Solicitors Regulation Authority

Diversity in law firms' workforce

Updated 3 January 2025

This overview covers solicitors and other employees working in SRA-regulated law firms and is based on data collected from almost all firms in summer 2023.

The survey shows a slow but steady increase in diversity among all lawyers since the previous survey in 2021.

Use our firm diversity data tool to explore the data for yourself [/solicitors/resources-archived/diversity-toolkit/law-firm-diversity-tool/].

Key findings

Women in law firms

- The proportion of women in law firms has risen from 48% in 2015 to 53% in 2023.
- The seniority gap for women remains but has narrowed slightly since 2015:
  - 32% of full-equity partners (the most senior levels in law firms) are women
  - 47% of salaried partners are women
  - 62% of solicitors are women.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic lawyers in law firms

- There has been a steady increase in the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic lawyers in law firms, from 14% in 2015 to 19% in 2023. The increase is less than a percentage point for each category in 2023, which, when rounded up, shows:
  - 12% Asian
  - 3% Black
  - 3% Mixed/Multiple
  - 1% Other.
- The high proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic partners in one-partner firms (most of whom will be full-equity partners) means the overall proportion of equity partners (19%) is higher than the salaried partners (14%).
- There is a significantly higher proportion of lawyers from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background working in one-partner firms (39%) than any other firm size. And this proportion decreases as the firm size increases:
  - 2–5 partners (23%).
  - 6–9 partners (16%).
  - 10–50 partners (15%).
  - 50+ partners (15%).

Disabled lawyers in law firms

- There has been an increase in the proportion of disabled lawyers, from 3% in 2015 to 6% in 2023. However, there is still significant underrepresentation compared to 16% in the UK workforce.

Lesbian, gay and bi lawyers in law firms

- There has been a slight growth in lawyers who are lesbian, gay, bi or prefer another description over time, from 3% in 2015 to 4.4% in 2023.

Socio-economic background

- The proportion of lawyers from a professional socio-economic background has decreased from 60% in 2019 to 57% in 2023. Lawyers from an intermediate socio-economic background increased – from 5% in 2019 to 13% in 2023.
- However, lawyers from lower socio-economic backgrounds has reduced from 21% in 2015 to 18% in 2023. There is little difference in socio-economic background by seniority.
- The proportion of lawyers attending independent/fee-paying schools has decreased, from 23% in 2015 to 21% in 2023. The number of those attending state schools has grown from 59% in 2015 to 64% in 2023. There is a greater proportion of partners (25%) who attended an independent/fee-paying school compared to solicitors (19%).

Law firm size differences

Looking at the data by firm size highlights significant differences in diversity for the largest law firms (with 50+ partners) compared to the smallest (with one partner). This illustrates the real challenges for these large firms in making progress toward diversity, including:

- Women are underrepresented at partner level in firms of all sizes, but to a greater extent in the largest law firms (34% of partners overall and 28% of full-equity partners).
- The difference in the ethnicity profile between the one-partner firms and the largest firms is still marked, with the proportion of partners from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic group more than four times greater in one-partner firms (36% compared to 8%).
- The largest law firms have a smaller proportion of disabled lawyers (5% compared to 6% overall), but this is also true of the smallest firms (5%).
- The largest firms have the greatest proportion of lawyers from a professional socio-economic background (65%), and those who went to independent/fee-paying schools (28%).

About the data

We collect diversity data from the law firms we regulate in England and Wales every two years. Our most recent collection was in summer 2023, when 99% of law firms reported their data, covering more than 203,000 people working in 9,276 firms.

Firms collect the data from their staff in line with a standard set of diversity questions and report the aggregated data to us by role category.

We updated these categories in 2023 by splitting the partner group into 'full-equity solicitor partners' and 'salaried or partial-equity solicitor partners'. For convenience, we will refer to these groups as 'full equity' and 'salaried' partners. We look at the partner category as a whole, where there are notable trends over time.

There are 13 role categories, but we present the data by seven distinct groups in the law firm diversity data tool, as shown below.

