



# DIVERSITY PROFILE OF THE SOLICITORS' PROFESSION 2015

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OCTOBER 2016

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## WELCOME

A diverse profession can meet the needs of its clients more effectively. As the professional body for solicitors, one of the Law Society's responsibilities is to support and encourage access to the profession.

We also support progress within the profession for the best candidates, regardless of their background. This ensures that our profession reflects the population it aims to serve. Understanding the diversity profile of the profession helps us to do this.

We are making progress but there is more to do. The statistics in this report show that:

- More women than men are joining the profession and now make up 48% of solicitors.
- 56.7% of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) solicitors are women.
- Over 50% of solicitors are the first generation in their family to attend university.

However, we also know that:

- People with disabilities are under represented in the profession.
- Despite a steady increase in the number of women entrants to the profession over the last twenty years, only 28.8% of partners are women.
- 11.1% of partners come from BAME backgrounds.

The report highlights the areas that we will continue to work on with law firms and current and potential individual members.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Charter provides an opportunity for firms of all sizes to measure their own progress and to share best practice. We are also helping firms to adopt fair recruitment procedures, as well as supporting them to address the gender pay gap in the legal sector.

Our mentoring programme and networking events help women, BAME, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and solicitors with disabilities to develop the skills and contacts they need to succeed. Our communities for these groups provide peer advice and support. You can find out more at [www.lawsociety.org.uk/communities](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/communities).

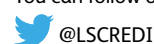
We will continue to address social mobility issues through our Social Mobility Ambassadors programme, which profiles successful solicitors from non-traditional backgrounds. Our ambassadors are featured on **our website**, attend law fairs and other events to promote the profession, and participate in an advisory scheme for existing and aspiring solicitors.

Our Diversity Access Scheme provides bursaries and other support for talented LPC students who have faced exceptional obstacles in pursuing their dream of being a solicitor. Although progress is being made there is still much work to be done. The Law Society is committed to working with the profession to enable the best to succeed irrespective of background.



**Catherine Dixon**  
Law Society chief executive

You can follow our equality and diversity work on twitter



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## 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a baseline of information against which firms can assess their own diversity profiles. Since 2009, the Law Society has been working with law firms through its **Diversity Charter** to help them turn their commitment to diversity and inclusion into positive, practical action for their businesses, staff and clients.

The Law Society is committed to helping the legal profession to be:

- inclusive – its composition reflecting the diversity of our society
- responsive – able to provide a sensitive, appropriate and highly professional service to all sections of society
- good employers – recruiting on merit and offering training and development opportunities to all employees regardless of background.

The report draws on data from two main sources:

- The Annual Statistics Report (ASR) 2015, published in April 2016 and the management information data on which the report is based. Figures from this source are based on total population data. The ASR provides a snapshot of the profession, at firm and individual level on the 31 July each year. The report has been published each year since 1994. The ASR 2015 is free to members on request ([EnquiriesSRU@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:EnquiriesSRU@lawsociety.org.uk)) or can be purchased by non-members through the **Law Society Bookshop**.
- The PC Holder Survey (2015) – which is an annual telephone survey of 1,502 randomly selected individuals from private practice, in-house and government, conducted in May to August 2015. Figures from this source are therefore estimates. Further details are provided in Appendix 1.

The following table provides the key figures on eight diversity characteristics of the profession – gender, disability, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, socio-economic status and caring responsibilities. The figures on the gender, age and ethnicity of practicing certificate (PC) holders were obtained from the Annual Statistics Report 2015, data on disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and caring responsibilities were collected through the annual PC Holder Survey 2015.

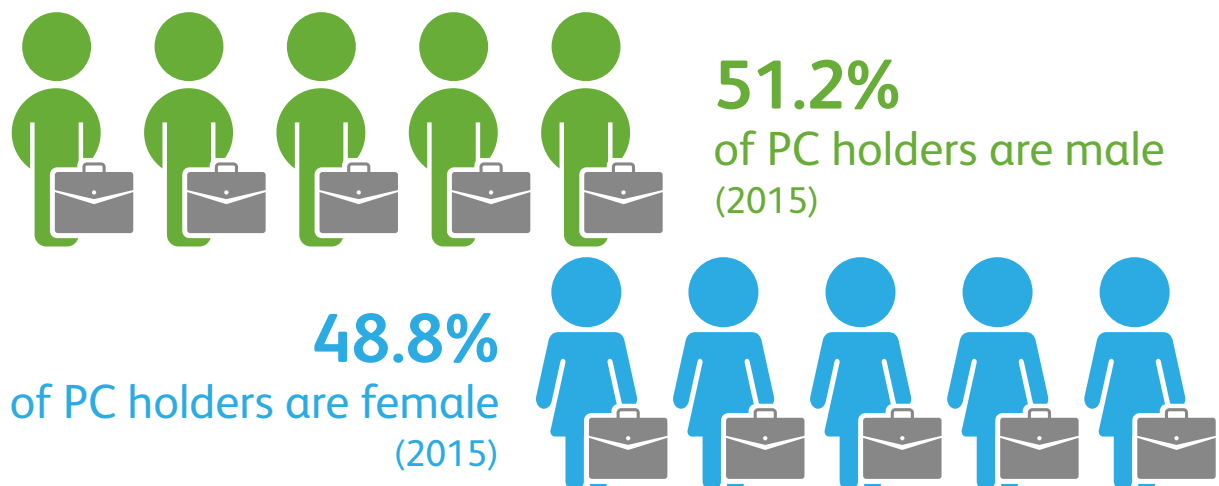


Table 1: Diversity strand overview (2015)

