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**Thematic study of compliance with Principle 9:
encouraging equality of opportunity and respect
for diversity**

Report
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Introduction

1. With the introduction of the SRA Handbook at the end of 2011 and our move to outcomes-focused regulation, we introduced 10 mandatory [principles](#) for the profession. The principles embody the key ethical requirements on firms and individuals who are involved in the provision of legal services.
2. Principle 9 requires the regulated population to "run your business or carry out your role in the business in a way that encourages equality of opportunity and respect for diversity" and is supported by five equality and diversity outcomes set out in [chapter 2](#) of the Code of Conduct in the SRA Handbook.
3. In the latter part of 2012, we carried out thematic supervision visits with firms to find out what arrangements they had in place to meet Principle 9. As we only visited 90 firms, the findings are not statistically representative of all firms regulated by the SRA but indicate broad trends.
4. Also part of the supervision visits, was a review of how firms were responding to the new requirement to comply with the workforce diversity data survey we conducted in the latter half of 2012. This was a new requirement on firms, introduced to meet the Legal Services Board's expectations and designed to promote transparency and ultimately to increase diversity and social mobility in the legal workforce. We see this as an integral part of compliance with Principle 9 and the supervision visits were an ideal opportunity to engage with firms about the new requirements.

Key findings and conclusions

5. We are grateful to the 90 firms we visited as part of this thematic review of compliance with Principle 9 to 'encourage equality of opportunity and respect for diversity'. The visits have given us a good understanding of what is working well and some of the challenges faced by firms large and small.
6. We met with a wide range of firms which provided an equally wide range of responses. Their experiences are set out in case study boxes throughout the report, illustrating how they are meeting the outcomes in chapter 2 of the Code of Conduct. These outcomes cover: arrangements to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination, providing services to clients in a way that respects diversity, providing reasonable adjustments to disabled staff and clients, arrangements for recruitment and employment and dealing with complaints of discrimination.
7. The best examples came from firms which were proactive in identifying the equality and diversity issues relevant for their firm and had thought ahead about the needs of their clients. Apart from the regulatory and legal imperatives, firms were driven by a range of factors - the desire to recruit and retain the best staff, to ensure that individual clients were well served, or to market their services and attract new business. In several cases it was the clients themselves who were driving the firms to promote equality and diversity.

8. Whatever the driver, the proactive firms, whether large or small, were better able to demonstrate how they were meeting the outcomes. For example:
 - firms which had incorporated an equality and diversity policy and approach relevant to their firm which complemented their culture rather than adopting a stand alone policy that had not been updated;
 - firms which were thinking ahead and monitoring their progress - from a large firm commissioning research to understand diversity trends apparent from their partner appointments, to a small firm which had observed changes in the diversity of their clients and prepared staff by offering language training and raising cultural awareness about these new communities;
 - firms which were actively seeking feedback from their clients and encouraged their staff to raise concerns and had and learnt from any complaints raised, may be performing better than firms which had less engagement and no complaints.
9. In our conclusion, we identified four themes that had emerged from the visits leading to some actions for both the profession and for us as the regulator.
 - Understanding expectations - we will review the outcomes and indicative behaviours in chapter 2 of the Code of Conduct to help firms better understand our expectations, and to make it clear how the new requirement to collect workforce diversity data fits with Principle 9 and outcomes-focused regulation.
 - Proactive compliance and monitoring progress - firms will need to be more proactive in their approach to equality and diversity. Compliance with Principle 9 requires more than an equality and diversity policy and no proven complaints of discrimination. The SRA won't be prescriptive, but firms will be expected to have a clear strategy for managing the risks in this area and should monitor their progress and set targets for improvement. The approach need not be complex, nor overambitious as long as there is demonstrable evidence that a firm has identified how they are going to achieve compliance with Principle 9 and is implementing that plan in a proportionate way.
 - Guidance and good practice - we will provide guidance on the new workforce diversity data arrangements and raise awareness of the guidance available to support firms in this area from the Law Society and others.
 - Enforcing non compliance - we will continue to take reports of discrimination seriously and will take a robust approach to enforcement where appropriate. To help us develop our risk based approach in this are, we will monitor the incidence and outcome of discrimination reports brought to our attention.

Why select equality and diversity as a theme

10. In this section we have set out the context for this thematic work and why we selected equality and diversity as a theme.

Regulating equality and diversity

11. In recognition of our regulatory objectives, one of the [objectives](#) in our Equality Framework, published in July 2011, is encouraging a diverse profession. One of the ways we have been seeking to achieve this is by working with firms to promote understanding of how they might meet the equality and diversity outcomes set out in chapter 2 of the new Code of Conduct.
12. Before the SRA Handbook in October 2011, equality and diversity was regulated by rule 6 in the old code of conduct. Our approach at that time was largely reactive, driven by individual reports received about discrimination. Our monitoring of rule 6 suggested that only a small percentage of reports resulted in formal regulatory action. Of 139 reports alleging discrimination received in 2010 there were only 8 matters upheld by formal regulatory decisions. Our rule based approach meant we only took action in those cases where we could establish there had been discrimination or where the firm did not have an equal opportunities policy (which was a specific requirement under rule 6). There was limited scope for promoting improvement in equality and diversity across the profession through this reactive approach to enforcement of the old rule based regulations.
13. There is evidence to suggest that the relatively low incidence of rule 6 reports does not mean that equality and diversity is fully embedded in the profession. A number of concerns have been expressed by individuals within the profession and by consumers, for example:
- the Law Society's published [research](#) illustrates some of the career barriers faced by solicitors, in particular women, solicitors from a Black Minority Ethnic background (BME) and lesbian, gay and bisexual solicitors,
 - the diversity profile of the profession illustrates under representation of some groups at partner level and concentration of other groups in certain firms types or areas of law,¹
 - access to the profession itself is an issue which the Legal and Education Training Review (LETR) is seeking to address,

¹ See the Diversity League Tables produced by the Black Solicitors Network (BSN) at www.blacksolicitorsnetwork.co.uk/diversity-league-table and the Law Society's annual report on trends in the profession at www.lawsociety.org.uk/representation/research-trends/annual-statistical-reports.

- the difficulties in seeking legal services experienced by consumers with hearing loss are summarised by [research](#) commissioned by the SRA.
14. Our move to outcomes-focused regulation provides an ideal opportunity for us to be more creative in working with the profession to promote good practice, looking at the way firms are managing their risks in this area. The approach will be different for each firm, depending on its size, location and differences in its work and client base, although each firm will have to demonstrate it is meeting the equality and diversity outcomes. Our new approach to regulation will not involve any dilution of protection for either clients or individuals working within the profession, as the SRA will still take legal and enforcement action where appropriate.
 15. The Law Society is actively supporting the profession to improve its equality and diversity outcomes through various initiatives, such as the Diversity and Inclusion Charter and its publication of best practice and guidance.² We hope that the recommendations from this report will complement the Law Society's work and offer firms practical guidance to help them demonstrate compliance with Principle 9.