All people working in law firms			
All lawyers			
All partners		Solicitors	Other staff
Full-equity partners	Salaried partners	• Solicitors • Barristers • Chartered legal executives • Licensed conveyancers • Patent or trademark attorneys • Costs lawyers • Notaries	• Other fee earning roles • Roles directly supporting fee earners • Managerial roles • IT/HR/other corporate services roles

In this overview, we have set out the key findings for the diversity characteristics covered in the questionnaire. These including an analysis of the data by seniority, firm size and work type.

We include the 'prefer not to say' responses in our data tool when working out the percentages. When comparing the data to national datasets, which are based on known data (excluding the 'prefer not to say' responses), we have recalculated the firm data to exclude the 'prefer not to say' responses. This allows a like-for-like comparison between national datasets and the law firm data.

We have seen a slight fall in the 'prefer not to say' responses for lawyers across a range of categories, including:

- ethnicity
- disability

- sexual orientation
- age
- religion
- caring responsibilities.

There was a slight increase in 'prefer not to say' for:

- sex
- parental occupation
- school type
- gender identity.

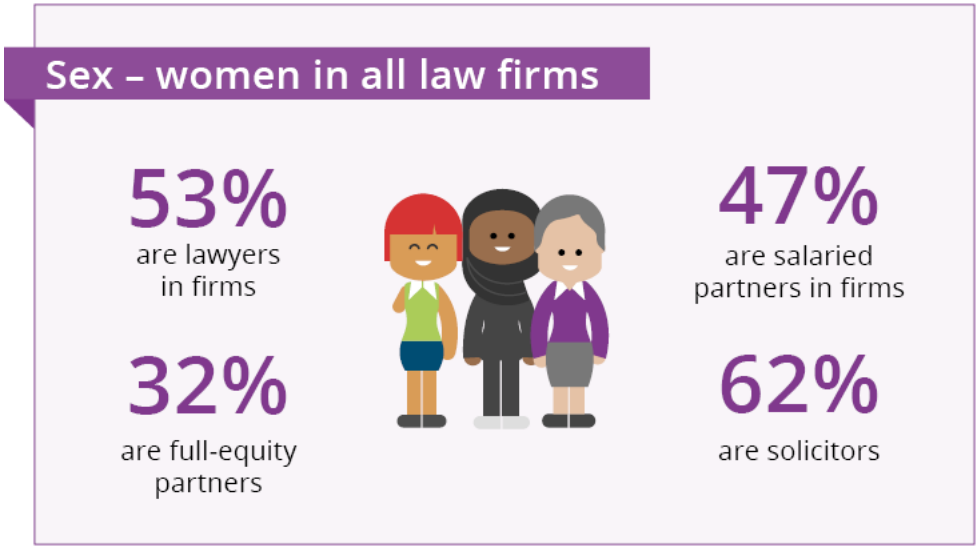
Some of these are not apparent from the diversity data tool, which uses rounded figures.

To find out about other practising solicitors, read our diversity of in-house solicitors' report [/sra/equality-diversity/diversity-profession/diversity-in-house/] .

Key findings by diversity characteristic

Open all [#]

Sex



All lawyers

The proportion of women lawyers in law firms exceeds that of men and is continuing to rise:

- 53% of lawyers are women, up from 52% in 2021.
- 45% of lawyers are men, down from 47% in 2021.
- 0.1% of lawyers preferred another description, down from 0.2% in 2021.

The Office for National Statistics employment figures for 2023 [https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusbyethnicgr show that women made up 48% of the workforce in England, Scotland and Wales. In comparison, excluding the 'prefer not to say' responses, women make up 54% of the known population of lawyers.

Only 2% of lawyers preferred not to say their response (no change from 2021).

By seniority

Differences become more apparent when we look at seniority, with women less well represented at senior levels:

- 32% of full-equity partners are women.
- 47% of salaried partners are women.
- 62% of solicitors are women.

Looking at the trends over time for all partners (as we only have the full-equity and salaried partner split for 2023), the proportion of women at partner level is 37%, up from 35% in 2021. This has risen consistently since

2015, when it was 32%.

Only 2% of full-equity partners and 1% of salaried partners preferred not to give their response. When looking at the partners as one group, 2% preferred not to say their response (no change from 2021) and 2% of solicitors preferred not to say (up from 1% in 2021).