Diversity strand		% of PC holders 2015 <sup>1</sup>	% of PC holders 2014	% of PC holders 2013
Gender	Male	51.2%	51.8%	52.3%
	Female	48.8%	48.2%	47.7%
Disability	Disabled	5.9%	4.9%	3.0%
	Not disabled	93.6%	94.4%	96.6%
Ethnicity	African Caribbean	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
	African	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
	Asian	8.0%	7.8%	7.5%
	Chinese	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%
	Other ethnic group	2.5%	2.5%	2.2%
	White/European	75.7%	77.3%	78.0%
Age	Under 25	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%
	26-30	11.5%	12.2%	14.2%
	31-35	18.9%	19.4%	19.8%
	36-40	17.2%	16.8%	16.0%
	41-45	14.3%	14.5%	14.5%
	46-50	12.5%	12.3%	11.7%
	51-55	9.6%	9.5%	9.1%
	56-60	7.4%	7.3%	7.1%
	61-65	4.7%	4.7%	4.4%
	66-70	2.4%	2.3%	1.9%
71+	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%	
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual/straight	94.6%	92%	92.7%
	Lesbian/gay/bisexual/other	2.6%	2.2%	2.5%
Religion or belief	Buddhist	0.9%	0.6%	0.2%
	Christian	48.7%	48.5%	55.0%
	Hindu	1.9%	1.7%	1.7%
	Jewish	2.3%	3.0%	2.5%
	Muslim	3.8%	2.4%	1.9%
	No religion	35.4%	35.3%	33.2%
	Sikhism	1.5%	1.2%	1.7%
	Other	1.9%	2.5%	1.1%
Socio-economic background	First generation in family to attend university	52.7%	50.5%	53.1%
	UK independent/fee-paying school	27.4%	26.6%	28.6%
	Eligibility for free school meals	11.2%	10.8%	NA
Caring responsibilities	For children	37.1%	29.4%	29.4%
	For adults	20.1%	19.8%	17.7%

Law Society MI data, July 2015, PC Holder Survey 2015

<sup>1</sup> Figures for some diversity characteristics might not add up to 100 due to the exclusion from the table of such categories as 'do not know' or 'refuse to say'.

## The size of the profession

- As at 31 July 2015, 133,367 solicitors held PCs, a 2.3% increase on the previous year.
- The participation rate (the percentage of solicitors on the Roll holding a PC) in 2015 was 79.3%, a difference of 2% on 2014 figures.
- Over the past thirty years, the total number of solicitors holding PCs has grown by 186% at an average annual growth rate of 3.7%.
- In 2015 there were 9,403 private practice firms registered in England and Wales employing 91,062 solicitors (68.3% of all PC holders). The number of firms has declined by 1.5% and the number of solicitors employed by private practice firms by 0.8% compared to 2014 figures.
- 4,244 solicitors (3.2% of PC holders) were employed by 964 foreign law firms, or were working as locums in 159 locum services.
- Over the past ten years, the proportion of PC holders not employed in private practice (i.e. employed by organisations other than law firms) in England and Wales has increased from 22.6% in 2005 to 28.5% in 2015.

## Trends on entry

- In 2015 there were 23,855 applicants from UK students to study first degree courses in law in England and Wales, of whom 17,335 (72.7%) were accepted. BAME individuals made up 35.5% of those accepted on to first degree courses.
- Of the 15,431 law graduates in the summer of 2015, two-thirds (68.9%) achieved firsts or upper second classifications. More women graduated with firsts and upper seconds than men, 71.1% as opposed to 65.2%.
- There were 5,457 new traineeships registered in the year 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015. This is an increase of 9.1% on the previous year's figures, but the total remains below the levels of the mid 2000s.
- Of the 5,457 new trainees registered August 2014 to July 2015, 62.8% were women.
- In the year to 31 July 2015, there were 6,077 admissions to the Roll (i.e. newly qualified solicitors and transfers from other legal professions), a decrease of 4.2% on admissions the year before.
- Of new admissions, 61.1% were women and 38.9% were men. The number of male admissions decreased from 2,539 in 2014 to 2,363 in 2015, a decrease of 6.9%.



**23,855**

applicants from UK students to study first degree courses in England and Wales (2015)

**72.7%** accepted

**35.5%** of those accepted made up of BAME individuals

## 2: GENDER

Women now account for 48.8% of solicitors with PCs compared with 41.6% at the same point in 2005. Since 2005, the total number of solicitors with PCs has grown by 32.1%. Over this period the number of women solicitors with PCs has increased by 55.2% while the number of men increased by only 15.7%.

For the past twenty years, women have accounted for over one-half of new entrants to the profession, so the proportion of PC holders who are women is set to increase for the foreseeable future.

Women outnumber men in the in-house sector but not in private practice; they also make up almost two-thirds of solicitors working in central and local government.

**Table 2: Gender of PC holders (2015)**

Gender	Number of PC holders (2015)	% of all (2015)
Men	68,220	51.2%
Women	65,147	48.8%
All	133,367	100%

Annual Statistics Report 2015

**Table 3: Gender by sector (2015)**

Gender	Private practice		Central and local government		In-house		All attached to an organisation	
	Number	% of sector	Number	% of sector	Number	% of sector	Number	% of sector
Men	51,281	53.8%	2,342	34.4%	8,921	45.9%	62,544	51.4%
Women	44,038	46.2%	4,471	65.6%	10,510	54.1%	59,019	48.6%
Total	95,319	100%	6,813	100%	19,431	100%	121,563	100%

Law Society MI data, July 2015 (attached to an organisation)

## Gender and partnership within private practice

A higher proportion of men (48%) than women (22%), irrespective of experience, were partners in 2015. Taking the experience group in which partnership levels are most common (10-19 years' experience) it becomes apparent that the size of the gap has continued over time. Of those solicitors in 2015 with potentially 10-19 years' experience, 59% of men were partner equivalents compared with only 32% of women (a 27% difference). In 1995, 79% of men and 54% of women with 10-19 years' experience were in partner positions, reflecting a 25% difference.

Women partners were better represented within smaller firms compared to larger firms: 33% of sole practitioners and 31.1% of partners within firms with 2-4 partners were women, compared to 22.8% of partners within the largest firms (81+ partners).