The new workforce diversity data regulations

16. One of the reasons we chose to undertake the supervision visits at this time was because of the Legal Services Board's new requirement for firms to collect workforce diversity data. We see this as an integral part of a firm's compliance with Principle 9 and diversity monitoring is one of the indicative behaviours in chapter 2.
17. We implemented the requirement in 2012 by conducting a diversity survey of the workforce of the whole firm population. We contacted all firms at the end of July 2012, asking them to confirm how many people worked at the firm to provide a baseline of how many people we could expect to hear from in response to the survey. When they responded, we gave them access to an online diversity questionnaire and asked them to circulate the link to all staff. For some firms it was the first time they had carried out any diversity monitoring of their staff.
18. The workforce diversity data will be one of the annual regulatory reporting requirements on firms going forward. We will be reporting the aggregate diversity data collected from the profession for 2012 in a separate report.
19. At the supervision visits, we took the opportunity to talk to firms about their experience of the 2012 diversity survey and have taken on board their comments in planning the arrangements for 2013.

² See the Law Society's website at www.lawsociety.org.uk/communities/equality-diversity.

What we did

The SRA Supervision function

20. The SRA's Supervision function performs risk based engagement with the regulated community. The risks we assess are those associated with meeting our regulatory objectives.
21. One of the supervisory tools available to us as part of our [new approach to supervision](#) is to look at risks and issues on a thematic basis. This approach helps us assess risks which could have a material impact on the legal market and/or consumers. The thematic review helps us build up an evidence base taken from the experiences of a randomly selected group of firms.
22. The thematic review of Principle 9 was designed and implemented jointly between Supervision and the SRA's Diversity and Inclusion team.

Supervision visits

23. SRA supervision staff arranged visits with 90 firms most of which took place between September and December 2012. On a number of visits, supervisors were accompanied by a member of the Diversity and Inclusion team. The visits were pre-arranged with the firms and prior to the visit supervisors contacted the firms to explain the purpose of the visit and asked them to nominate a member of staff with sufficient seniority to discuss equality and diversity issues with the SRA's representatives on behalf of the firm.
24. Before the visit, each firm was provided with a copy of the standard questionnaire that would be used by the supervisors on the day. The questionnaire is set out in **Appendix 1**. The questions focus on each of the five outcomes specified in chapter 2 of the Code of Conduct and helped to guide the dialogue we had with firms at the visit. As there is considerable overlap across these outcomes, it became apparent during the visits, that we would not be able to pursue a rigid approach to the questionnaire, but we covered all five outcomes in every visit.
25. We also asked the firms to provide a range of documents including their equality and diversity policy.

Which firms did we visit, and why?

26. The firms we visited were selected at random using a system that allowed us to ensure that we had an even spread of firms from different parts of England and Wales, firms of different sizes (measured by the number of partners) and firms which represented a range of people with the diversity characteristics of ethnicity, gender and age.

27. A number of firms in the original sample were not included in the exercise, because they were closing or were regulated entities which were not trading or for other reasons. We topped up the original sample with a small number of firms that we knew had complaints of discrimination recorded against them. The final sample included 90 firms.
 28. In **Appendix 2**, we have included tables setting out a profile of the 90 firms which participated in the exercise, showing size, diversity (ethnicity, gender and age) and location.
 29. The findings from each firm were then brought together, and we have identified key themes across the whole group of firms. We have set out our findings under each of the five outcomes specified in chapter 2 of the Code of Conduct:
 - arrangements to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination (Outcome 2.1);
 - providing services to clients in a way that respects diversity (Outcome 2.2);
 - providing reasonable adjustments to disabled staff and clients (Outcome 2.3);
 - arrangements for recruitment and employment (Outcome 2.4); and
 - dealing with complaints of discrimination (Outcome 2.5).
-

What we found

30. This section of the report sets out what firms are doing to meet each of the five outcomes. We have also commented on what appears to be working well and the challenges faced in meeting the five outcomes.
31. Given the nature of the thematic supervision review and the size of the group, our findings will not represent the experiences of the whole firm population and even within the sample group, the findings are not statistically representative. However, we have made some observations on the differences in approach that were apparent in firms of different sizes.
32. In addition to the five outcomes, we talked to firms about the SRA's workforce diversity data survey in 2012 and more generally about equality and diversity issues in the profession and the SRA's role as a regulator in this area.
33. Most of the firms had not encountered any significant problems in complying with the diversity survey, although it was clear that many remained unconvinced of its value. We have taken into account the feedback provided by the firms in designing our approach to the workforce data collection requirements in 2013. More about the views and experience of firms is included in the report setting out the workforce data for 2012, so we will not be reporting the comments in detail here.

34. A small number of firms provided interesting observations about equality and diversity in the profession and about the SRA's role in regulating this area. Discussions often strayed into other areas of regulatory activity, such as the practicing certificate renewal process, the compliance officer application and approval process and outcomes-focused regulation in general. Although the visits provided a welcome opportunity to engage with firms about these other important issues, we have focused on the chapter 2 outcomes in writing up this report.

Outcome (2.1) You do not discriminate unlawfully, or victimise or harass anyone, in the course of your professional dealings

35. Under this outcome we look at what arrangements firms have in place to make sure they do not discriminate unlawfully, victimise or harass. We present an account of what firms reported on their policies and culture, equality and diversity training and other diversity initiatives.

What are firms doing to meet this outcome?

Policies and culture

36. Although there is no longer an express requirement to have an equality and diversity policy, as there was under the old rules, it is one of the indicative behaviours referred to in chapter 2 of the Handbook. Almost all firms had an equality and diversity policy. In most cases, equality and diversity policies were stand alone documents, however, a small number of firms had equality and diversity statements or policies that were part of their staff or office handbook.
37. Some firms, typically the medium and larger ones had a number of detailed policies which covered equality and diversity, including policies about bullying and harassment, and recruitment policies which expressly covered equality and diversity.
38. Some firms also included equality and diversity statements or commitments in their client care letters. Others were Lexcel accredited and had included equality and diversity in their policies and procedures to meet the Lexcel standard.³

³ Lexcel is the Law Society's international practice management standard. It is a scheme for any type of practice to certify that certain standards have been met following independent assessment. Practices are currently required to have a policy on the avoidance of discrimination and the promotion of equality and diversity, which must include: employment and partnership, recruitment and selection, training and conditions of service and promotions within the practice; the delivery of service; the instruction of counsel and experts in all professional dealings; a procedure to deal with complaints and disciplinary issues in breach of the policy; a procedure to monitor diversity; training of all personnel on compliance with equality and diversity requirements; the person responsible for the policy; and a procedure for an annual review of the policy, to verify it is in effective operation across the practice.

