

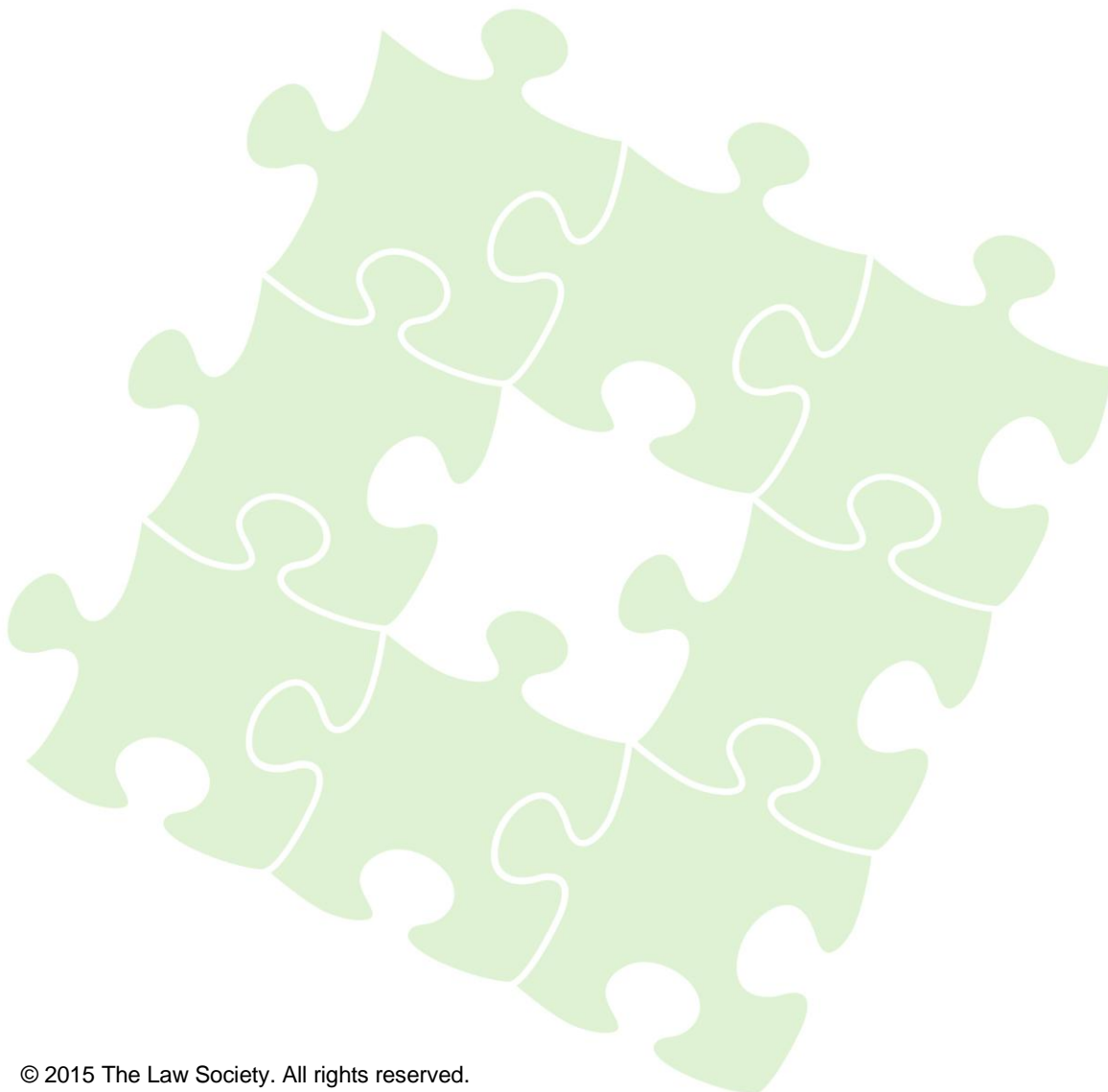


The Law Society

Diversity profile of the profession 2014

A short synopsis

June 2015



Contents

Section	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Sources of data	3
3. Diversity profile: factsheet	4
4. The size of the profession	5
5. A descriptive profile	5
6. Trends in post-graduate education	6
7. Age	7
8. Gender	7
9. Age and Gender	8
10. Ethnicity.....	9
11. Religion or belief	10
12. Sexual orientation.....	10
13. Disability.....	11
14. Socio-economic background	12
Type of secondary school attended	12
First generation of family to attend university	12
Eligibility for free school meals	14
15. Caring responsibilities	14