An estimated 34% of the 9,403 law firms in England and Wales (3,206) in 2015 were majority owned by women (50% or more of the partners being women), this compares to a national estimate of SME owners of 21%<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 4: Gender of partners, by size of firm (2015)**

Size of firm (partner count)	Number of partner equivalents in firm size band	% of partner equivalents within size band who are women	% of partner equivalents within size band who are men
Sole	4,157	33.0%	67.0%
2-4 partners	8,885	31.1%	68.9%
5-10 partners	4,951	30.4%	69.6%
11-25 partners	3,531	30.4%	69.6%
26-80 partners	4,102	29.2%	70.8%
81+ partners	7,225	28.1%	71.9%
All	32,851	22.8%	77.2%

*Law Society MI data, July 2015*

<sup>2</sup> **BIS Research Paper 289**. Longitudinal Small Business Survey Year 1 (2015) SME employers, May 2016, p2.



Historical trends show some improvement in progression for women. The proportion of partners who are women has increased from 15% in 1995 to 29% in 2015, an increase of 14% and in absolute terms represents an increase of 103% in the number of women partners.

However, at the same time the proportion of all women in private practice who are partners has declined from almost one-third (31%) to one-fifth (22%). This can at least partly be explained by the facts that: the rate of growth of women into the profession has been substantially faster than the rate of growth for male entrants (so the base on which proportions are calculated has expanded); and the prospects of partnership have decreased over time, across the board.

- The number of private practitioners has grown by 69% between 1995 and 2015. The number of women entering the profession has exceeded male entry since 1992. Over the past twenty years the number of female admissions has grown by 50.6% at an average annual growth rate of 2.4%. This compares to a 6% growth in the number of male admissions, at an average annual growth rate of 0.6%. The number of private practitioners has grown by 68% between 1995 and 2015.
- Just 36% of all private practitioners in 2015 were at partnership level, compared to 57% of those in private practice in 1995.

**Table 5: Women partners (1995-2015)**

Year	Number of women partners	% of partners who are women
1995	4,676	15.2%
2000	6,330	19.2%
2005	7,079	22.7%
2010	9,156	25.8%
2015	9,471	28.8%

*Annual Statistics Report 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015*



Proportion of partners who are women has increased from **15%** in 1995 to **29%** in 2015

**103%**  
increase in the number  
of women partners

### 3. AGE

The table below shows the age distribution of solicitors in five year bands. Around two-fifths (62%) of PC holders were below the age of 45, 3.4% were over 65 and just 0.3% were 25 or younger.

Those working in an organisation or solicitors working in government were on average older than their counterparts in private practice and the employed sector.

**Table 6: Age profile of PC holders (2015)**

Age	All with PC	% of all PC holders in age group
25 and under	434	0.3%
26-30	15,318	11.5%
31-35	25,243	18.9%
36-40	22,979	17.2%
41-45	19,093	14.3%
46-50	16,700	12.5%
51-55	12,866	9.6%
56-60	9,848	7.4%
61-65	6,319	4.7%
66-70	3,166	2.4%
71 and older	1,398	1.0%
Unknown	3	0.0%
All known	133,364	
Total	133,367	100%

**Mean age 43 Median age 41** Annual Statistics Report 2015

**Table 7: Average (mean) age by sector (2015)**

	Private practice	Central and local government	Employed sector	All attached PC holders
Male	46 years	49 years	43 years	46 years
Female	40 years	45 years	40 years	40 years
All	43 years	46 years	41 years	43 years

Law Society MI data, July 2015 (attached to an organisation)

## Age and gender

The table below shows that women outnumber men in the groups of PC holders aged 40 and younger. Overall, the calculation of the median age for men and women indicates that one-half of women solicitors with PCs were aged 38 or younger, whereas one-half of men with PCs were aged 44 or younger.

The average (mean) age of a male PC holder was 45.9 years compared to only 40.1 years for female PC holders, reflecting later growth of female entry into the profession.

The profession has aged over the past twenty years: the average age of women PC holders in 2015 was 40.1 years compared to 35 years in 1995, a difference of 5.1 years. The average age of men has increased also, albeit not at the same rate, from 43 years in 1995 to 45.9 years in 2015, a difference of 3 years.

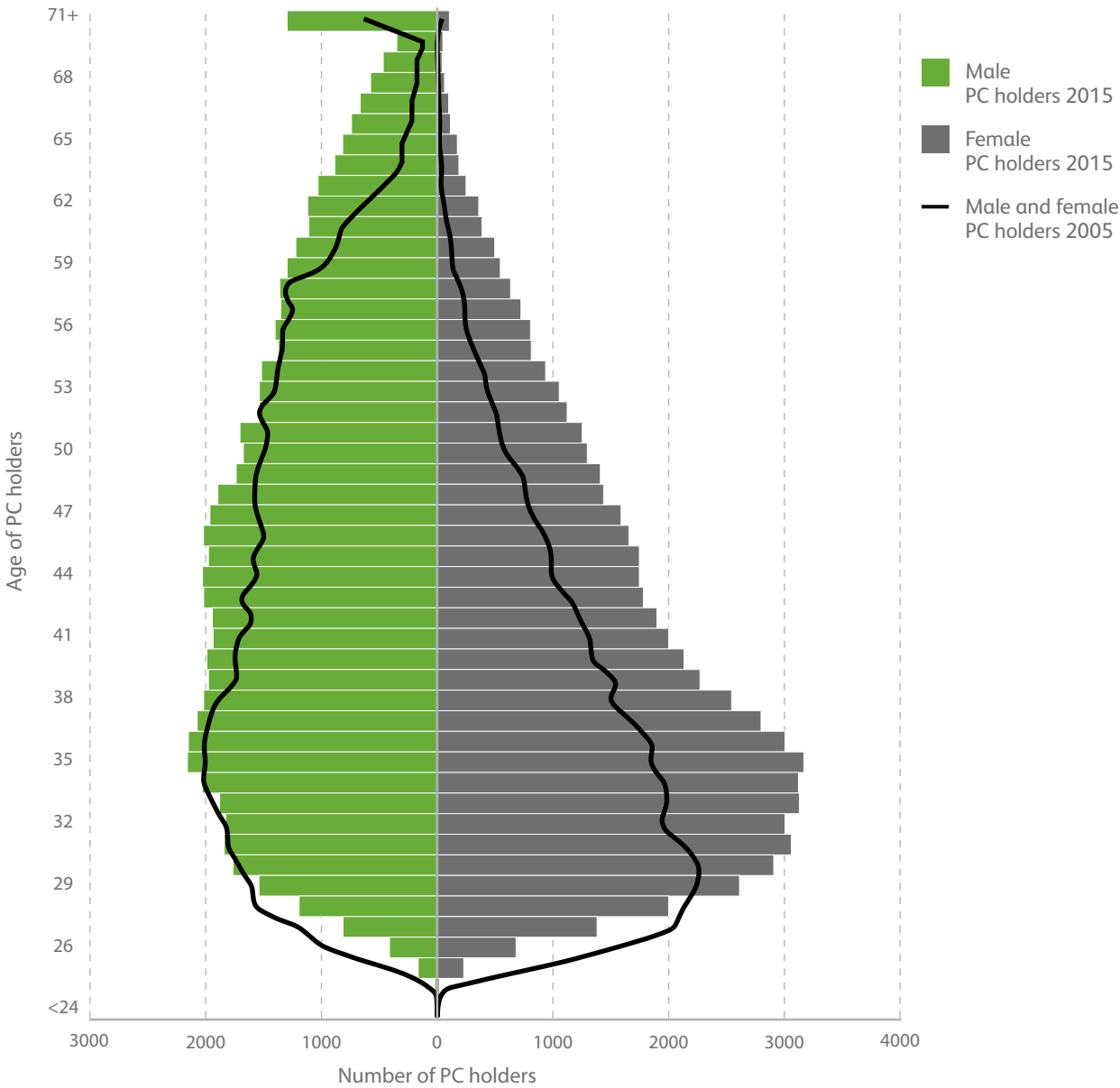
One quarter of the PC holders in 2015 were aged 50 or over. Men were twice as likely as women to be over the age of 50, with 34.1% of male PC holders over 50 compared to 15.8% of women. This compares to 20.6% of men in 1995 and just 3.9% of women.