Case study box: detailed and comprehensive policies

Firm A: One firm had substantial reference to equality and diversity issues throughout the manual, even down to the guidance given regarding the receipt of an offensive email. The firm had an equality and diversity action plan for 2012/13 which highlighted the steps they were taking to implement the findings from their staff diversity survey.

Firm B: Another large firm had a comprehensive set of policies on equality and diversity and clear objectives across the firm which helped to maintain momentum on embedding equality and diversity through a range of initiatives. They had a partner sponsoring each area of diversity and networking groups which were popular with staff.

39. A minority of firms reported that they did not have an equality and diversity policy or any formal arrangements in place to demonstrate commitment to equality and diversity. These were mainly sole practitioners or smaller firms, who stated that they dealt with issues as and when they occurred and this worked for them, as the staff in the firm know each other well enough to discuss issues openly.
40. Some firms told us that it was only in preparation for the visit they had put a policy in place or reviewed and updated old policies. Others had out of date policies which referred to obsolete legislation and contained sections that were no longer relevant and required updating.

Case study box: lack of formal equality and diversity policies and/or procedures

Firm C: One sole practice with few staff and a low staff turnover, admitted they had only given limited consideration to equality and diversity. Before the SRA visit, they had no written policy documents in place and described an informal and casual approach to equality and diversity. After discussing the issues with the SRA Supervisor, the firm recognised that they do have vulnerable clients from time to time who may have particular requirements which need to be taken into consideration and an equality and diversity policy could help with this.

Firm D: Another sole practitioner with only three fee earning staff, acknowledged they were not proactive in promoting equality and diversity at the firm but would deal with any concerns as they arose.

Firm E: One firm had appointed a consultant to draft a policy just before we arrived - it was well drafted, up to date and had an action plan for implementation. The firm had been concerned about the visit and keen to be compliant and felt they had benefitted from being able to discuss this area in the context of a thematic review. Although a small firm, they were keen to make sure they kept up the momentum and implemented their new policy.

41. The majority of firms said they have embedded equality and diversity into their firm culture with some firms stating that they have a 'zero tolerance policy' in relation to discrimination and unfair treatment. Most were confident that their staff knew discrimination was unacceptable.

Training and other diversity initiatives

42. Most firms were committed to training their staff on equality and diversity. Popular methods included online training, podcasts, webinars, training with specialist charities/organisations and working groups or forums. Where equality and diversity policies and procedures existed, they were communicated to staff, usually as part of an induction process.
43. Some of the larger firms were members of the Law Society's [Diversity and Inclusion Charter](#) and had well developed equality and diversity initiatives, a few had applied for recognised diversity accreditation and some had won awards for good practice. Some of these larger firms were collecting workforce diversity data, monitoring their diversity policies and taking action to understand or address under representation.

Case study box: training and other diversity initiatives

Firm F: One of the visited firms had a strong commitment to equality and diversity with well documented policies and procedures. This firm holds regular “inset days” where open discussions take place and fee earners receive training which includes equality and diversity.

Firm G: One medium sized general practice had found a really effective way of monitoring whether staff understood their various policies and initiatives and how they were implementing them. The firm's client care team, staffed by non lawyer managers and other practice management professionals, held detailed face to face quarterly meetings with each department at the firm. These meetings involved staff from their branch offices and were used to identify management issues, feedback messages about new policies or changes in the law and spot check various matters, from resolving client complaints to dealing with staff flexible working requests. This allowed the team to assess how each department was being run and gave the department an opportunity discuss management issues. The meetings had been set up originally to address client care issues but had proved to be an effective forum for implementing and monitoring a wide range of management issues, including diversity.

Firm H: One large firm had identified from their diversity monitoring a downward trend in their appointment of women partners and had commissioned external researchers to help them understand why this might be the case. They had also been developing career paths for female staff.

What works well?

44. Firms which had drafted their own policies that were tailor made for their firms found them much more useful. On the other hand, firms relying on standard or precedent policies which had not been adapted or were out of date, are at risk of failing to comply with their regulatory and legal obligations.
45. Some larger firms had a systematic approach to dealing with equality and diversity issues, while smaller firms often relied on a more informal approach. We recognise that firms need to select the approach which best suits their business and do not expect all firms to take a sophisticated formal approach.

However, one factor that seemed to be working well for firms, regardless of size, was taking a more proactive approach, rather than just dealing with issues as they arise. The case studies in this section illustrate how some firms were raising awareness in their firms by embedding equality and diversity into their wider practice management activities, such as training, client care monitoring and business planning.

What challenges are faced?

46. Firms recognise the importance of dedicating time to equality and diversity, however, some were concerned about the amount of time required to formulate and communicate policies and keep up with legislative changes which ultimately cut into fee earning time. These firms felt they would benefit from access to information and updates that were easy to understand and digest.
47. In some cases, firms reported that although they have policies and procedures in place, one challenge was getting staff members to actively engage in the issues. One firm said they had set up a staff forum, made time during the working day for them to meet, and staff had selected their own representatives. However, the firm found it really difficult to breathe life into the forum and often it was the managing partner or practice manager who had to set the agenda and prompt discussion. The firm genuinely wanted to involve staff in some of their decisions and felt their input would be helpful, but were frustrated that staff appeared not to be forthcoming.
48. Monitoring staff understanding and the effectiveness of their policies was flagged as an issue for some firms. In some cases, employees were asked to read their equality and diversity policy and sign a declaration form to say they had read and understood the policy. However, it was unclear whether this approach was effective.

Outcome (2.2) You provide services to clients in a way that respects diversity

49. Under this outcome we look at how the firm makes sure they are providing their services in a way that meets the diverse needs of their clients. We have broken the section down into what firms reported they are doing in relation to marketing, advertising, and adjusting to individual client requirements.

What are firms doing to meet this outcome?

Marketing, advertising and services offered to clients

50. Most firms had a website, and some had leaflets and web content available in different languages to reflect local demographics and their client base. Firms also carried out advertising campaigns in different languages and had signs translated into different languages displayed in their office.
51. Just under half of the firms that took part in the review highlighted that they offer some form of translation/interpretation service for their clients. In some cases, staff members were used to provide translations for clients. Where this was not possible firms used professional translation companies at no extra charge to the clients.