1. Introduction

This report highlights the most up-to-date data available on the diversity profile of solicitors holding practising certificates (PCs) in England and Wales.

2. Sources of data

The report draws data from two sources:

- The main source used for this report was the Annual Statistical Report 2014 of the Law Society's Research Unit based on the data extracted on 31 July 2014. The Annual Statistical Report 2014 is free to members on request (EnquiriesSRU@lawsociety.org.uk) or, can be purchased through the [Law Society Bookshop](#).
- The PC Holder Survey (2014) – an annual telephone survey of 1,517 randomly selected individuals from private practice, commerce and industry and government, conducted in July and September 2014. Gross weights have 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.
- Please contact Joanne Cox with any queries or comments on the report: joanne.cox@lawsociety.org.uk

3. Diversity profile: factsheet

The following table provides the key figures on seven diversity strands of the profession - gender, disability, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, belief and socio-economic background. The data on gender, age and ethnicity of practicing certificate (PC) holders were obtained from the Annual Statistical Report 2014 produced by the Law Society's Research Unit, and the data on disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and socio-economic background were collected through the Law Society's annual PC Holder Survey.

Diversity Strand		Per cent of PC holders (2014) ¹
Gender	Male	51.8%
	Female	48.2%
Disability	Disabled	4.9%
	Not disabled	94.4%
Ethnicity	African Caribbean	0.7%
	African	1.4%
	Asian	7.8%
	Chinese	1.3%
	Other ethnic group	2.5%
	White/European	77.3%
	Unknown	9.0%
Age	Under 25	0.2%
	26-30	12.2%
	31-35	19.4%
	36-40	16.8%
	41-45	14.5%
	46-50	12.3%
	51-55	9.5%
	56-60	7.3%
	61-65	4.7%
	66-70	2.3%
	71+	0.9%
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual/straight	92.0%
	Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	2.2%
Religion or belief	Buddhist	0.6%
	Christian	48.5%
	Hindu	1.7%
	Jewish	3.0%
	Muslim	2.4%
	No Religion	35.3%
	Other	2.5%
Socio-economic background	Sikhism	1.2%
	First generation in family to attend university	50.5%
	UK Independent/fee-paying school	26.6%
	Eligibility for free school meals	10.8%

¹ Figures in each diversity strand might not add up to 100 due to the exclusion from the table of such categories as 'do not know' or 'refuse to say'.

4. The size of the profession

- As at 31 July 2014, 130,382 solicitors held practising certificates, a 2.1 per cent increase on 2013 figures.
- The participation rate (the number of solicitors on the Roll holding a practising certificate) in 2014 was 81.3 per cent, a 0.8 per cent increase 2013 figures.
- Over the past thirty years, the total number of solicitors holding practice certificates has grown by 191% per cent at an average rate of 3.8 per cent.
- In 2014 there were 9,542 private practice firms registered in England and Wales employing 90,306 solicitors (69.3% of all practising certificate holders). The eleven year decline in the share of all practising solicitors working in private practice halted in 2014.
- 4,309 solicitors (3.3% of practising certificate holders) were employed by 967 foreign law firms, or were working as locums in 180 locum services.
- Over the past ten years, the proportion of practising certificate holders not employed in private practice in England and Wales has increased from 22.4 per cent to 27.4 per cent in 2014.