**Table 8: Age distribution of solicitors by gender (2015)**

Age	Number of men with PC	% of men PC holders	Number of women with PC	% of women PC holders
<=25	176	0.3%	258	0.4%
26-30	5,699	8.4%	9,619	14.8%
31-35	9,721	14.2%	15,522	23.8%
36-40	10,193	14.9%	12,786	19.6%
41-45	9,884	14.5%	9,209	14.1%
46-50	9,273	13.6%	7,427	11.4%
51-55	7,650	11.2%	5,216	8.0%
56-60	6,613	9.7%	3,235	5.0%
61-65	4,940	7.2%	1,379	2.1%
66-70	2,780	4.1%	386	0.6%
>=71	1,290	1.9%	108	0.2%
Unknown	1	0.0%	2	0.0%
All known	68,219	100%	65,145	100%
Total	68,220	100%	65,147	100%

Annual Statistics Report 2015

Age distribution of solicitors with practising certificates 2015



Annual Statistics Report 2015

These figures are consistent with national trends, the Department for Work and Pensions 2014 report *Fuller working lives – background evidence* notes that ‘there are now more people aged 50 and over

in employment than ever before, and the numbers are still increasing<sup>3</sup>. Population predictions suggest that by 2020 almost one-third of the working age population will be over 50.

**Table 9: Average age of PC holders (1995-2015)**

Year	Men PC holders		Women PC holders		% of PC holders over 50	
	Mean age	Median age	Mean age	Median age	% of men	% of women
1995	43 years	35 years	41 years	33 years	20.6%	3.9%
2000	42.9 years	36.2 years	42 years	34 years	25.2%	5.8%
2005	43.5 years	37.2 years	42 years	35 years	28.4%	8.4%
2010	44.5 years	38.1 years	43 years	36 years	31.3%	11.6%
2015	45.9 years	40.1 years	44 years	38 years	34.1%	15.8%

ASR Reports 1995 – 2015



Population predictions suggest that by 2020 almost one-third of the working age population will be over **50**

<sup>3</sup> Department for Work and Pensions, ‘Fuller working lives – background evidence’ June 2014. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fuller-working-lives-background-evidence> p 22

## 4. ETHNICITY

The table below records the number of solicitors with PCs who were known to belong to a BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) group. The provision of information on ethnicity by individuals is optional, and, as of July 2015, ethnicity was known for 89.6% of PC holders. The proportion of PC holders for whom ethnicity is unknown is likely to increase over time due to changes to the way ethnicity data is now collected by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors were estimated to account for 13.9% of solicitors with PCs in 2015, a similar figure to the 13.7% recorded in 2014. Within this total, 16.1% of women solicitors were members of a BAME group compared with 11.8% of men, reflecting the fact that within the BAME solicitor population as a whole, women are better represented (56.7%) than in the white population (48.1%). Indeed, for all BAME groups women outnumber men.

The proportion of PC holders belonging to a BAME group was similar to that found in the working age population of England and Wales. Census data for England and Wales in 2011 found that of those in the population aged between 16 and 64, 14.4% described themselves as belonging to a BAME group<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 10: Ethnicity of PC holders (2015)**

Ethnicity	Men	Women	Total	% of all PC holders
White European	52,428	48,546	100,974	75.7%
African-Caribbean	249	658	907	0.7%
Asian	4,943	5,752	10,695	8.0%
Chinese	641	1,062	1,703	1.3%
African	835	1,096	1,931	1.4%
Other ethnic origin	1,369	1,942	3,311	2.5%
All solicitors for whom ethnic origin is known	60,465	59,056	119,521	
% of all solicitors with PCs for whom ethnic origin is known	88.6%	90.7%		89.6%
Ethnicity unknown	7,755	6,091	13,846	10.4%
All PC holders	68,220	65,147	133,367	100%
All PC holders from minority ethnic groups known to the Law Society	8,037	10,510	18,547	
% of all solicitors with PCs	11.8%	16.1%		13.9%

*Annual Statistics Report 2015*

<sup>4</sup> BD0076 Economic Activity by ethnicity, sex and age (England and Wales tab). The proportion of economically active individuals aged 16-64 in England and Wales, from a BAME background is 12.8%.