52. Some of the high street firms emphasised the importance of maintaining links with the local area to help understand the needs of local communities. Other larger firms were driven by the international dimension of their practices.

Case study box: knowing your community

Firm I: One firm which acts entirely in immigration matters had historically had a lot of clients of Zimbabwean and South African origin. They have recently been getting more clients of Nigerian, Jamaican and Eastern European origin as the firm have taken on solicitors with links in these communities. The local area has a high number of Asian residents and the firm are aware they are under represented within their client base. In view of this they are considering placing adverts at the local Mosque.

Firm J: One firm was proactive in thinking about the needs of its diverse client base. Having identified 40 to 45% of its clients as Eastern European (Polish/Latvian), the firm was raising awareness among fee earners of these communities. This involved teaching staff Polish and adapting their communication and approach to clients from these communities to ensure they were culturally sensitive.

Firm K: One large international firm spoke of the importance that some of their American clients placed on diversity and how they were required to satisfy these clients that they were delivering equality and diversity. Clients from other jurisdictions had less of an emphasis on diversity and the firm had to cater for the different markets in which they were operating.

Firm L: Another firm, based in a large multicultural city, marketed its personal approach to clients and was actively engaged with diverse groups in the city to ensure they were providing tailored and accessible services. The firm offered legal surgeries at Pride⁴ and other community events and have translated some of their publications in other languages. This firm has also found that its investment into various community based activities has brought rewards; for example, the work they have done with Chinese community groups has brought them increased commercial work

53. Clients can be a driver for adopting and promoting good equality and diversity practices.

⁴ Pride events celebrate the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender culture.

Case study box: driven by clients demands

Firm M: One large firm explained how they were required to report diversity data on a quarterly basis to some of their larger clients and they were often required to respond to searching diversity questions when responding to tenders.

Firm N: Another firm told us how they were driven by their public sector client base to make sure they were up to speed on equality and diversity. The firm acted for a number of public authorities such as fire and police authorities and local authorities all of whom are themselves bound by the public sector equality duty. This firm had regular meetings with these clients to review their work and discuss various issues and these meetings would also cover equality and diversity. This firm reported that these clients have 'zero tolerance' on equality and diversity which kept them on their toes. Overall, this firm was proactive in its approach to equality and diversity and were convinced of the sound commercial and business reasons for this. For this firm, getting it wrong could involve losing valuable clients and damage to their reputation.

Responding to individual client requirements

54. Some firms stated that they carried out formal risk assessments with new clients which allowed them to pick up any cultural sensitivities or specific needs at the outset. Whilst never condoning discriminatory instructions from clients, one or two firms talked about how they dealt with clients who expressed a preference for solicitors or barristers of a particular gender. One firm explained how the relationship of trust that they built with their clients meant they were able to overcome any reservations their clients might express, by emphasising the skills and expertise of the barristers suggested. Another firm carried out a careful risk assessment and on one occasion decided that their distressed female client would be better able to relate to a female solicitor at the firm.
55. On opening files one particular firm considered any special needs or wishes of the client and where appropriate places a physical flag (sticker) on the front of the client file to indicate the relevant information, thereby acting as a reminder for the fee earner and any subsequent assistants or support staff. A flag was also placed on billing information, where clients were financially vulnerable.

What works well?

56. Many firms had some links with the community where they were based and although they may have been driven by the marketing opportunities presented by attending and/or sponsoring community events, the engagement appeared to be helping firms appreciate and respect the diversity of their client base. For some this was also seen as a commercial necessity for attracting new clients and giving them a good service and this was the case for small firms as well as the larger ones.
57. Firms appeared to be adept at providing translation for their clients where needed. Those that did not have arrangements in place were learning as they went along. Having to respond to a particular client who has difficulty communicating in English, leads the firm to develop expertise and seek solutions which they then draw on for other clients in the same position. Most

firms told us they had dealt with clients speaking English as a second language and had managed with the help of the client's friends or relatives, with translators or with the help of employees in the firm who spoke other languages.

What challenges are faced?

58. A majority of firms found it difficult to answer questions about whether they were delivering their services to a diverse client population. Whilst many firms knew the diversity profile of the area where their firms were located in broad terms, only very few knew the diversity profile of their client base. It was therefore difficult for firms to know if they were reaching all sectors of the local community. This was a particular challenge for high street firms but less so for the more commercial practices.
59. In the visits where this was discussed, firms were not comfortable with the idea of any sort of diversity monitoring for clients and many firms responded by confirming they did not turn any clients away, that they were 'colour blind'. It appeared to be a challenge for most firms to say with any degree of accuracy whether they were serving a diverse range of clients.
60. Most firms responded to these questions by explaining the facilities and arrangements they had for disabled clients or clients who had difficulty getting in to the office, but very few demonstrated any awareness of whether they were attracting other groups, such as younger clients, female clients or clients from different ethnic groups. Very few had thought about how 'accessible' they might be to people from different diversity groups or how they might make themselves more 'accessible' or welcoming to these groups.
61. One of the reasons why it may have been more difficult for firms to answer the questions about outcome 2.2 was because there is no explanation of what respecting diversity means in practice.

Outcome (2.3) You make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled clients, employees or managers are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled, and you do not pass on the costs of these adjustments to these disabled clients, employees or managers

62. Under this outcome we look at the requirement in the Equality Act 2010⁵ that all employers and service providers provide reasonable adjustments to those who are defined by the Act as disabled (someone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities). This section of the report sets out what firms reported on their approach to reasonable adjustments for both clients and staff.

What are firms doing to meet this outcome?

⁵ s 20 of the Equality Act 2012 which can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15

63. Almost all firms stated that they made reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled clients, employees or managers are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled.
64. Several firms provided examples of reasonable adjustments including:
- Building/office modifications and facilities:
 - Hearing loops
 - Lift access
 - Disabled toilets
 - Low level door bells/buzzers
 - Ramps to access building
 - Reserved parking bays.
 - Services offered to clients:
 - Home or hospital visits
 - Extra long appointments if clients have difficulties in communication
 - Firm representatives read documents out loud for partially sighted/blind clients.
65. Several firms said that they offered DSE (display screen equipment) assessments for staff to ensure staff were working in a comfortable working environment.
66. As a result of the visits, we found that some firms started to consider other reasonable adjustments that they could make.

