

Annual statistics report 2024: top-line report



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Introduction

In 2025, we're marking 200 years of supporting solicitors by recalling our rich history, celebrating our diverse community and looking to the future of our profession. Over the last two centuries, we've seen the profession grow into an industry that contributes almost £60 billion to the UK economy and produces £9.5 billion in exports.

Solicitors are at the heart of a legal system that is respected around the world, acting as a force for good and providing individuals and businesses with the legal advice they need to keep our society and economy thriving.

We're proud to represent a community where people are welcomed, encouraged and supported to contribute their unique perspectives. As we look to the next 200 years, data will be vital to understand how the profession is continuing to change and evolve.

Data plays an important role in every sector. Since 1984, we've acknowledged this by producing our annual statistics report, which provides insight into the size and shape of our profession, tracking changes to help firms make informed decisions, benchmark performance, and address challenges and opportunities.

This 42nd edition of the report is divided into three main sections. The first details the changes to the roll over the past year, section two analyses PC holders based on their demographic data and the final section examines changes in practice types and partner equivalent levels.

The data for this report is provided by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). The terms 'male', 'female', and 'sex' are used throughout this report, in line with how the SRA gathers data through the question, "What is your sex?". This question offered the options 'female', 'male', 'other preferred description' and 'prefer not to say'. Those who did not specify their sex have been listed as 'no data shared'.

This report is part of a series of research and economic analyses conducted by our research and insight team.

If you have any queries or comments, you can contact the team at researchandinsightgroup@lawsociety.org.uk.



Richard Atkinson
President of the Law Society of England and Wales

Executive summary

The annual statistics report (ASR) aims to track changes in the legal sector and help solicitor firms make informed decisions. This edition evaluates the solicitors' profession within England and Wales between August 2023 and July 2024, focusing on changes on the roll, demographics of practising certificate holders, and changes across partner equivalent levels.

Solicitors on the roll

As of July 2024, there were 202,454 solicitors on the roll, a 3% increase from the previous year. This growth comes after a 9% decline in 2023, driven by the reintroduction of the roll-keeping exercise. The exercise, which requires non-practising solicitors to reapply annually to remain on the roll resulted in over 27,000 solicitors leaving in 2023. However, there were only about 5,900 solicitors who did not make the application in 2024, a 78% drop compared to 2023.

Combined with a 15% increase in admissions, the reduced numbers leaving the roll are representative of a resilient profession. The updated roll figures now provide a more accurate representation of active members in the profession, given the requirement for non-practising solicitors to re-apply annually.

Practising certificate (PC) holders

There were 167,603 PC holders in July 2024, which is a 3% rise versus 2023.

Partly reflecting the increase in unreported demographic data, especially among recently admitted solicitors, there has been no change observed in the demographic distribution of PC holders compared to 2023. Among those who shared their sex, women continue to represent 53% of PC holders, while 19% of those who shared their ethnicity identify as being from a Black, Asian, or minority ethnic background.

The profession has a younger female workforce, with 56% of female PC holders under age 45 in contrast to 61% of male PC holders who are 45 years or older. There is a steady inflow of young talent, with nearly a quarter of all PC holders under 35. There is, however, room to strengthen early-career representation to match the wider workforce in England and Wales, where 33% of the workforce are below 35 years.

Practice type and changes across partner equivalent levels

Solicitors who work in-house increased by 4% in the year to July 2024, reaching 37,035. The number of solicitors in private practice increased by 1%, reaching 97,084.

Solicitors who did not share any data about their place of employment now accounts for 17% of PC holders. Excluding this group of PC holders, solicitors in private practice represented 72% of PC holders, while in-house solicitors represented 28%.

Female solicitors have a strong presence across in-house and private practice types, making up 60% of in-house solicitors and 51% of solicitors in private practice.

At partner equivalent levels, female representation increased slightly from 34% in 2023 to 35% in 2024. Partner equivalent refers to sole practitioners, directors, members, own accounts, partners, and senior partners within private practice.