5. A descriptive profile

- In 2014 solicitors from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups represented 13.7 per cent of all solicitors with practising certificates, and 12.5 per cent of all solicitors in private practice.
- Women now account for 48.2 per cent of solicitors with practising certificates. Whereas since 2004 the total number of solicitors holding practising certificates has grown by 34.8 per cent, the number of women holding practising certificates has increased by 60.3 per cent.
- 76.1 per cent of men holding practising certificates work within private practice, compared to 68.8 per cent of women.
- In 2014 the average (mean) age of a male practising certificate holder was 45.6 years compared to only 39.8 years for female practising certificate holders.

- In 2014 the average age of female solicitors in private practice was 39.1 years compared with 46.0 years for men. The average age of sole practitioners was 52.4 years compared with 49.0 years for partners and 42.8 years for all solicitors in private practice.
- Two-fifths of practising certificate holders in 2014 (39.9 per cent) were employed by organisations based in London. These organisations were responsible for the employment of just under one-fifth (18%) of all BAME practising certificate holders.

6. Trends in post-graduate education

- In 2014 there were 31,800 applicants to study first degree courses in law in England and Wales, of whom 21,775 (68.5 per cent) were accepted.
- Of the 16,120 graduates in the summer of 2014, two-thirds (66.9 per cent) achieved firsts or upper second classifications. More women graduated with firsts and upper seconds than men, 68.6 per cent as opposed to 63.9 per cent.
- There were 5,001 new traineeships registered in the year 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014. This is a decrease of 5.7 per cent on the previous years figures, and a 12.4 per cent decline on 2003-04 figures.
- Of the new trainees registered, 60.8 per cent were women.
- In the year to 31 July 2014, there were 6,345 admissions to the Roll (i.e. newly qualified solicitors and transfers from other legal professions), a decrease of 6.1 per cent on admissions the year before.
- Of new admissions, 60.0 per cent were women and 40.0 per cent were men. The number of male admissions decreased from 2,767 in 2013 to 2,539 in 2014, a decrease of 8.2 per cent. Admissions from BAME groups represented 21.0 per cent of all admissions.

7. Age

The table below shows the age distribution of solicitors in five year bands. Almost two-thirds (62.8 per cent) of PC holders were between 26 and 45 years of age, 3.2 per cent were of over 65 and just 0.2 per cent were 25 or younger.

Age	Number of PC holders (2014)	Per cent of total (2014)
<=25	310	0.2%
26-30	15,898	12.2%
31-35	25,291	19.4%
36-40	21,851	16.8%
41-45	18,848	14.5%
46-50	16,082	12.3%
51-55	12,330	9.5%
56-60	9,485	7.3%
61-65	6,094	4.7%
66-70	2,987	2.3%
>=71	1,198	0.9%
Unknown	8	0.0%
All	130,382	100.0%

Annual Statistical Report 2014

8. Gender

Since 2004, the total number of solicitors with practising certificates has grown by 34.8 per cent. However, over this period the number of women solicitors with practising certificates has increased by 60.3 per cent whilst the number of men increased by only 17.3 per cent. The proportion of female solicitors holding practising certificates was 48.2 per cent at 31 July 2014 compared with 40.5 per cent in at the same point in 2003. For the past twenty years, women have accounted for over one-half of new entrants to the profession, so this proportion is set to increase for the foreseeable future.

Gender	Number of PC holders (2014)	Per cent of total (2014)
Male	67,538	51.8%
Female	62,844	48.2%
Total	130,382	100.0%

