

## Key facts about the solicitors' profession in the West Midlands region

The Law Society conducts research on the solicitors' profession in England and Wales. This fact sheet presents key figures on the profession for the West Midlands region as at November 2010.

Key statistics as at November 2010	No	%
<b>Solicitors with practising certificates</b>	<b>8,062</b>	
Male solicitors with practising certificates	4,269	53.0
Female solicitors with practising certificates	3,793	47.0
Solicitors in private practice	6,219	81.3
Solicitors in commerce and industry	427	5.6
Solicitors in central and local government	758	9.9
Solicitors in other sectors	249	3.3
Solicitors in sole practices	544	7.1
Solicitors in practices with 2-4 partners	3,057	40.0
Solicitors in practices with 5-10 partners	1,223	16.0
Solicitors in practices with 11-25 partners	641	8.4
Solicitors in practices with more than 26 partners	2,186	28.6
<b>Trainees</b>		
Number of trainees	<b>406</b>	
Number of male trainees	145	35.7
Number of female trainees	261	64.3
Starting salary (median)	£18,000	
<b>Organisations</b>		
Organisations employing solicitors (head office)	<b>1,411</b>	
Private practices (head office)	807	57.2
Other organisations employing solicitors <sup>1</sup>	604	42.8

<sup>1</sup> Non private practice comprises of organisations employing solicitors by the following type of business: Commerce & Industry; Government (Government Department, Local Government, Court Government funded services, and Crown Prosecution Service); Other (Advice service, Educational establishment, Churches etc.).

## Practising certificate holders

Table 1 shows the ethnicity of all practising certificate holders in the region compared with all the regions in England and Wales, and Chart A illustrates their age distribution. Just under one-third (32.0%) of solicitors are aged between 26-35 years old which is slightly less than in the profession as a whole where 35.3% fall into this age range. The ethnicity profile shows that there are almost twice as many solicitors of Asian background in this region as in England and Wales as a whole.

Table 2 provides details of the number of years of post qualification experience of practising certificate holders within the region compared to the profession as a whole. It shows that there are proportionately fewer solicitors of 0-9 years of experience in the region than in England and Wales as a whole.

The top three main areas of work for practising certificate holders in this region are business affairs (17.5%), wills and probate (7.1%) and litigation (general) (6.3%). In comparison with the profession as a whole, litigation (general) is cited by 5.8% and wills and probate by 7.2% of the profession with business affairs dominating at 21.0%.

## Trainees

In 2010 44.6% of trainees are aged 25 and under, with only 3.4% of trainees aged over 41 years, compared with 45.8% and 3.2% respectively for the profession as a whole.

Table 3 shows trainee registrations by ethnicity for the West Midlands region and for the entire profession. It indicates greater representation of Asian trainees in this region than in the profession as a whole (20.0% compared to 11.5%).

The overwhelming majority (93.3%) of trainees work in law practices, with only 2.0% in commerce and industry and 3.9% in local and central government.

More than one-third (34.0%) of trainees are based in large firms of more than 26 partners and 29.1% are located within firms of 2 to 4 partners. Ten percent of registered trainees are based within sole practices, compared with 6.0% for the profession as a whole.

## Private practice firms

There are 807 private practice head offices in the region. The distribution of size of firms across the region is shown in table 4. It illustrates that there are 45.5% of firms with 2 to 4 partners followed by 42.1% of sole practices in the region.

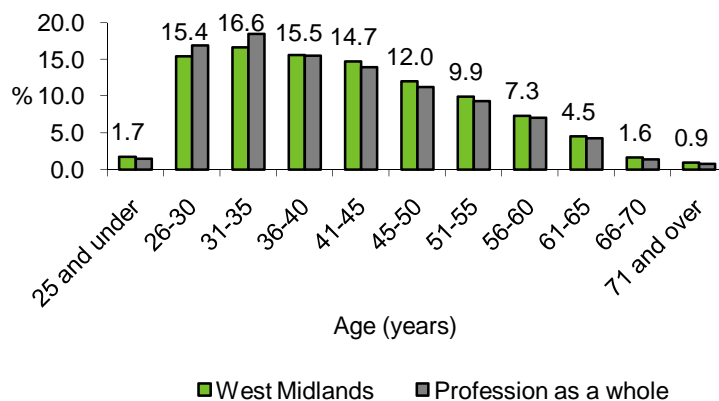
## Further reading

*Trends in the solicitors' profession, Annual statistical report 2009.* Bill Cole, Nina Fletcher, Tara Chittenden and Joanne Cox. Strategic Research Unit. The Law Society. 2009.

**Table 1 Ethnicity of practising certificate holders**

	West Midlands		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	84	1.0	798	0.7
Asian	935	11.6	7,438	6.6
Chinese	42	0.5	924	0.8
African	41	0.5	1,417	1.3
Other Ethnicity	97	1.2	2,117	1.9
White	6,308	78.3	90,337	79.7
Unknown	555	6.8	10,341	9.1
Total	8,062	100	113,372	100

**Chart A Age distribution of practising certificate holders**



**Table 2 Experience of practising certificate holders by years qualified**

	West Midlands		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
0-9	3,227	40.0	49,666	43.8
10-19	2,251	27.9	29,646	26.1
20-29	1,209	15.0	16,146	14.0
30-39	781	9.6	10,136	8.9
40-49	155	1.9	1,734	1.5
50+	29	0.4	291	0.3
Unknown	410	5.1	5,753	5.1
Total	8,062	100	113,372	100

**Table 3 Ethnicity of trainees**

	West Midlands		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	2	0.5	45	0.7
Asian	81	20.0	787	11.5
Chinese	2	0.5	152	2.2
African	7	1.7	145	2.1
Other Ethnicity	6	1.5	274	4.0
White	272	67.2	4,972	72.4
Unknown	35	8.6	493	7.2
Total	405	100	6,868	100

**Table 4 Size of firms (head office)**

	West Midlands		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
Sole practice	340	42.1	4,583	45.1
2-4	367	45.5	4,185	41.1
5-10	77	9.5	898	8.8
11-25	14	1.7	310	3.1
26+	9	1.1	196	1.9
Total	807	100	10,172	100

Source: Law Society REGIS database