Key metrics

	2023	2024	Year-on-year change (%)
Membership statistics			
Solicitors on the roll ¹	197,378	202,454	3%
Newly admitted solicitors	8,304	9,575	15%
Solicitors who left the roll	27,099	5,965	Not comparable ²
Practising certificate holders	2023	2024	Year-on-year change (%)
All PC holders	162,120	167,603	3%
Female PC holders	75,574	74,341	Not comparable ²
Male PC holders	67,285	65,649	Not comparable ²
No data shared on sex ³	19,261	27,613	43%
Ethnicity of PC holders	2023	2024	Year-on-year change(%)
White	94,825	92,582	Not comparable ²
Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups	21,977	21,743	Not comparable ²
No data shared on ethnicity	45,318	53,278	18%
Practice type	2023	2024	Year-on-year change (%)
Solicitors in private practice ⁴	95,792	97,084	1%
In-house solicitors ⁵	35,738	37,035	4%
No data shared on place of work	26,242	28,940	10%
Partner equivalent ⁶	2023	2024	Year-on-year change (%)
Total	28,795	28,256	-2%
Female partner equivalent	9,905	9,865	0%
Male partner equivalent	18,578	17,950	-3%
No data shared on sex	312	441	41%

¹Solicitors on the roll exclude registered European lawyers (REL), registered foreign lawyers (RFE), and exempt European lawyers (EEL).

²Not comparable is used where current statistics may not accurately reflect reality due to missing or incomplete data. It is also used when the metrics has some peculiarity e.g. in the case of solicitors who exited the roll, where 2023 number is a compound effect.

³No data shared on sex in this table sums up blank, prefer not to say and other preferred description. However, these categories are separated in other parts of the report.

⁴Solicitors in private practice in this report excludes those in foreign law practice and locum services.

⁵In-house solicitors are employed directly by other organisations rather than law firms.

⁶Partner equivalent refers to sole practitioners, directors, members, own accounts, partners and senior partners within private practice.

⁷Pink text in most parts of the report may highlight a decline. It may also signify an undesirable growth in a metric.

1. Solicitors on the roll

As of July 2024, the roll of solicitors in England and Wales included 202,454 individuals, reflecting a 3% increase compared to 2023 (**Figure 1**). This growth follows a 9% decline in 2023, mainly attributed to the reintroduced roll-maintenance exercise after an eight-year absence. The current roll figures provide a more accurate reflection of active members in the profession.