Annual Statistical Report 2014

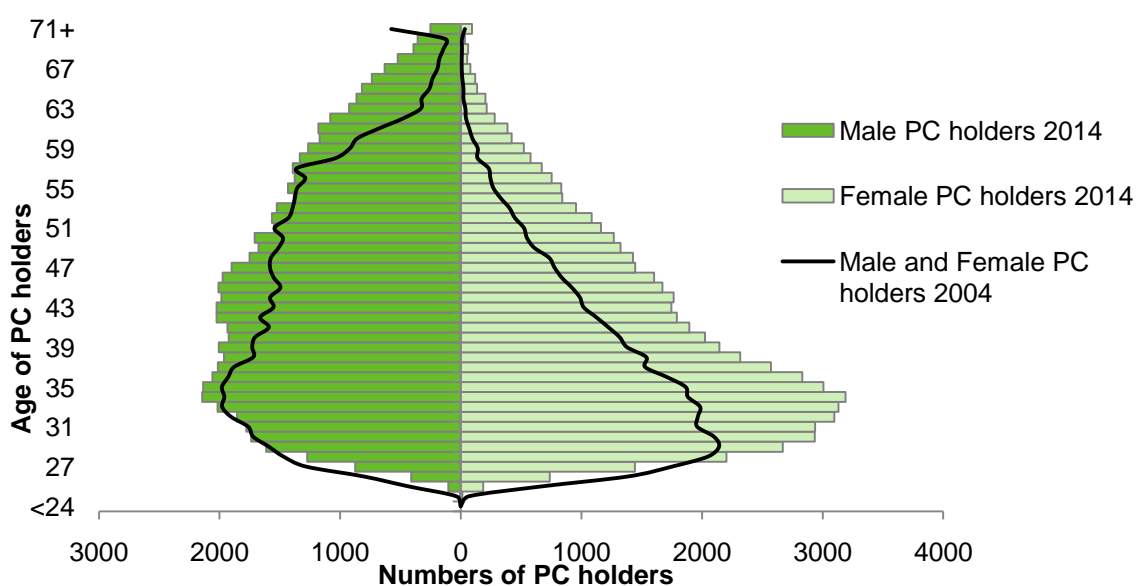
9. Age and gender

The table below shows that for those aged 35 and under there were over 1.6 female PC holders for every male PC holder; however in the older age groups male PC holders represented the majority reaching five male PC holders for every female PC holder in the group of those aged over 61. Overall, the calculation of the median age for females and males 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.

Age	Number of men with PC	Per cent of total (2014)	Number of women with PC	Per cent of total (2014)
<=25	110	0.2%	200	0.3%
26-30	5,914	8.8%	9,984	15.9%
31-35	9,931	14.7%	15,360	24.4%
36-40	9,967	14.8%	11,884	18.9%
41-45	9,982	14.8%	8,866	14.1%
46-50	9,012	13.3%	7,070	11.3%
51-55	7,457	11.0%	4,873	7.8%
56-60	6,540	9.7%	2,945	4.7%
61-65	4,874	7.2%	1,220	1.9%
66-70	2,643	3.9%	344	0.5%
>=71	1,106	1.6%	92	0.1%
Unknown	2	0.0%	6	0.0%
All known	67,536		62,838	
Total	67,538	100.0%	62,844	100.0%

Annual Statistical Report 2014

Age distribution of solicitors with practising certificates



Annual Statistical Report 2014

10. Ethnicity

The table below records the number of solicitors with practising certificates who were known to belong to a BAME group. The provision of information on ethnicity by individuals is entirely optional, and, at July 2014, was known for 91.0 per cent of practising certificate holders.

BAME solicitors were estimated to account for 13.7 per cent of solicitors with practising certificates in 2014, a small increase on the 13.1 per cent recorded in 2013. Within this total, 16.0 per cent of women solicitors were members of a BAME group compared with 11.5 per cent of men.

The proportion of PC holders belonging to a BAME group was slightly less than 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 group². This compares to 13.7 per cent of PC holders for whom ethnicity is known.