Case study box: thinking about new reasonable adjustments

Firm O: At the visit we discussed whether this firm had ever considered installing a system to support clients with hearing difficulties, such as a hearing loop. The firm said that they had not considered this to date as they had not come across many clients with hearing difficulties. The firm decided to speak with the board of directors about this as the proactive installation of a hearing loop, along with other possible adjustments, may attract clients with hearing difficulties and could increase their client base and bring them more business.

67. Some firms were proactive, for example one firm had set out a list of common conditions and provided practical examples of arrangements that could be made to overcome them so their staff were prepared in advance. Others were less proactive and only made changes if issues were raised by employees or clients first.

What works well?

68. The nature of the solicitor-client relationship meant that firms were used to dealing with the individual needs of their clients and making sure they were able to take clear instructions. Without really labelling them as 'reasonable adjustments' firms told us they would make arrangements with their clients to communicate with them in a way that suited the client and would arrange meetings at the client's convenience. Those firms which had offices which were inaccessible or difficult for wheelchair users would visit the clients at home or had alternative arrangements in place, such as ground floor meeting space at alternative locations.
69. Many firms were able to describe arrangements they had made for members of the firm who had a disability, and told us they were aware of health and safety issues such as those raised by prolonged use of VDUs (visual display units).
70. It is difficult to judge from this type of thematic review how effective these adjustments were for staff or clients but there was at least a good level of awareness of the need to provide the adjustments.

What challenges are faced?

71. In some cases, firms reported that they were unable to make some types of reasonable adjustment due to building restrictions. Although this presented a challenge initially, many were able to overcome these difficulties. For example, one firm unable to make any modifications to their building because it was listed, had offered to meet clients at an alternative suitable location.
72. A few of the smaller firms found the cost of providing reasonable adjustments to be a challenge, in particular visiting clients at home. Some firms had not realised they should not be passing the cost of providing reasonable adjustments to their clients until advised of this at the visit and one or two were unaware that this was a requirement which was included in the Equality Act 2010.
73. Many firms had not taken a proactive approach to reasonable adjustments. They said they would happily put arrangements in place for a disabled client, but apart from level access for wheelchair users, they had not thought ahead about how they would deal with the needs of people with other disabilities.
74. A number of firms were interested in finding out how they could make their websites more accessible, for example how the content may be made compatible with common forms of assistive technology (such as screen readers used by those with visual impairments) but very few had thought about this themselves.

Outcome (2.4) Your approach to recruitment and employment encourages equality of opportunity and respect for diversity

75. This section of the report looks at recruitment and employment practices, working practices and the collection of equality data.

What are firms doing to meet this outcome?

Recruitment and employment practices

76. Some firms use recruitment agencies and in some cases firms exchanged equality and diversity policies with the recruitment agencies they use to ensure all parties understood the position. Some firms did not use external agencies in the recruitment process at all.
77. Most of the firms that ask for personal details and diversity questions on application forms, will remove these before short listing the applications to help mitigate the risk of introducing bias.
78. Some firms had a very informal approach to recruitment either because they were small or because they had low staff turnover and did not recruit very often. Not surprisingly, the larger firms tended to have a more formal approach to recruitment.
79. It is important to think about how best to manage the risks of allowing subjective and potentially biased decisions in recruitment and promotion, it may not require a detailed and lengthy recruitment policy, but some proportionate safeguards may be appropriate.

Case study box: recruitment practices

Firm P: The recruitment of staff for this firm, was mainly done by headhunting and through employment agencies. The firm claimed to be an equal opportunities employer and their equality and diversity policy was in the Staff Handbook. However, the firm were not monitoring whether the agencies were following their equality and diversity policy. The firm may find it difficult to demonstrate that their recruitment is based on fair and objective selection processes. Accordingly, the firm was to consider making the agencies aware of their equality and diversity policy requirements and objectives.

Firm Q: In terms of recruitment of staff, this small firm identified itself as an equal opportunities employer and only employed approximately two lawyers each year on the basis of merit. This approach equally applied in respect of their promotion policy and they had an equal pay policy for men and women doing work of equal value.

Firm R: This firm confirmed that they used employment agencies for the recruitment of their staff. They confirmed that they request the agencies to adopt their policies in relation to equality and diversity and they are given a copy as part of their terms of business. The firm advertises all its vacancies on its website to make opportunities more accessible.

Firm S: One firm had support staff who were mainly women and many of them had been with the firm for over 20 years. They described how they recently advertised for their receptionist by placing a notice in their office window. They described a very informal approach to short listing and interview and advised us that they based their decision on the candidate's appearance, communication skills and how they came across at the interview. Despite the firm having a majority of long serving female staff, they were prepared to offer their recent receptionist job vacancy to a young male candidate, demonstrating they were focused on getting the right person for the job not seeking to make stereotypical assumptions about who might fit it. Although the male candidate did not take up the offer, and the post was filled by a woman, we felt the firm had demonstrated they were meeting the equality and diversity outcomes. However, we advised the firm that having

such an informal approach may leave them vulnerable to challenge and less able to demonstrate that they were applying an objective approach

Collection and recording diversity information

80. Only a small proportion of firms reported that they had systems in place to collect and monitor equality and diversity data, typically these were the larger firms. In some cases this was carried out by asking staff to complete diversity monitoring forms and some firms asked clients for diversity data at the file opening stage.

Case study box: collection and recording diversity data

Firm T: One firm collected staff diversity data and felt that their staff group was representative of the general diversity of the area of the office and their client base. However, they did not have an ethnically diverse group of trainees and had discussed this with the board of directors of the firm. They concluded that the trainees, whilst not a representation of their diverse client base, did represent the ethnicity of individuals undertaking law degrees and training contracts in the UK.

Firm U: Another firm, whilst having equality policies in place did not actively collect diversity data for staff or clients, nor on job applications. The firm was not able explain how it could monitor compliance with its equality and diversity policies.

Working arrangements

81. Most firms stated that they offer flexible working arrangements to staff. Flexible working was offered to help support work-life balance and to permit staff to work around childcare commitments. Some firms reported that this could be difficult for fee earners in certain types of work where they needed a presence in the office, but several told us they had reluctantly tried flexible working for female staff returning from maternity leave and had found it had worked surprisingly well.
82. In most cases, flexible working was focused on working hours and in some cases it covered working from home. A small number of firms offered time off for religious events.

What works well?

83. There were some genuinely good examples of firms following recruitment procedures which included guidance about equality and diversity and how to make sure that decisions were fair and objective. Often these were from firms which had human resources or other practice support available to them.
84. It appeared that firms were prepared to consider and trial flexible working arrangements for their staff although some thought this suitable for only certain roles. It is difficult to judge from a review of this nature whether everyone working at a firm would feel able to ask for flexible arrangements and whether they were particularly encouraged to apply, but most firms had a positive example to offer of flexible arrangements which were or had been in place.