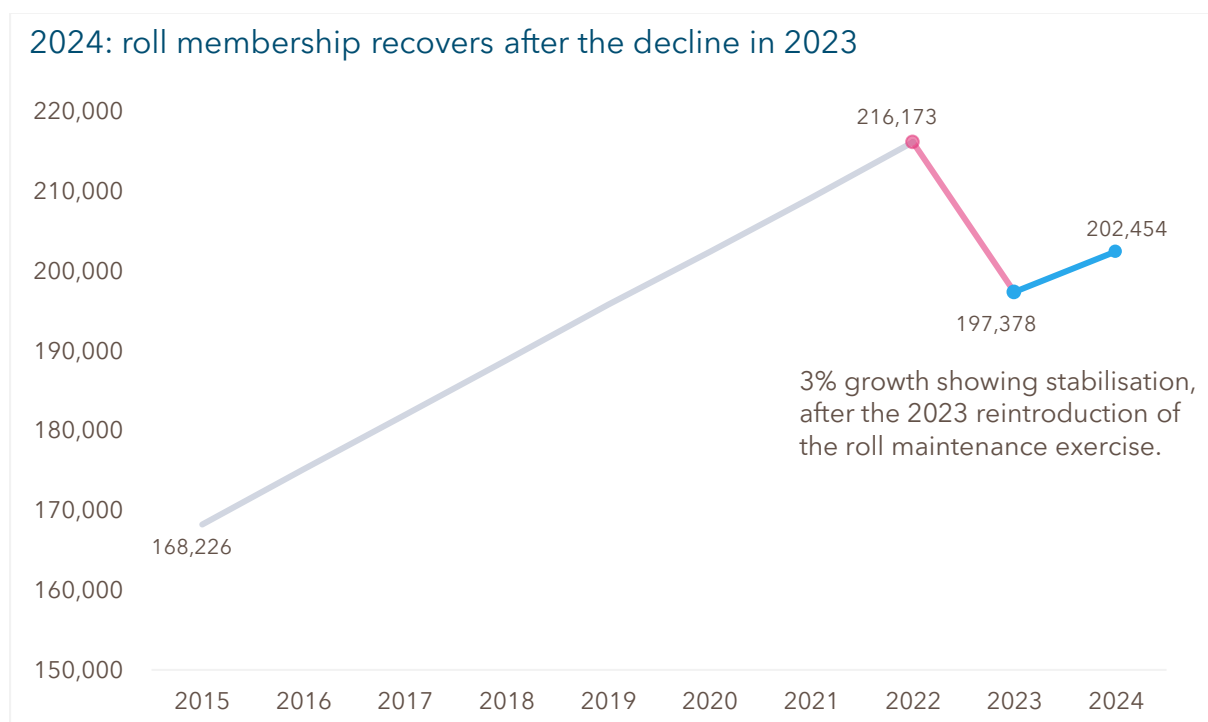


Figure 1: number of solicitors on the roll from 2015 to 2024

New admissions into the profession

A total of 9,575 new solicitors joined the profession in 2024, a 13% increase from 8,304 admissions recorded in 2023. Admission trends from August 2022 to July 2024 highlight a seasonal pattern, with the highest admissions occurring in August, September, and

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March (Figure 2). These peaks are likely linked to training completions and graduation periods.

Non-practising certificate holders

The number of non-practising certificate holders dropped by 1%, bringing their total down to 34,851 from 35,258 in 2023. This category now makes up 17% of all solicitors on the roll. Non-PC holders cut across all age groups and sex, with 51% female, 40% male, and 9% with no sex data available.

Members who left the roll

In 2024, 5,965 members left the roll, resulting in a 97%-member retention rate compared to 2023. Data in Table 1 indicates that non-PC holders are more likely to leave the roll, followed by unattached solicitors. Six in 10 female solicitors who left the roll were under 55, compared to just three in 10 male solicitors of the same age.