Solicitors from BAME backgrounds were marginally better represented in the broad in-house sector than in private practice, making up 15.3% of PC holders within government. They also make up 14.3% of those working in other in-house organisations and 12.8% of private practitioners are BAME.

Just over half (53%) of all BAME PC holders work in organisations based in London. Relative to overall representation in the solicitor population, BAME groups are better represented in London (18%).

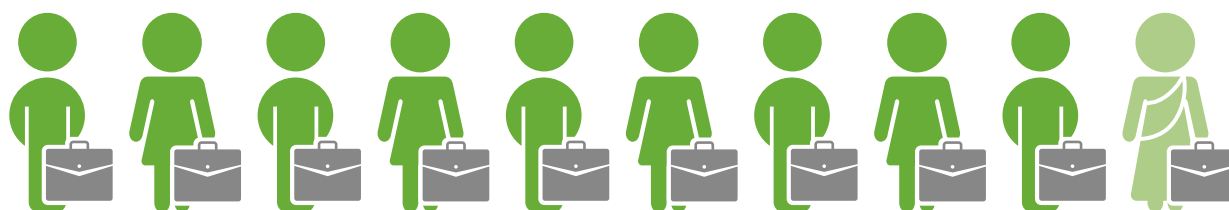
## Ethnicity and partnership

Of the 32,851 PC holders identified as being partners or partner equivalents 11.1% were from a BAME background. While one-third of white private practice solicitors were partners, the proportion was 22% for BAME groups. Furthermore, BAME solicitors were over twice as likely to be sole practitioners, with 9.2% of BAME solicitors being sole practitioners compared to 3.9% of white solicitors.

*Table 11: Status of private practice solicitors in firms registered in England and Wales, by ethnicity (2015)*

Ethnicity	All in pp	% of solicitors					Total
		Partners	SPs	Associates	Assistants	Other pp	
African-Caribbean	485	19.4%	10.3%	19.4%	29.7%	21.2%	100%
Asian	7,296	23.8%	9.6%	19.7%	29.9%	16.9%	100%
Chinese	752	17.4%	4.4%	38.3%	24.7%	15.2%	100%
African	1,118	19.1%	15.2%	19.1%	26.4%	20.2%	100%
Other ethnic origin	1,984	19.7%	5.6%	30.4%	28.7%	15.7%	100%
All BAME groups	11,635	22.0%	9.2%	22.7%	29.0%	17.1%	100%
White European	70,716	33.3%	3.9%	22.7%	24.1%	16.0%	100%
Unknown	8,711	29.8%	4.2%	26.1%	20.7%	19.3%	100%
Total	91,062	31.5%	4.6%	23.1%	24.4%	16.5%	100%

Annual Statistics Report 2015



**32,851** PC holders identified as being partners or partner equivalents (2015)

**11.1%** were from BAME backgrounds

BAME solicitors were better represented at partnership level in smaller firms than in larger firms; 25.6% of sole practitioners and 17.4% of partners in 2-4 partner firms being from BAME backgrounds compared to 4.8% of partners in the largest firms (81+ partners).

14.2% of the 9,471 women partners and 9.8% of 23,380 male partners were from BAME backgrounds in 2015. BAME women made up 4.1% of all partners, 10% of all sole practices, but just 1.5% of all partners within the largest firms (81+ partners) while BAME men made up 6.9% of all partners, 15.6% of all sole practices, but just 3.3% of all partners within the largest firms (81+ partners).

*Table 12: Ethnicity of partners, by firm size (2015)*

Ethnicity	All in pp	% of partners						Total
		Sole	2-4 partners	5-10 partners	11-25 partners	26-80 partners	81+ partners	
African-Caribbean	144	1.2%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%
Asian	2,438	16.9%	12.5%	4.0%	3.5%	2.7%	2.7%	7.4%
Chinese	164	0.8%	0.8%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%
African	384	4.1%	1.9%	0.1%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%	1.2%
Other ethnic origin	501	2.7%	1.6%	1.3%	1.2%	1.0%	1.4%	1.5%
All BAME groups	3,631	25.6%	17.4%	5.9%	5.7%	4.4%	4.8%	11.1%
White European	26,261	65.6%	73.4%	87%	85.3%	86.7%	84.9%	79.9%
Unknown	2,959	8.7%	9.3%	7.1%	9.0%	8.8%	10.3%	9.0%
Total	32,851	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Law Society MI data, July 2015*



**Table 13: Women partner equivalents, by ethnicity and size of firm (2015)**

Ethnicity	All in pp	% of partners						Total
		Sole	2-4 partners	5-10 partners	11-25 partners	26-80 partners	81+ partners	
African-Caribbean	82	0.7%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Asian	834	5.8%	4.1%	1.4%	1.6%	1.1%	0.8%	2.5%
Chinese	80	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
African	151	1.8%	0.7%	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Other ethnic origin	202	1.3%	0.7%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%
All BAME groups	1,349	10.1%	6.1%	2.4%	2.5%	1.8%	1.5%	4.1%
White European	7,460	20.5%	22.7%	26.4%	24.9%	24.4%	19.4%	22.7%
Unknown	662	2.4%	2.3%	1.6%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%
Total	9,471	33.0%	31.1%	30.4%	29.2%	28.1%	22.8%	28.8%

Law Society MI data, July 2015

**Table 14: Men partner equivalents, by ethnicity and size of firm (2015)**

Ethnicity	All in pp	% of partners						Total
		Sole	2-4 partners	5-10 partners	11-25 partners	26-80 partners	81+ partners	
African-Caribbean	62	0.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Asian	1,604	11.0%	8.4%	2.6%	1.9%	1.6%	1.9%	4.9%
Chinese	84	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
African	233	2.3%	1.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.7%
Other ethnic origin	299	1.3%	1.0%	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	1.0%	0.9%
All BAME groups	2,282	15.6%	11.2%	3.6%	3.1%	2.6%	3.3%	6.9%
White European	18,801	45.1%	50.7%	60.6%	60.4%	62.4%	65.5%	57.2%
Unknown	2,297	6.4%	6.9%	5.5%	7.2%	6.9%	8.4%	7.0%
Total	23,380	67.0%	68.9%	69.6%	70.8%	71.9%	77.2%	71.2%