85. For the firms which were collecting diversity data from staff, either at the point of recruitment or otherwise, some were actively using this data to monitor their employment policies. Even the firms which were not previously collecting diversity data reported few problems with the SRA's first workforce diversity data survey conducted during the summer of 2012.

What challenges are faced?

86. A number of firms were concerned that they were being or would, in the future, be expected to actively recruit to a target level of staff diversity and were reassured that this was not the case. Firms in rural areas or areas which were not ethnically diverse found it a struggle to attract a diverse range of applicants. Some firms also advised us that there were some trends in the applications they were receiving for posts at particular levels or for particular work types despite them conducting national advertising campaigns. For example one firm found they were getting mainly female applicants for their training contracts.
87. Some firms were not recruiting many staff at this time and smaller firms talked about how they had expanded organically, with former colleagues coming to join them in practice. Others used word of mouth for recruiting support staff, or inviting staff to suggest vacancies to their friends and relatives. Whilst informal methods for recruitment are not directly in conflict with the outcomes or the Equality Act, there is an increased risk that these approaches could lead to subjective decision making and potentially leave the firm open to challenge.
88. Although firms were not reporting problems with the operation of the SRA's workforce diversity survey, many of them were unconvinced of the value of collecting the data and could not see the benefit to themselves or the profession of such an exercise. Some firms were unclear about what data they are expected to collate and publish in 2013 and were concerned that they were going to have to collect the data themselves and almost all of them were awaiting SRA guidance on these requirements.
89. Some smaller firms raised concerns about the possible consequences of publishing equality and diversity data because publishing data could potentially identify individuals at the firm.

Outcome (2.5) Complaints of discrimination are dealt with promptly, fairly, openly, and effectively.

90. This section of the report presents an account of what firms are doing in relation to complaints of discrimination.

What are firms doing to meet this outcome?

91. A number of firms talked generally about having an 'open door' policy which meant that staff had an ongoing opportunity to raise concerns and this meant that they rarely had to resolve grievances on a formal basis.
92. Most firms stated that they had not received any complaints of discrimination from staff or clients. There were, however, some firms which had received complaints from staff and a few which had been the subject of employment tribunal proceedings for discrimination. In most cases these complaints were

discussed at the visit and firms explained the reasons behind what had happened. In some cases the firm had been successful at the hearing but in others they had either settled or lost and we discussed the lessons learnt.

93. One firm told us how much they and their staff had learnt from dealing with a recent discrimination complaint - this was one which had not ended in tribunal proceedings. A fee earner in their branch office felt that she had been harassed by a colleague on grounds of her race. As they investigated the complaint, the firm were surprised that staff had very different views about whether the conduct they had witnessed was harassment or bullying and after resolving the complaint to the ultimate satisfaction of both sides, identified the need to follow up with training on bullying and harassment for staff. The firm appeared to have a culture where staff really did feel safe to raise their concerns and had faith that they would be listened to. Although having no complaints is a good sign, it is also important to be sure that staff really do feel confident enough to raise concerns if something did arise.
94. A number of firms had systems in place to gather feedback from clients and this was how they monitored the quality of service provided by their fee earners and the satisfaction levels from their clients. Firms told us they would identify and follow up comments from these forms, which were not 'complaints' as such. Some of the feedback forms had questions asking whether clients felt they had been treated fairly but none of these firms reported that they had picked up discrimination complaints that way.

Case study box: complaints

Firm V: One firm told us they had found evidence of a potential discrimination complaint from a routine file review - although it was a complaint the fee earner could have made about the way the client had treated her. The client care team picked this up and called the client to raise their concern and the client was apologetic. It is important to be aware of and react to any discriminatory conduct coming from clients so as to protect your staff and this example demonstrates how file reviews can pick up matters which might never have come to the surface.

What works well?

95. As there were so few complaints of discrimination raised we had only a few examples to review in establishing what was working well for firms. A thorough investigation of the complaint and learning from it generally works well and helps firms to avoid future complaints.

What challenges are faced?

96. It is clearly a good sign that so many firms were unable to recall any complaints of discrimination from clients or staff, but as stated above, one of the challenges, although not evidenced in this review, is the concern that there is the fear that people have of raising complaints of discrimination at all.⁶

⁶ Please see footnote 3 above.

Conclusions

97. We are very grateful to all of the firms who contributed to this thematic supervision review. The SRA learnt a lot from this review and it was clear that many firms had been prompted by the visit to review this area more carefully and had found this useful.
98. Given the nature of the thematic supervision review, our findings will not represent the experiences of the whole firm population. The visits gave an opportunity for us to talk openly with firms about how they were meeting the outcomes. They were not investigation visits so we did not seek to verify everything we were told, we relied on the account provided by the firm's chosen representative
99. We have summarised the detail of what works well and the challenges faced for each of the outcomes above so our conclusions will pick up a number of broad themes identified.

Understanding expectations

100. It was clear at the outset that there is considerable overlap across the five outcomes in chapter 2, which in itself is not necessarily a problem but we did find a number of firms who were not entirely clear about outcome 2.2 in particular - what behaviour or activities would indicate they were 'providing services to clients in a way that respects diversity'.
101. In our discussions about outcome 2.2, a majority of firms talked about the reasonable adjustments they had in place for disabled clients, which is covered in outcome 2.3 and some referred to the translation facilities they had in place for clients who did not speak English as a first language. In our visits we prompted firms to talk about the diversity of their client base and whether they thought their services were accessible to the communities in their local area. Some firms felt a wider and/or clearer range of indicative behaviours or guidance might help them meet these outcomes.
102. Although we will resist the temptation to provide this clarity through a long list of indicative behaviours, which may be treated like rules, there may nevertheless be some scope to clarify the way we have described the chapter 2 outcomes.
103. A review of chapter 2 would allow us the opportunity to include information about the requirement that firms collect, report and publish workforce diversity data; a requirement which was imposed for the first time in 2012. Although most of the firms in this thematic review had not experienced a problem with the survey in 2012, our engagement did highlight the need for us to clearly explain the requirement and how this fits with outcomes focused regulation and Principal 9.