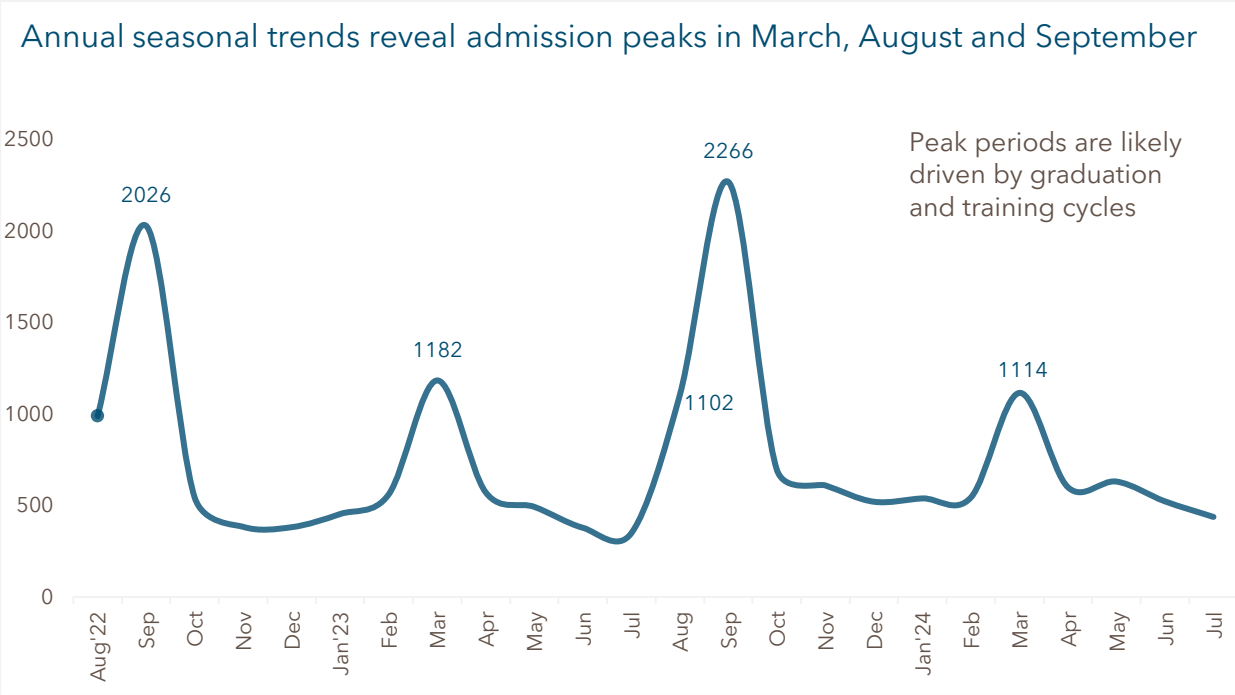


Figure 2: monthly admission trend from August 2022 to July 2024

Table 1: members who left the roll in 2024

Practice type	Number of Solicitors	Percentage
Non-PC holders	3,843	64%
No data shared on employment	1041	17%
Private Practice	694	12%
In-house	333	6%
Foreign Law +Locum	54	1%
Total	5,965	100%

Summary

A 97% retention rate was recorded amongst solicitors on the roll, demonstrating strong member commitment. Coupled with a 15% rise in new admissions, these factors point to a growing profession. We will remain dedicated to supporting and engaging with solicitors to ensure continued progress and the retention of diverse talent within the profession.

2. Solicitors with practising certificates

PC holders grew by 3% compared to the previous year, reaching 167,603 in 2024 **(Figure 3)**. PC holders currently make up 83% of solicitors on the roll.

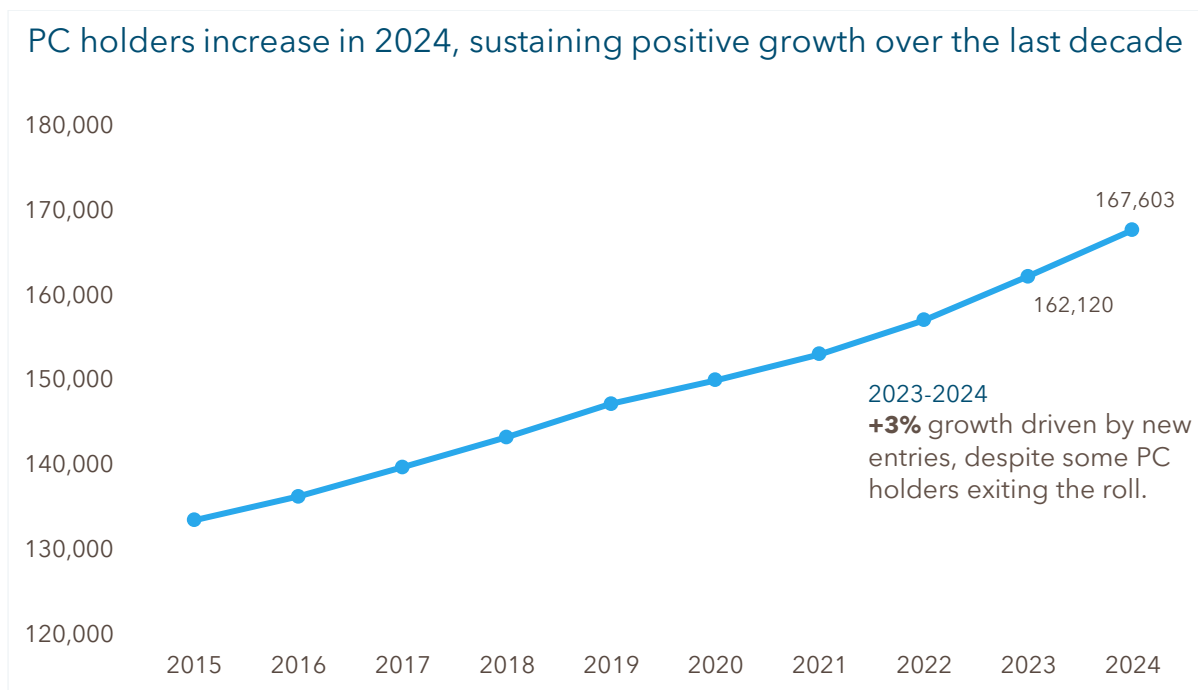


Figure 3: number of PC holders from 2015 to 2024

Sex of PC holders

The table below provides a breakdown of PC holders by sex. Excluding PC holders who did not share any data on sex, female solicitors account for 53% of PC holders, while male solicitors represent 47%.