By firm size

There is a greater proportion of women lawyers in mid-size firms (those with between 6 and 50 partners) and a notably smaller proportion in one-partner firms.

Women lawyers in a firm	Firm size	Change from 2021
53%	50+ partners	Up from 52%
56%	10–50 partners	No change
59%	6–9 partners	Up from 57%
52%	2–5 partners	Up from 50%
44%	1 partner	No change

Overall, 37% of partners are women (32% full equity and 47% salaried), but there are differences when we look at the breakdown by firm size:

- The proportion of women full-equity partners (32%) in the larger firms is lower than across all firms. This is 31% in 10–50 partner firms and 28% in 50+ partner firms.
- The overall proportion of women who are salaried partners is 47% and 41% in 50+ partner firms. However, in 6–9 partner firms, the proportion is higher than across all firms (52%).

By work type

Overall, 53% of lawyers are women, but this varies by the type of legal work undertaken by the firm. Women are underrepresented in law firms carrying out some work types, including:

- criminal work – 38% of lawyers are women, no change from 2021
- corporate work – 47% of lawyers are women, up from 46% in 2021.

And women are overrepresented in law firms carrying out other work types, including:

- litigation work – 53% of lawyers are women, up from 51% in 2021
- property work – 54% of lawyers are women, up from 51% in 2021
- private client – 58% of lawyers are women, up from 56% in 2021.

Other staff

There is a greater proportion of women working in other staff roles in law firms:

- 74% of other staff are women, no change from 2021
- 25% of other staff are men, no change from 2021
- 0.2% of other staff preferred another description, up from 0.1% in 2021.

Excluding the 'prefer not to say' responses, women make up 75% of the known population of other staff, compared to 48% of the national workforce data. One per cent of other staff preferred not to say, which has not changed from 2021.

Wales compared to England

There is no difference between England and Wales regarding the percentage of the national workforce that is made up of women (both 48%*). However, there is a greater proportion of women lawyers in Wales than in England, including at partner level:

- 57% of lawyers are women in Wales, compared to 53% in England.
- 41% of partners are women in Wales, compared to 37% in England.

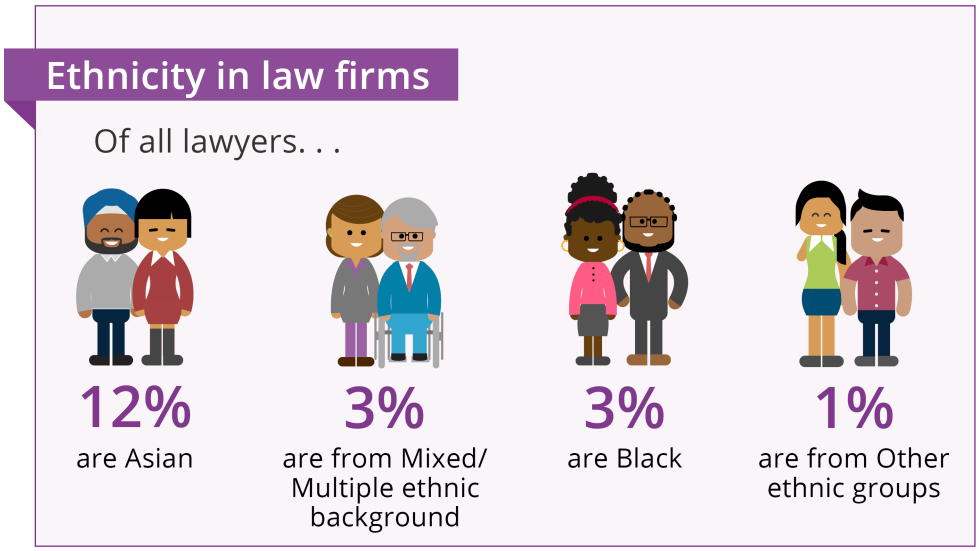
The number of women lawyers and partners in Wales has increased by a greater proportion over time than in England:

- In both England and Wales, the proportion of women lawyers was 48% in 2015, rising to 57% in Wales and 53% in England by 2023.
- The proportion of women who are full-equity partners in Wales (35%) is slightly higher than in England (32%).
- The proportion of women who are salaried partners in Wales (54%) is higher than in England (47%).
- The proportion of women partners in Wales has increased by eight percentage points since 2015 (33% to 41%) compared to an increase of five percentage points in England (32% to 37%).