104. As with all other firms in the private sector service industry, law firms are bound by the Equality Act 2010, both in relation to their responsibilities as an employer and in terms of the services they provide. The legislation, in so far as it applies to private sector organisations, is largely aimed at providing a remedy for protected individuals when things have gone wrong.
105. The SRA's regulatory approach clearly encompasses the expectation that firms comply with the law and this is expressly covered in outcomes 2.1 and 2.3. However, Principle 9 is wider than this, requiring firms to 'encourage equality of opportunity and respect for diversity'.
106. The outcomes and indicative behaviours contained in chapter 2 of the Code of Conduct 2011 help to illustrate the key areas where firms will need to consider their approach to equality and diversity. We know from engagement with the profession during our transition to outcomes-focused regulation, that some firms derive comfort from prescriptive rules. In the absence of such rules, these firms often look for a list of simple actions they can take to assure themselves that they are compliant with Principle 9. For example many firms we visited were content to rely on the existence of an equality and diversity policy and the absence of discrimination complaints as evidence of their compliance with Principle 9. Whilst these two indicators are relevant and are quite properly covered by the indicative behaviours, only a minority of firms were actively measuring the success of their equality and diversity policy or taking a more proactive approach to embedding 'equality of opportunity and respect for diversity' into the way they worked.
107. Each firm will be able to take an approach appropriate to its size, location and client base and the type of legal services it provides. However we will expect firms to have a clear strategy for managing the risks presented by a finding or complaint of discrimination, or failures in providing appropriate services for diverse consumers. A firm should monitor how it is complying with Principle 9, monitor its progress and set targets for improvement. Even if things go wrong and an event is brought to the attention of the SRA, we will take into account evidence that the firm have taken steps to manage their risks.
108. Equally the SRA must develop a more risk-based approach to measuring compliance with Principle 9. Discrimination is incorporated in our regulatory risk index (December 2012) in the category of 'competence, fitness and propriety' and there could be overlap with some of the other risks listed in this category.⁷ Supervisors called to review firms where there are risks under this category should be alive to Principle 9, even if there is no express reference to a complaint of discrimination. Poor management or an absence of propriety or ethics may themselves increase the risk that a firm might unlawfully discriminate against clients or consumers.

⁷ The other level 1 risks listed in this category are: failure to act with integrity or ethics, lack of legal competence, lack of financial competence, and lack of management competence.

Guidance and good practice

109. Our outcomes-focused approach does not lend itself to detailed and prescriptive guidance on the activities that a firm must take to ensure compliance with Principle 9. However, we recognise that this can be a difficult area and firms will want information, guidance and examples of good practice. This is the case especially for smaller firms and firms without dedicated practice management resources
110. We do work closely with the Law Society and as the representative body they have taken a proactive approach, providing a good array of guidance, events, training and practice notes on equality and diversity issues. Initiatives such as the Diversity and Inclusion Charter have been taken up by and much appreciated by some of the larger firms, but some of the smaller firms appeared not to be aware of this guidance or clear on how it could benefit them.
111. We will continue to work closely with the Law Society in the work they are doing to promote good practice in the profession and guidance, in particular for smaller firms.
112. In relation to the specific requirement on firms to collect, report and publish diversity data, most firms wanted the SRA to provide information about the arrangements and expectations for 2013 and this will be provided directly by the SRA.

Enforcing non compliance with Principle 9

113. Our approach to enforcement is set out in our [Enforcement Strategy](#). Enforcement of Principle 9 is no different to enforcement in relation to any of the other principles but we will always regard discrimination as a serious conduct issue.
114. We make it clear to those considering [making a report to the SRA](#) that 'we always consider allegations of dishonesty or discrimination' and a supervisor will assess the report. Although we will not always take immediate action in response to the issues raised, the information will be recorded and take into account as part of our ongoing supervision of the firm.
115. We regularly monitored the incidence and outcome of reports raised with us under rule 6, the equality and diversity rule in the old code of conduct. The last monitoring [report](#) which looked at figures for 2010 revealed a relatively low level of reporting and a small number of conduct matters that were pursued to a formal regulatory outcome. Figures extracted for the outcomes of the discrimination investigations closed in 2012 show similar trends.

No action	78
Ongoing other action	16
Complaint/Allegation upheld	1
Complaint/Allegation Referred to SDT	3
Grand Total	98

116. In order to better track how we are dealing with discrimination reports brought to our attention, we will resume our monitoring of these reports. A qualitative look at how some of the discrimination reports are dealt with in supervision will help us identify and share good practice within the SRA.

What are we going to do as a result of what we've found?

117. In light of our conclusions, we have identified a number of actions. These actions will be incorporated as measurable and time bound objectives into the delivery plans of the relevant units at the SRA and reflected in the SRA's 2013/14 equality and diversity action plan which will be published in the Summer of 2013. The delivery times will be influenced by the strategic priorities of the SRA as set out in our 2013/15 strategic plan.

1. We will consider the outcomes and indicative behaviours set out in chapter 2 and consider if and how we can revise them to improve clarity.
 2. We will more clearly explain how the requirement to collect, report and publish workforce diversity data fits with outcomes-focused regulation and Principal 9.
 3. We will raise awareness of Principle 9 and the guidance available to support compliance from the Law Society and other sources.
 4. We will publish further information about the requirement on firms to collect, report and publish workforce diversity data for 2013.
 5. We will train staff across the SRA to continue to consider non compliance with Principal 9 as a potential risk, even when there are no express complaints of discrimination.
 6. We will monitor the incidence and outcome of discrimination reports made to the SRA.
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Acknowledgements

118. Sincere thanks to all those firms whom contributed to this study, the SRA appreciates the time made available to assist with this review.

Appendix 1: Visit questionnaire

Section 1: Delivering the outcomes

We would like to discuss the equality and diversity outcomes that the SRA requires regulated firms to achieve. We would like to get your views on each outcome set out in chapter 2 and how it is delivered and measured.

Outcome (2.1) You do not discriminate unlawfully, or victimise or harass anyone, in the course of your professional dealings.

- i. What actions, processes or practices does your firm use to deliver this outcome?
- ii. How do you measure the delivery of this outcome or ensure that it is being delivered?
- iii. Are there any aspects of your approach that work particularly well?
- iv. What are the main challenges or risks that you face in meeting this outcome?
- v. Before we move on, is there anything else you would like to add on this outcome?

Outcome (2.2) You provide services to clients in a way that respects diversity.

- i. What actions, processes or practices does your firm use to deliver this outcome?
- ii. How do you measure the delivery of this outcome or ensure that it is being delivered?
- iii. Are there any aspects of your approach that work particularly well?
- iv. What are the main challenges or risks that you face in meeting this outcome?
- v. Before we move on, is there anything else you would like to add on this outcome?

Outcome (2.3) You make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled clients, employees or managers are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled, and you do not pass on the costs of these adjustments to these disabled clients, employees or managers.