Table 2: sex of PC holders

Sex	Number of PC holders	Percentage
Female	74,341	44%
Male	65,649	39%
No data shared	27,378	16%
Prefer not to say	224	0%
Other preferred description	11	0%
Total	167,603	100%

Ethnicity of PC holders

Excluding those who did not share their ethnicity, 19% of PC holders are from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds, while 81% are white. When considering 32% of PC holders with no data shared on ethnicity, the proportion differs as seen in **Table 3**.

Table 3: ethnicity of PC holders

Ethnicity	Number of PC holders	Percentage
White	92,582	55%
No data shared	53,278	32%
Asian or Asian British	14,266	9%
Black or Black British	3,365	2%
Mixed	2,260	1%
Other ethnic groups	1,852	1%
Total	167,603	100%

Age of PC holders

[Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.](#) reveals that 56% of female PC holders are under 45, closely aligning with the national average of 57% for employed females in England and Wales. Male PC holders, however, show a more aged demographic, with only 39% under 45, falling behind the national average of 55% for employed males ([England and Wales, Census 2021 - ONS](#))

Overall, there is a steady inflow of young talent, with a quarter of all PC holders under 35, largely driven by those with no data shared on sex. There is, however, room to strengthen early-career representation to match the wider workforce where 33% are below 35 years.

Table 4: age of PC holders

Age group	Female	Male	No data shared	All PC holders
<35	16%	10%	79%	24%
35-44	40%	29%	17%	32%
45-54	28%	30%	3%	25%
55-64	13%	21%	1%	14%
65+	3%	10%	0%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Summary

Partly due to the increase in unreported demographic data, especially for recently admitted solicitors, no notable shift has been recorded in the demographic profile of PC holders compared to 2023. Female solicitors still account for a larger proportion of PC holders. Nearly a quarter of the solicitor workforce is below 35 years and one in every five PC holder identifies as being from a Black, Asian, or minority ethnic background. We remain committed to enabling a diverse and inclusive solicitor workforce.

3. Practice types and changes across partner equivalent levels

Solicitors who work in-house increased by 4% over the past year, reaching 37,035. The number of solicitors in private practice increased by 1%, reaching 97,084. Additionally, the proportion of PC holders who did not share any data about their place of employment increased by 10%, bringing their total to 28,940.

Considering 17% of PC holders with no employment data, PC holders who work in private practice represent 58%, those who work in-house represent 22% and those in foreign law practice and locum services represent 3% of all PC holders.

Focusing only on private and in-house practice types (**Table 5**), approximately three in every 10 PC holder works in-house, while the other seven work in private practice. 33% of female solicitors work in-house compared to 33% of male solicitors.

Table 5: PC holders' distribution by practice types

Distribution based on sex	Private practice	In-house practice	Total
Female	67%	33%	100%
Male	75%	25%	100%
No data shared on sex	82%	18%	100%
All PC holders	72%	28%	100%

There is a near equal distribution between female and male PC holders in private practice (**Table 6**), however, female solicitors seem to be over-represented in the in-house practice type, making up 60% of PC holders in that category (**Table 7**).

Table 6: make up of solicitors in private practice based on sex

Private practice	Number of PC holders	Percentage
Female	41,012	51%
Male	39,647	49%
Total	80,659	100%

Table 7: make up of solicitors working in-house based on sex

In-house	Number of PC holders	Percentage
Female	20,218	60%
Male	13,301	40%
Total	33,519	100%

Table 6 and Table 7 exclude PC holders with no data shared on sex.

Changes across partner equivalent levels

The total number of partner equivalents declined by 2% compared to 2023, bringing the number down to 28,256. **Table** shows changes across partner equivalents between 2023 and 2024.

Male solicitors accounted for nearly two-thirds of those leaving partner equivalent roles and over half of the new partner equivalents in 2024. However, their total numbers fell by 3% compared to 2023, as new appointments equalled only 71% of those who left (**Figure 4**).