For other staff in Wales, there is a higher proportion of women (83%) compared to England (74%).

*There is no 2023 data available yet for Wales, so this has been taken from the 2022 publication [https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/employment/latest] .

Ethnicity



We have provided the data broken down by the five main ethnicity categories: Black, Asian, Mixed/Multiple, Other and White.

We have also drawn a comparison between those making up the White group and those making up the Black, Asian, Mixed/Multiple and Other groups, which we refer to as the Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

All lawyers

There has been an increase in the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic lawyers working in law firms, which has been rising steadily since 2015, from 14% to 19% in 2023. There has been a corresponding decrease in the representation of White lawyers over the same period, from 80% to 77%.

Overall, 19% of lawyers are from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background, up from 18% in 2021, of which:

- 12% are Asian
- 3% are Black
- 3% are from a Mixed/Multiple background
- 1% of lawyers are Other.

And 77% of lawyers are from White groups, down from 78% in 2021.

The Office for National Statistics employment figures from 2023 [https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusbyethnicgr showed that 15% of the workforce in England, Scotland and Wales were from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds (6% Asian, 4% Black, 2% Mixed/Multiple and 4% Other) and 85% were White.

In comparison, excluding the 'prefer not to say' response, Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups make up 20% of the known population of lawyers (13% Asian, 3% Black, 3% Mixed/Multiple and 1% Other) and 80% are White.

Four per cent of lawyers preferred not to declare their ethnicity, no change from 2021.

By seniority

There is a difference by seniority for lawyers from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background, with a larger proportion of full-equity partners in these groups compared to salaried partners. This is likely to be caused by the high proportion of solicitors in these groups setting up as sole practices (see the data about one-partner firms by ethnicity in the section below):

- 19% of full-equity partners are from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background
- 14% of salaried partners are from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background
- 21% of solicitors are from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background.

Looking separately at the categories making up the Black, Asian and minority ethnic group, the pattern is similar:

- 13% of full-equity partners, 9% of salaried partners and 13% of solicitors are Asian.
- 3% of full-equity partners, 1% of salaried partners and 3% of solicitors are Black.
- 2% of full-equity partners, 2% of salaried partners and 3% of solicitors are from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds.
- 1% of full-equity partners, 1% of salaried partners and 1% of solicitors are from the Other ethnic group.

The opposite is true for partners in the White group:

- 76% of full-equity partners are White.
- 83% of salaried partners are White.
- 76% of solicitors are White.

Looking at trends over time for all partners, there has been no change in the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic partners since 2021, at 17%. (We only have the full-equity and salaried partner split for 2023.)

The slight increase seen from 2015 (from 13% to 17% in 2023) reflects the increase in the proportion of Asian partners. They increased from 9% in 2015 to 12% in 2023, with the other minority ethnic groups the same in 2015 as in 2023 (2% Black, 2% Mixed/Multiple and 1% Other).

The 'prefer not to say' response did not change from 2021 for solicitors (3%) or partners (4%). This year, 5% of full-equity partners and 3% of salaried partners preferred not to give a response.

By firm size

There is a significantly higher proportion of lawyers from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background working in one-partner firms (39%) than any other firm size. And this proportion decreases as the firm size increases:

- 2–5 partners (23%).
- 6–9 partners (16%).
- 10–50 partners (15%).
- 50+ partners (15%).

This difference is also reflected at partner level. Overall, 17% of partners are from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background, but there are differences when we look at the breakdown by firm size:

- 8% of partners in the largest firms with 50+ partners and 10% in firms with 10 to 50 partners are from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background. The proportion has risen by one percentage point for both firm groups since 2021.
- 36% of partners in the smallest firms with one-partner and 23% of partners in firms with two-to-five partners are from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background. This has not changed since 2021.