- i. What actions, processes or practices does your firm use to deliver this outcome?
- ii. How do you measure the delivery of this outcome or ensure that it is being delivered?
- iii. Are there any aspects of your approach that work particularly well?
- iv. What are the main challenges or risks that you face in meeting this outcome?

- v. Before we move on, is there anything else you would like to add on this outcome?

Outcome (2.4) Your approach to recruitment and employment encourages equality of opportunity and respect for diversity.

- i. What actions, processes or practices does your firm use to deliver this outcome?
- ii. How do you measure the delivery of this outcome or ensure that it is being delivered?
- iii. Are there any aspects of your approach that work particularly well?
- iv. What are the main challenges or risks that you face in meeting this outcome?
- v. Before we move on, is there anything else you would like to add on this outcome?

Outcome (2.5) Complaints of discrimination are dealt with promptly, fairly, openly, and effectively.

- i. What actions, processes or practices does your firm use to deliver this outcome?
- ii. How do you measure the delivery of this outcome or ensure that it is being delivered?
- iii. Are there any aspects of your approach that work particularly well?
- iv. What are the main challenges or risks that you face in meeting this outcome?
- v. Before we move on, is there anything else you would like to add on this outcome?

Section 2: Improving equality and diversity in the legal profession

The diversity survey

We would like to ask some questions about collecting and monitoring diversity data in your firm. The SRA had recently contacted firms asking them to provide employees with the opportunity to complete a diversity questionnaire which will give every individual in your workforce (both lawyer and non-lawyer), an opportunity to self-classify against the following characteristics: age, gender, disability, ethnic group, religion or belief, sexual orientation, socio-economic background and caring responsibilities?

This is in line with the requirements as set out by the Legal Services Board to encourage diversity in the legal profession. We are gathering an evidence base about the composition of the legal workforce to inform targeted policy responses and are looking to use the data as a benchmark to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of existing diversity initiatives.

1. How have you found the diversity survey and have you had any problems in implementing this requirement in your firm?
2. What are you intending to do in order to meet the requirement to collect firm diversity data next year?
3. How are you planning to publish the diversity information collected for your firm next year?
4. Is there any support or information the SRA can provide to you in relation to collecting, monitoring or publishing your firm diversity data?

Generally about regulating equality and diversity

We would also like to ask some more general questions about equality and diversity and how you think the SRA could improve its approach.

5. Can you explain your understanding of why the SRA regulates equality and diversity?
6. How far do you think the legal sector has come in achieving equality and diversity outcomes?
 - What do you think are the challenges and risks firms face in regards to equality and diversity?
 - What do you think are the areas of greatest improvement and success?
7. Do you feel it is important that law firms ensure that equality and diversity outcomes are achieved?
8. How do you think the SRA can improve its approach to engaging with firms on equality and diversity?
9. Do you have any other questions or comments you would like to make?

Ends

Appendix 2: Profile of the sample firms

Table 1: Ethnicity, gender and age data for practising certificate (PC) holders working at firms in all firms by size category

			Ethnicity - percentage of the total PC holders in all firms by size category			Gender - percentage of the total PC holders in all firms by size category			Age - percentage of the total PC holders in all firms by size category						
Firm Size (number of partners)	Number of Firms in each firm size category	Number of PC holders in all firms for each size category	White	BME	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown	21 and under	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-65	66 and over
1	20	34	47%	44%	9%	56%	44%	0%	0%	12%	15%	21%	32%	6%	15%
2 to 4	21	111	59%	30%	12%	51%	49%	0%	0%	15%	41%	26%	10%	3%	5%
5 to 10	17	673	78%	14%	8%	47%	53%	0%	0%	18%	37%	28%	12%	4%	2%
11 to 25	21	761	85%	7%	7%	55%	45%	0%	0%	16%	31%	24%	20%	6%	3%
26 to 80	8	554	89%	4%	7%	55%	45%	0%	0%	15%	33%	27%	19%	5%	2%
>80	3	1918	84%	6%	10%	53%	46%	1%	0%	23%	40%	26%	10%	1%	1%
Grand Total	90	4051	83%	8%	9%	52%	47%	1%	0%	19%	36%	26%	14%	3%	2%

There were 90 firms in the sample, spread across the firm size categories shown in the first column. A total of 58 firms had 10 partners or under.

The third column shows the total number of practising certificate holders working across all firms in each size category. For example, there are 21 firms which are 2 to 4 partners, and these 21 firms employ 111 PC holders between them. The subsequent columns show the percentage of this 111 PC holders falling into the diversity categories set out for ethnicity, gender and age.

Table 2: Ethnicity, gender and age data for practising certificate (PC) holders working in all firms by region

			Ethnicity - percentage of the total PC holders working in all firms by region			Gender- percentage of the total PC holders working in all firms by region			Age- percentage of the total PC holders working in all firms by region						
Region (based on the location of the firm's head office)	Number of firms in each region	Number of PC holders in all firms in each region	White	BME	Un-known	Male	Female	Un-known	21 and under	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-65	66 and over
East	8	99	92%	3%	5%	39%	61%	0%	0%	18%	30%	16%	23%	9%	3%
East Midlands	10	224	85%	9%	5%	53%	47%	0%	0%	14%	29%	26%	22%	6%	3%
East of England	4	47	79%	11%	11%	57%	40%	2%	0%	13%	15%	34%	21%	15%	2%
Isle of Wight	3	30	90%	3%	7%	40%	60%	0%	0%	13%	43%	13%	23%	3%	3%
London	15	1588	82%	8%	10%	55%	45%	0%	0%	23%	40%	23%	11%	2%	1%
North East	7	80	86%	4%	10%	59%	41%	0%	0%	8%	34%	30%	20%	9%	0%
North West	9	894	84%	7%	10%	53%	45%	3%	0%	19%	34%	29%	14%	3%	1%
South East	17	786	79%	13%	8%	47%	53%	0%	0%	17%	37%	28%	13%	3%	3%
South West	6	98	94%	2%	4%	55%	45%	0%	0%	12%	31%	29%	15%	7%	6%
Wales	7	126	82%	12%	6%	52%	48%	0%	0%	21%	41%	19%	13%	3%	2%
West Midlands	4	79	99%	0%	1%	59%	41%	0%	0%	10%	30%	29%	22%	6%	3%
Grand Total	90	4051	83%	8%	9%	52%	47%	1%	0%	19%	36%	26%	14%	3%	2%

The third column shows the total number of practising certificate holders working across all firms in each size category. For example, there were 10 firms from the East Midlands, and these 10 firms employ 224 PC holders between them. The subsequent columns show the percentage of this 224 PC holders falling into the diversity categories set out for ethnicity, gender and age.