Law Society MI data, July 2015

An estimated 21% of the 9,403 law firms in England and Wales (1,926) in 2015 were majority owned by BAME partners (50% or more of the partners were

from BAME background), this compares to a national estimate of SME owners of 5%<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> BIS Research Paper 289. Longitudinal Small Business Survey Year 1 (2015) SME employers, May 2016, p2

## 5. RELIGION OR BELIEF

The Law Society's PC holder survey 2015 indicated that 47.1% of PC holders were Christian, 35.4% had no religion, 3.8% were Muslim, 2.3% were Jewish, 1.9% were Hindu, 1.5% were Sikh followed by 0.9% of those practising Buddhism.

Comparison with data on religious orientation in the general population from the 2011 Census<sup>6</sup>, suggests that PC holders with no religion were over-represented whereas those of Christian and Muslim religions seem to be under-represented. However, a more recent YouGov survey<sup>7</sup> suggests little difference between the views of the public and views of PC holders on this topic.

**Table 15: Religion of PC holders (2015)**

Religion	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2015)*	% of total (2015)	% of general population (Census 2011)	You Gov (2015)
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	55,368	48.7%	59.3%	49.0%
No religion	40,240	35.4%	25.1%	42.0%
Muslim	4,340	3.8%	4.8%	1.0%
Jewish	2,594	2.3%	0.5%	1.0%
Hindu	2,187	1.9%	1.5%	0.0%
Sikh	1,703	1.5%	0.8%	0.0%
Buddhist	1,060	0.9%	0.4%	1.0%
Other	2,209	1.9%	0.4%	1.0%
Prefer not to say	4,003	3.5%	7.2%	4.0%
Total	113,704	100%	100%	100%

PC Holder Survey 2015

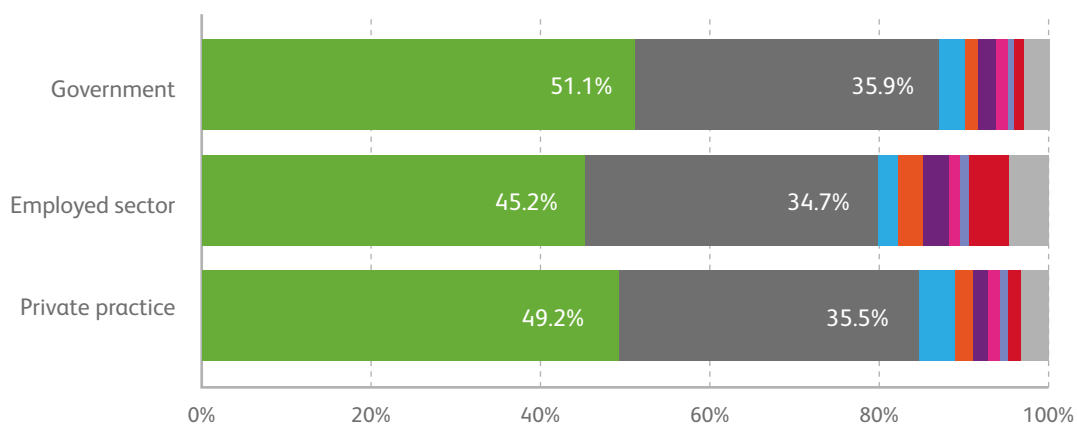
\* Estimates are based on weighted survey data

<sup>6</sup> Office for National Statistics, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/sty-religion.html> (last accessed 14.06.16)

<sup>7</sup> YouGov, <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/02/12/third-british-adults-dont-believe-higher-power/> Rounded figures.

The proportion of PC holders holding a religious belief did not vary significantly with sector of employment.

*Religion or belief, by sector*



	Government	Employed sector	Private practice
Christian	51.1%	45.2%	49.2%
No religion	35.9%	34.7%	35.5%
Muslim	3.1%	2.3%	4.2%
Jewish	1.5%	2.9%	2.2%
Hindu	2.2%	3.1%	1.7%
Sikh	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%
Buddhist	0.6%	1.1%	0.9%
Other	1.2%	4.7%	1.5%
Prefer not to say	3.1%	4.7%	3.3%

PC Holder Survey 2015

## 6. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

According to the PC Holder Survey 2015, 94.6% of PC holders were estimated to be heterosexual/straight and 2.6% were either gay, lesbians, bisexual or other (1.4% were gay men, 0.7% were gay women, 0.4% were bisexual and 0.1% other); 2.8% of PC holders preferred not to reveal this information. No significant differences were found between the reported sexual orientation and employment sector.

These findings are broadly representative of the UK population. In 2014, an Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey found that 1.9% of UK adults described themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual<sup>8</sup>. No national census has asked about sexual orientation. Stonewall suggests that the government's estimate of 5-7% of the population is a reasonable estimate of the proportion of the UK population which are lesbian, gay men or bisexual.

*Table 16: Sexual orientation of PC holders (2015)*

Sexual orientation	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2015)	% of total (2015)	% of UK population ONS 2014
Heterosexual/straight	107,594	94.6%	92.8%
Gay/lesbian	2,417	2.1%	1.1%
Bisexual	438	0.4%	0.5%
Other	117	0.1%	0.3%
Unknown/refused	3,137	2.8%	5.3%
Total	113,704	100%	100%

*PC Holder Survey 2015*

<sup>8</sup> Office for National Statistics, **Sexual orientation by country** (last accessed 14.06.2016)

## 7. DISABILITY

Around 6% of PC holders in the 2015 PC holder survey reported having a long-term illness, health problem or disability. Of these, 39.6% reported that their day-to-day activities were ‘limited a little’ and 20.4% said they were ‘limited a lot’.