Since 2015, there has been an increase in the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic partners in all firm sizes, but there is still a marked underrepresentation in the largest firms. For one-partner firms, this rose from 26% in 2015 to 36% in 2023, and in the 50+ partner firms from 6% to 8% over the same period.

Overall, there are only small differences of one or two percentage points between the ethnic breakdown of full-equity and salaried partners across four of the five firm size categories. The difference is slightly larger for six-to-nine partner firms where there is four percentage points difference, which you can see in the table below.

Firm size	Full-equity partners	Salaried partners	Partners as a whole
1 partner	37%	36%	36%
2–5 partners	24%	22%	23%
6–9 partners	8%	12%	10%
10–50 partners	10%	9%	10%
50+ partners	8%	9%	8%

Looking separately at the Black and Asian partners, in the largest firms with 50+ partners:

- 4% of full-equity partners are Asian and 5% of salaried partners
- 0% (0.47 rounded to 0) of full-equity partners are Black and 1% of salaried partners.

In the smallest firms with one partner:

- 27% of full-equity partners are Asian and 25% of salaried partners.
- 6% of full-equity partners are Black and 7% of salaried partners.

There is a higher proportion of full-equity partners in one, two-to-five and 10 to 50 partner firms that preferred not to say than salaried partners. Only 3% of salaried partners and 2% of full-equity partners preferred not to say in six-to-nine partner firms. In 50+ partner firms, this was 3% for both full-equity and salaried partners.

By work type

There are differences in the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic lawyers according to the type of legal work undertaken by firms. Firms mainly doing criminal work and those mainly doing private client work both have a higher proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic lawyers.

Area of law/work	Black, Asian or minority ethnic background	Asian	Black	Change from 2021
Private client	37%	25%	8%	Up from 35%
Criminal law	32%	22%	5%	Up from 30%
Property law	20%	14%	2%	Up from 19%
Corporate law	19%	11%	2%	Up from 18%
Mixed range of work	15%	9%	2%	Up from 13%

Other staff

The proportion of other staff working in law firms from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background is 18%, up from 16% in 2021. This has been a steady increase from 12% in 2015. Other highlights include:

- 10% of other staff are Asian – up from 7% in 2015.
- 3% of other staff are Black – up from 2% in 2015.
- 3% of other staff are from a Mixed/Multiple ethnic background – up from 2% in 2015.
- 1% of other staff are from the Other ethnic group – there has been a steady increase since 2015 but at rates of less than 1%.

Excluding the 'prefer not to say' response, Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups make up 18% of the known population of other staff and 82% are White.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are broken down as:

- 10% Asian compared to 6% of the UK workforce
- 4% Black compared to 4% of the UK workforce
- 3% Mixed/Multiple compared to 2% of the UK workforce
- 1% Other compared to 4% of the UK workforce.

This compares to the national breakdown of 15% Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (6% Asian, 4% Black, 2% Mixed/Multiple and 4% Other) and 85% White groups.

Three per cent of other staff preferred not to say, which is no change from 2021.

Wales compared to England

There is a much smaller proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic lawyers in Wales than in England:

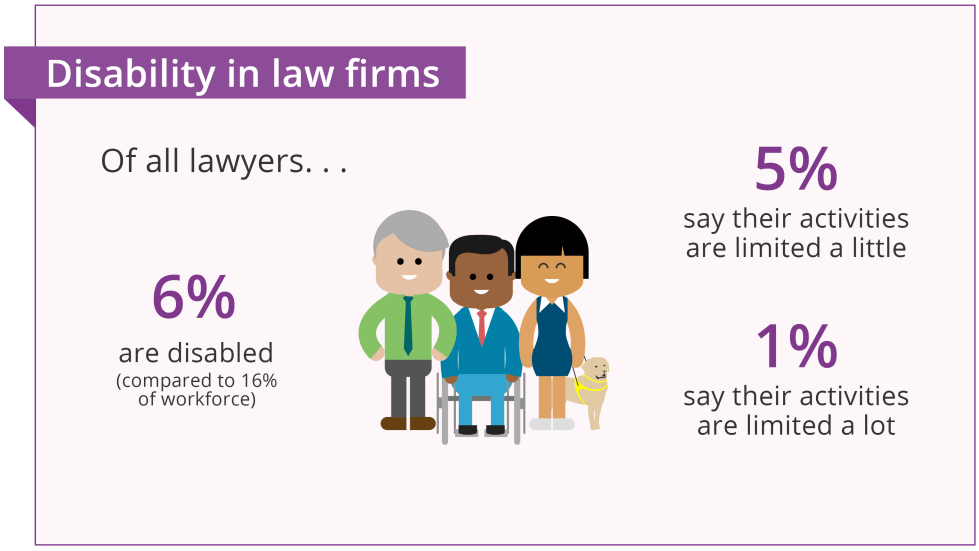
- 5% of lawyers are from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background in Wales:
  - 3% Asian
  - 0% (0.49%) Black
  - 2% Multiple/Mixed
  - 0% (0.2%) from Other ethnic groups.
- 20% of lawyers are from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background in England:
  - 13% Asian
  - 3% Black
  - 3% Multiple/Mixed
  - 1% from Other ethnic groups.

The number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic full-equity partners is lower than salaried partners in Wales, where the opposite is true for England:

- The proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic full-equity partners in Wales is 4% compared to 19% in England.
- The proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic salaried partners in Wales is 5% compared to 14% in England.
- The proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic partners in Wales has increased by three percentage points since 2015 (2% to 5%). This compares to an increase of five percentage points in England (13% to 17%).

For other staff in Wales, there is a lower proportion of those from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background (6%) compared to England (18%).

Disability



Disability

This section covers two questions – whether a person has a disability and whether their day-to-day activities are limited by a health condition or disability.

All lawyers

There has been an increase in the proportion of disabled lawyers and no change in those whose activities are limited:

- 6% of lawyers declared they are disabled, up from 5% in 2021.
- 6% of lawyers declared that their day-to-day activities were limited by a health condition or disability (no change from 2021). One per cent said they were affected a lot and 5% said they were affected a little in 2023.

There remains a considerable difference for disability compared to the wider population, which suggests underreporting in the legal sector. In 2023, 16% of the UK workforce [https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusofdisabled] and 23% of the working age population declared a disability.

In comparison, excluding the 'prefer not to say' responses, disabled lawyers still make up just 6% of the known population of lawyers.

Four per cent of lawyers preferred not to say whether they had a disability, no change from 2021. Five per cent preferred not to say whether their activities were limited, a very small fall of just over half a percentage point from 2021. This is not shown in the data tool as we round to whole numbers.

By seniority

There is a slight difference by seniority, with fewer disabled people at senior levels. Please note that the total declaration percentages and the total percentages of those affected a lot and a little may differ due to rounding:

- 5% of full-equity partners declared a disability and 6% declared that their day-to-day activities are limited by a health condition or disability (1% were affected a lot and 4% a little).
- 6% of salaried partners declared a disability and 6% declared that their day-to-day activities were limited by a health condition or disability (1% were affected a lot and 5% a little).
- 6% of solicitors declared a disability (up from 5% in 2021) and 7% declared that their day-to-day activities were limited by a health condition or disability (1% were affected a lot and 5% a little).

Looking at the trends over time for partners (as we only have the full-equity and salaried partner split for 2023):

- 5% of partners declared a disability – up from 4% in 2021.
- 6% declared that their day-to-day activities were limited by health condition or disability – 1% were affected a lot and 4% a little (up from 5% in 2021).

Both categories have risen slowly but consistently since 2015, when there were 3% disabled partners and 4% whose activities were limited.

Only 4% of partners preferred not to say whether they had a disability (down from 5% in 2021), or whether their activities were limited (down from 6% in 2021). For solicitors, there has been no change from 2021, with 4% who preferred not to say whether they had a disability and 5% who preferred not to say if their activities were limited.

By firm size

Although the differences are small, there is a slightly lower proportion of disabled lawyers in the largest and the smallest firms:

- 5% of lawyers have declared a disability in 50+ and one-partner firms (up from 4% in 2021 for the 50+ partner firms but no change for the one-partner firms).
- 6% of lawyers have declared a disability in the mid-size firms. This is up from 5% in 2021 for firms with between two and nine partners, and no change for 10 to 50 partner firms.