Table 7: changes across partner equivalent levels

Partner equivalents	2023	Between 2023 and 2024		2024	
Sex	Total	No longer partners	Remained partners	New	Total
Female	9,905	1,173	8,732	1,133	9,865
Male	18,578	2,163	16,415	1,535	17,950
No data shared	312	29	283	158	441
Total	28,795	3,365	25,430	2,826	28,256

Female solicitors, on the other hand, had a 97% replacement rate, for those who left, resulting in stable numbers with no growth. Overall, female solicitors constituted 35% of partner equivalents.

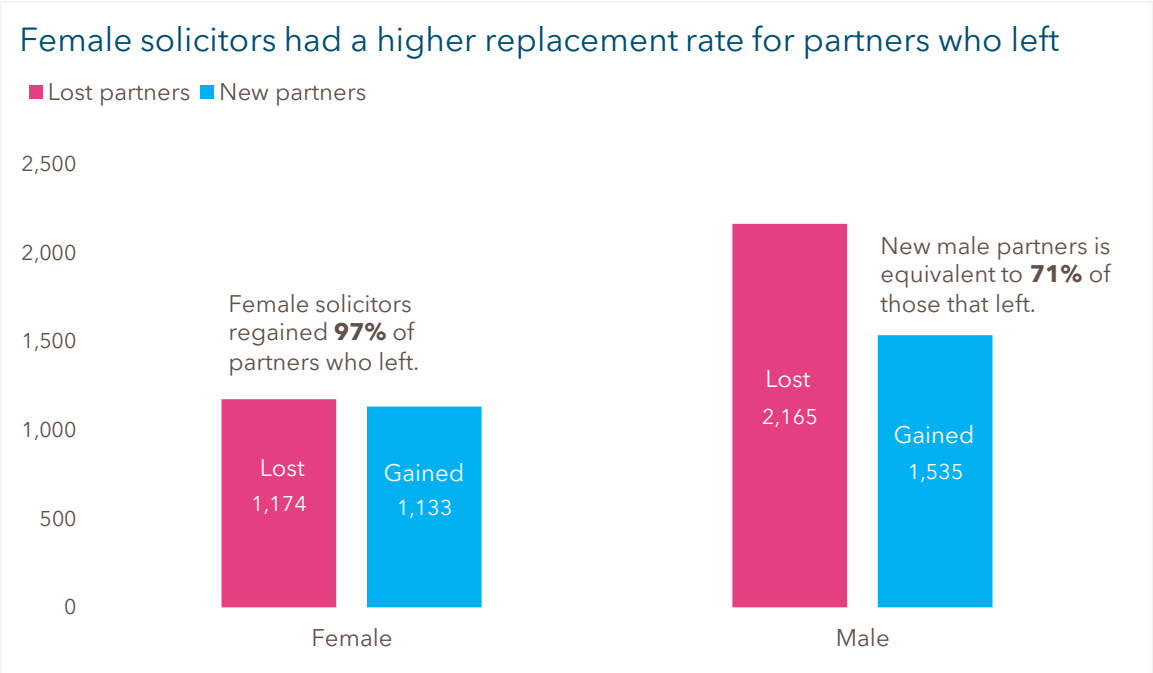


Figure 4: number of solicitors who left or attained partner equivalent levels in 2024

Table shows the ethnicity of partner equivalents. Black, Asian, and minority ethnic groups account for 14% of solicitors at partner equivalent levels, and 16% when the proportion of partner equivalents who shared no ethnic data is removed.

Table 8: partner equivalents breakdown by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed	Other ethnic groups	No data shared	White	Total
Total	2,817	623	334	312	3,010	21,160	28,256
%	10%	2%	1%	1%	11%	75%	100%

14%

Asian or Asian British

Black or Black British

Mixed

Other ethnic groups

Summary

The number of solicitors in private practice and in-house roles increased in 2024, with female solicitors continuing to be well represented in both practice types, making up 60% of in-house solicitors and 51% of solicitors in private practice.

Female representation at partner equivalent levels increased slightly from 34% in 2023 to 35% in 2024. We remain committed to promoting and supporting female representation at senior levels.

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ISBN: 978-1-78446-285-7

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