Previous qualitative research on solicitors with disabilities highlighted potential for people to be reluctant to classify themselves as disabled<sup>9</sup> so the figure should be treated as a lower limit of the proportion of solicitors with long-term illness or disability. The data suggests that disabled people were under-represented in the solicitors’ profession compared with the working age population of England and Wales in general (16%<sup>10</sup>).

Solicitors with disabilities were more likely to work in the government sector than in private practice or other employed sectors. 11.3% of solicitors in government self-reported as having a disability compared to 5.5% of those working in private practice and 5.9% of those in the employed sector.

**Table 17: PC holders with an illness, health problem or disability (2015)**

Long-term illness or health problem or disability	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2015)	% of total (2015)
Yes	6,699	5.9%
No	106,392	93.6%
Unknown	613	0.5%
Total	113,704	100%

PC Holder Survey 2015

**Table 18: Impact on day-to-day activities (2015)**

Whether long-term illness or health problem or disability limits daily activities and work	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2015)	% of those with a long term illness, health problem or disability (2015)
Yes – limited a lot	1,364	20.4%
Yes – limited a little	2,651	39.6%
No	2,684	40.1%
Total	6,699	100%

PC Holder Survey 2015

<sup>9</sup> Law Society, Career Experiences of Solicitors with Disabilities, 2003, see for example P. 15-19

<sup>10</sup> Department for Work and Pensions, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-facts-and-figures/disability-facts-and-figures>

## 8. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The socio-economic background of PC holders was measured in the 2015 PC holder survey using the indicators recommended by the Legal Services Board<sup>11</sup>. These are:

- Type of secondary school attended
- First generation in family to attend university
- Eligibility for free school meals.

### Type of secondary school attended

While the proportion of solicitors having attended independent / fee-paying schools (27.4%) is much higher than in society in general (7%<sup>12</sup>), the proportion is well below estimates for professions generally.

The Sutton Trust's report *Leading People 2016*<sup>13</sup> (focusing on leaders within certain professions) reports that 71% of the top military officers in the country attended independent schools, as did 61% of top doctors, almost half of civil servants and around one-third of MPs. In relation to solicitors, the report states that 51% of partners in magic circle firms (educated in the UK), attended independent fee-paying schools. The Solicitors Regulation Authority's (SRA<sup>14</sup>) law firm data collection exercise, on which the Sutton Trust's analysis is based, reports that 29% of 'partners or equivalents' and 23% of 'solicitors and other lawyers' were educated by independent fee-paying schools.

Estimates below are from the PC holders survey, which includes solicitors at all levels (partner and non-partners) working in private practice, in-house (employed sector) and in central or local government.

A higher proportion of solicitors in private practice (27.9%) and in the employed sector (30.3%) had attended a UK independent fee-paying school, compared to 13.8% of solicitors working in central and local government.

Table 19: Type of secondary school attended (2015)

Type of secondary school attended	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2015)	% of total (2015)
UK state school	72,833	64.1%
UK independent/fee paying school	31,167	27.4%
School outside of the UK	9,452	8.3%
Prefer not to say	251	0.2%
Total	113,704	100%

PC Holder Survey 2015

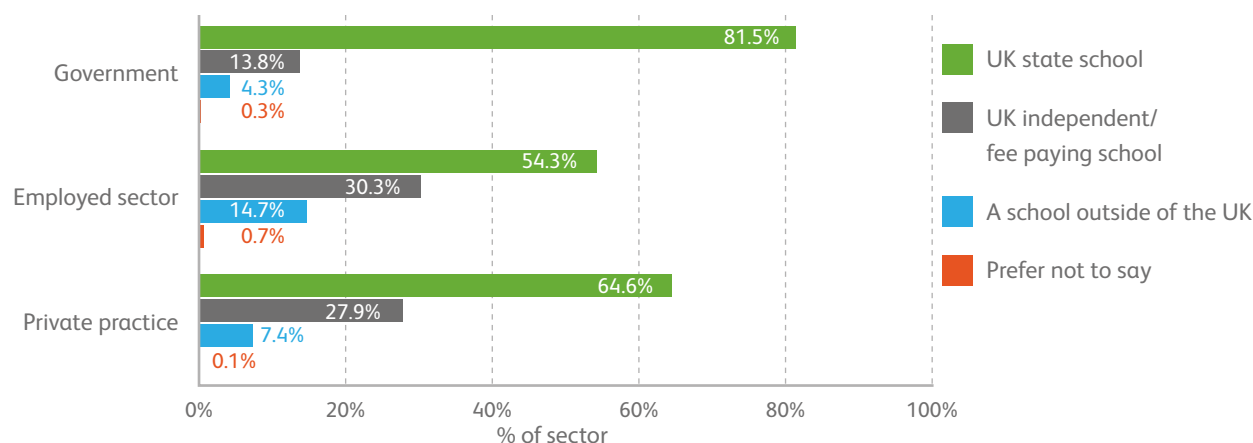
<sup>11</sup> Legal Services Board, **Increasing diversity and social mobility in the legal workforce: transparency and evidence: LSB response document & accompanying statutory guidance issued under Section 162 of the Legal Services Act 2007**, July 2011, p53 (last accessed 14.06.2016)

<sup>12</sup> The Sutton Trust, Dr P. Kirby, **'Leading People 2016 The educational backgrounds of the UK professional elite'**, February 2016, p2

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p32-33

<sup>14</sup> Solicitors Regulation Authority **'Diversity in the legal profession, Workforce data for solicitors' firms 2013/14**, May 2014

### Type of school attended by sector of employment



PC Holder Survey 2015

In private practice, type of school attended was found to be associated with private practice grade. Equity partners were more likely to have attended a UK independent / fee-paying school (38%) compared to 24% of assistant/associate solicitors and 26% of salaried partners.

### First generation in family to attend university

Just over half of solicitors in the PC Holders survey were in the first generation of their family to go to university.