	Men	Women	Total	Per cent of total (2014)
Ethnic origin				
White European	52,813	47,953	100,766	77.3%
African-Caribbean	253	653	906	0.7%
Asian	4,733	5,456	10,189	7.8%
Chinese	634	1,046	1,680	1.3%
African	816	1,043	1,859	1.4%
Other ethnic origin	1,330	1,867	3,197	2.5%
All solicitors for whom ethnic origin is known	60,579	58,018	118,597	91.0%
All practising certificate holders from minority ethnic groups known	7,766	10,065	17,831	
% of all solicitors with practising certificates from BAME	11.5%	16.0%	13.7%	
Unknown	6,959	4,826	11,785	9.0%
Total practising certificate holders	67,538	62,844	130,382	100.0%

Annual Statistical Report 2014

² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-378640> at BD0076 Economic Activity by ethnicity, sex and age (England and Wales tab) (last accessed 15.06.15)

11. Religion or belief

The Law Society's PC holder survey 2014 indicated that 48.5 per cent of PC holders were Christian, 35.3 per cent had no religion, 3.0 per cent were Jewish, 2.4 per cent were Muslim, 1.7 per cent were Hindu, 1.2 per cent - Sikh followed by 0.6 per cent of those practicing Buddhism.

The most accurate data on religion in the population in general are available from the Census in England and Wales 2011³. As seen from the table, PC holders with no religion were significantly over-represented compared with the population in general whereas those of Christian and Muslim religions were under-represented within the solicitor profession.

	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2014)*	Per cent of total (2014)	Per cent of general population (2011)
Christian (all denominations)	58,234	48.5%	59.3%
No religion	42,399	35.3%	25.1%
Jewish	3,596	3.0%	0.5%
Muslim	2,892	2.4%	4.8%
Hindu	2,038	1.7%	1.5%
Sikh	1,483	1.2%	0.8%
Buddhist	764	0.6%	0.4%
Other	3,017	2.5%	0.4%
Prefer not to say	5,536	4.6%	7.2%
Total	119,959	100.0%	100.0%

* PC Holder Survey 2014 (responses weighted (grossed) by sector of employment, gender and PQE for those PC Holders attached to an organisation)

³ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/sty-religion.html> (last accessed 15.06.15)

12. Sexual orientation

According to the PC Holder Survey 2014, nine in ten (92.0 per cent) PC holders were heterosexual/straight, 1.3 per cent were gay men, 0.7 per cent - gay women, 0.1 per cent were bisexual and 5.9 per cent of private certificate holders preferred not to reveal this information.

These findings were broadly representative of the population of the UK. In 2012, an Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey found that 1.8% of UK adults described themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual⁴. No national census has asked about sexual orientation. Stonewall suggests that the governments 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.

	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2014)	Per cent of total (2014)
Bisexual	157	0.1%
Gay man	1,545	1.3%
Gay woman / lesbian	787	0.7%
Heterosexual / straight	110,335	92.0%
Other	66	0.1%
Prefer not to say	7,070	5.9%
Total	119,959	100%

2014 PC Holder Survey

⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/integrated-household-survey/integrated-household-survey/january-to-december-2012/info-sexual-identity.html> (last accessed 24.06.15)

13. Disability

In 2014 around 11.9 per cent of the working age population (16-64 years) in England and Wales⁵, or 12.2 per cent of those in employment in the UK were disabled⁶. This estimate of the proportion of people with disability covers both DDA disabled (someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities⁷) and those work-limiting disabled.

Around five per cent of PC holders in the 2014 PC holder survey reported having a long-term illness, health problem or disability. Of these, 41.3 per cent reported that they were 'limited a little' and 29.8 per cent said they were 'limited a lot'.

Since some solicitors consider this information sensitive⁸, this figure should be treated as a lower limit of the proportion of solicitors with long-term illness or disability. Nonetheless, the data at hand suggests that disabled people were under represented in the solicitors' profession compared with the working age population of England and Wales in general.

Long-term illness or health problem or disability	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2014)	Per cent of total (2014)
Yes	5,843	4.9%
No	113,184	94.4%
Unknown	932	0.8%
Total	119,959	100.0%

2014 PC Holder Survey

	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation-2014	% of those with a long term illness, health problem or disability (2014)
Yes - limited a lot	1,744	29.8%
Yes - limited a little	2,413	41.3%
Unknown	20	0.3%
No	1,666	28.5%
Total	5,843	100.0%

2014 PC Holder Survey

⁵ Annual Population Survey, April 2012 to March 2013 (worksheet 2-Social Indicators) accessed through ONS website <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-337674> (last accessed 15.06.15)

⁶ A08: Labour market status of disabled people (July-September 2014) (last updated May 2013) Office for National Statistics Website <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=Labour+force+survey+%2B+disability> (last accessed 15.06.15)

⁷ Definition cited in the Equality Act 2010, which substituted the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

⁸ Career Experiences of Solicitors with Disabilities, The Law Society, 2003, see for example P. 15-19

14. Socio-economic background

The socio-economic background of PC holders was measured in the 2014 PC holder survey using the indicators recommended by the Legal Services Board⁹.

Type of secondary school attended

While the proportion of solicitors having attended independent or public schools (26.6 per cent) suggested that solicitors were over-represented compared to school age population (seven per cent¹⁰), the actual figure fell well below estimates for the professions generally and previous estimates in relation to solicitors (55 per cent)¹¹.

	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation 2014	Per cent of total (2014)
UK State School	76,953	64.1%
UK Independent/ Fee paying school	31,850	26.6%
School outside of the UK	10,254	8.5%
Prefer not to say	902	0.8%
Total	119,959	100.0%

2014 PC Holder Survey

First generation in family to attend university

Half of solicitors in the PC holders survey were in the first generation of their family to go to university.

	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation (2014)	Per cent of total (2014)
Yes	60,625	50.5%
No	55,949	46.6%
Did not attend university	2,745	2.3%
Prefer not to say	314	0.3%
Don't know	326	0.3%
Total	119,959	100.0%

2014 PC Holder Survey

⁹ 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, Legal Services Board, July 2011, p53
http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/what_we_do/consultations/closed/pdf/decision_document_diversity_and_social_mobility_final.pdf (last accessed 22.06.2015)

¹⁰ Department for Education, Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2015, National Tables SFR16/2015 (Table 2a) at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2015>

¹¹ Sutton Trust Submission to the Milburn Commission 'The Educational Backgrounds of Leading Lawyers, Journalists, Vice Chancellors, Politicians, Medics and Chief Executives', March 2009, p3
http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/ST_MilburnSubmission.pdf (last accessed 24.06.2015)

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 has not been consistent over time, there have been changes in relation to whether this benefit has been means tested or linked to receipt of state benefit, this indicator is considered more helpful in relation to those who have attended schools relatively recently. Across all PC holders, around one in ten PC holders had been eligible for free school meals (10.8 per cent). This compares to 16.3% of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals in 2014¹².

Post qualification experience (PQE) cohort	Estimated number of PC holders entitled to free school meals (2014)	Per cent of each PQE cohort entitled to free school meals (2014)
0-9 years PQE	4,909	10.0%
10-19 years PQE	4,158	10.9%
20-29 years PQE	2,382	13.4%
30+ years PQE	1,499	10.2%
Total	12,948	10.8%

2014 PC Holder Survey

15. Caring responsibilities

Just over one-quarter of PC holders (29.4 per cent) were the primary carers for a child or children under the age of eighteen, and 19.2 percent of PC holders gave help and support to other adults (family members, friends, neighbours or others).

	Estimated number of PC holders with caring responsibilities for children (2014)	Per cent of total (2014)
Yes	35,285	29.4%
No	83,974	70.0%
Prefer not to say	700	0.6%
Total	119,959	100.0%

2014 PC Holder Survey

	Estimated number of PC holders with caring responsibilities (other adults) (2014)	Per cent of total (2014)
No	96,230	80.2%
Yes, 1-19 hours a week	21,130	17.6%
Yes 20-49 hours a week	1,082	0.9%
Yes, 50 or more hours a week	846	0.7%
Prefer not to say	671	0.6%
Total	119,959	100.0%

2014 PC Holder Survey

¹² Department for Health 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics': Jan 2015 Ref:SFR16/2015 p6 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/433680/SFR16_2015_Main_Text.pdf (last accessed 24.06.2015)