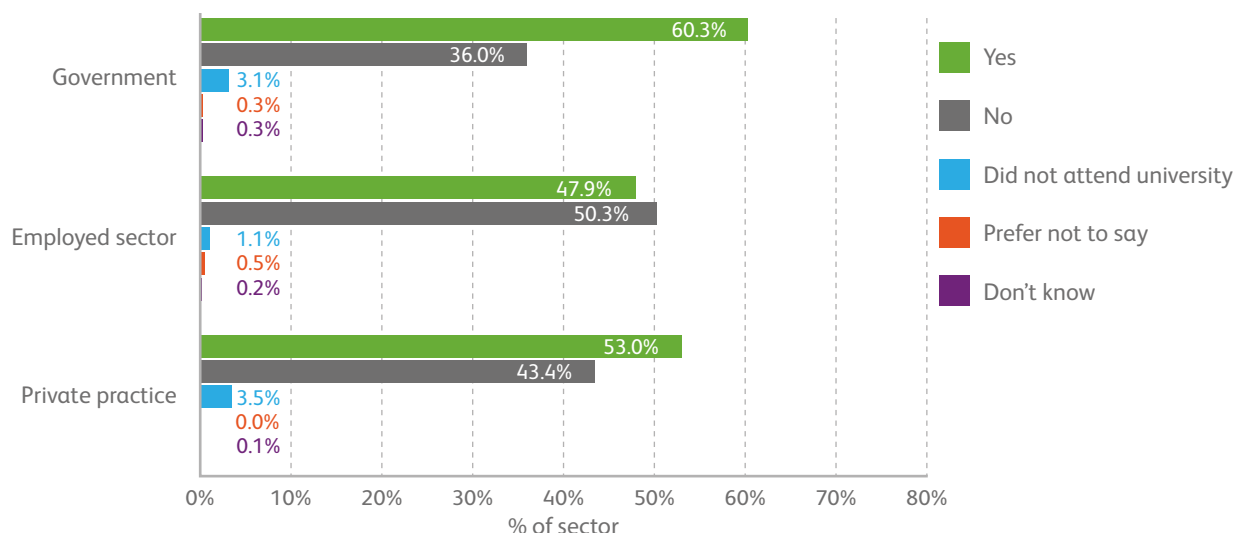
A higher proportion of solicitors working in government (60.3%) were amongst the first generation within their families to attend university compared to 53% of those in private practice or 47.9% of those in the employed sector. Within private practice, no significant association was found between private practice grade and being in the first generation to attend university.

Table 20: First generation in family to attend university (2015)

In first generation to attend university	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2015)	% of total (2015)
Yes	59,900	52.7%
No	49,976	44.0%
Did not attend university	3,558	3.1%
Prefer not to say	100	0.1%
Don't know	169	0.1%
Total	113,704	100%

PC Holder Survey 2015

### First in generation to attend university, by sector



PC Holder Survey 2015

### Eligibility for free school meals

Eligibility for free school meals has been used as another indicator of socio-economic background. As the arrangements for free school meals have not been consistent over time and there have been changes to whether this benefit has been means tested or linked to receipt of state benefits, this indicator is more helpful when applied to those who have attended schools relatively recently (within the past 20 years). Across all PC holders, around one in ten PC holders had been eligible for free school meals (11.2%).

A similar proportion of solicitors within each sector were entitled to free school meals – 11.3% of private practice, 12.5% of the employed sector and 15.1% of those working in government. Within private practice, no significant association was found between eligibility for free school meals and private practice grade.

Table 21: Eligibility for free school meals (2015)

Post qualification experience (PQE)	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2015)	% of each PQE cohort entitled to free school meals (2015)
0-9 years PQE	4,939	10.8%
10-19 years PQE	3,942	11.5%
20-29 years PQE	2,394	13.3%
30+ years PQE	1,370	9.0%
All	12,645	11.2%

PC Holder Survey 2015



## 9. CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

Almost two-fifths of PC holders (37.1%) were the primary carers (parents or legal guardians for a child or children under the age of 16), a similar proportion of men (36.4%) and women (37.8%) reported being primary carers.

One-fifth of PC holders (20.1%) provide help and support to other adults (family members, friends, neighbours or others) because of either long-term

physical or mental ill-health or problems relating to old age. A significantly higher proportion of women (21.6%) looked after or gave help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others compared to 16.7% of men.

A similar proportion of solicitors within each sector had caring responsibilities for other adults – 18.9% of private practice, 17.8% of those in the employed sector and 24.0% of those working for central or local government.

*Table 22: Caring responsibility for children (2015)*

Caring responsibilities for children	Estimated number of PC holders with caring responsibilities for children (2015)	% of total (2015)
Yes	42,191	37.1%
No	71,253	62.7%
Prefer not to say	260	0.2%
Total	113,704	100%

PC Holder Survey 2015

*Table 23: Caring responsibility for adults (2015)*

Caring responsibilities for adults	Estimated number of PC holders with caring responsibilities (other adults) (2015)	% of total (2015)
No	90,517	79.6%
Yes, 1-19 hours per week	19,418	17.1%
Yes, 20-49 hours per week	1,830	1.6%
Yes, 50 or more hours per week	383	0.3%
Yes, I offer financial support	1,229	1.1%
Prefer not to say	327	0.3%
Total	113,704	100%

PC Holder Survey 2015

## APPENDIX 1

### Methodology

Telephone interviews were conducted by PCP Market Research during May to September 2015. A response rate of 70% was achieved. Weighting has been applied to the survey data (by sector of employment, gender and by years of post-qualification experience) to ensure that data is representative of the profession on these factors.

*Table 24: Confidence intervals for the PC Holder Survey (2015)*

Sector	Population in England and Wales (July 2015*)	Sample size	Confidence interval + / - (%)
Private practice	90,074	755	3.55%
Government (central and local)	6,791	354	5.07%
In-house (includes those in commerce and industry, charities, regulators and advice agencies)	16,837	393	4.89%
All PC holders attached to an organisation	113,702	1,502	2.51%

\* Law Society MI data, July 2015 (attached to an organisation).



**70%** response rate was achieved by telephone. We would like to warmly thank members for taking part in the survey





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