There are small differences in lawyers whose activities are limited and work in firms of different sizes, with a slightly higher proportion in the mid-size firms:

- 6% of lawyers in one, two to five partners and 50+ partner firms' activities were limited by a disability. This is up from 5% in 2021 for 50+ partner firms, and there is no change for one and two-to-five partner firms since 2021.
- 7% of lawyers in six-to-nine and 10 to 50 partner firms' activities were limited by a disability – up from 6% in 2021.

By work type

Disabled lawyers represent 6% of all lawyers. Although the differences are small, there are some variations by the type of legal work undertaken by the firm.

Type of work	Percentage	Change since 2021
Corporate	5%	up from 3%
Property	5%	up from 4%
Private	5%	no change
Criminal	7%	up from 5%
Other work	8%	up from 6%

For disabled lawyers whose activities are limited and who represent 6% of all lawyers:

- A slightly lower proportion work in firms mainly doing corporate work at 5% (up from 4% in 2021).
- A higher proportion work in firms mainly doing criminal at 7% (down from 8% in 2021), private client at 7% (up from 6% in 2021), mixed at 7% (up from 6% in 2021) and other work at 10% (up from 8% in 2021).

Other staff

For other staff working in law firms:

- 7% are disabled, up from 5% in 2021
- 8% declared that their activities were limited (up from 6% in 2021), with 1% affected a lot and 6% a little.

Excluding the prefer not to say responses, 8% of the known population of other staff are disabled, compared to 16% of the national workforce and 23% of the working age population.

Only 3% preferred not to declare their disability (no change since 2021) and 4% preferred not to say whether their activities were limited (no change since 2021).

Wales compared to England

There is a slightly higher proportion of disabled lawyers in Wales (7%) than in England (6%), although this is still significantly lower than the UK workforce as a whole. The same is true for lawyers whose activities are limited, with 7% in Wales and 6% in England. There was no difference in the disclosure rates between England and Wales – at 4% for both countries for disability and 5% for activities limited.

Socio-economic background

We have reported parental occupation in accordance with the national approach, using three categories to indicate socio-economic background:

- The professional (higher) socio-economic category is made up of modern and traditional professional occupations and senior, middle or junior managers or administrators.
- The intermediate socio-economic category is made up of clerical and intermediate occupations and small business owners who employ fewer than 25 people.
- The lower socio-economic (working class) category is made up of technical and craft occupations and long-term unemployed.

In carrying out the analysis of data for parental occupation, we have used national datasets. Read more about measuring socio-economic diversity on the Social Mobility Commission website [https://socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/financial-and-professional-measurement/]. We have focused on parental occupation and school type in this analysis. According to the Social Mobility Commission, parental occupation is the most reliable indicator of social mobility. The data for parental qualification is available in the firm diversity data reporting tool, but we have not drawn out the key findings here.

All lawyers

Parental occupation

There is an increase in the proportion of lawyers from intermediate and lower socio-economic backgrounds and a decrease in those from a professional background.

Background	Percentage of lawyers	Change since 2021
Professional	57%	Down from 58%
Intermediate	13%	Up from 12%
Lower socio-economic	18%	Up from 17%
Preferred not to declare	9%	No change

Excluding the prefer not to say responses, lawyers compare to the general population [https://socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/] as follows:

- Professional background – 63% of lawyers compared to 37% nationally.
- Intermediate background – 14% of lawyers compared to 24% nationally.
- Lower socio-economic background – 19% of lawyers compared to 39% nationally.

Four per cent selected other responses (such as 'retired' or 'do not know').

School attended

There is a decrease in the proportion of lawyers attending an independent/fee-paying school. And there is an increase in the proportion of lawyers who attended a state school or a school outside the UK.

- 21% of lawyers attended an independent/fee-paying school, down from 22% since 2021.
  - 18% had no bursary, down from 20% in 2021.
  - 3% received a bursary covering 90% or more of the fees, no change since 2021.
- 64% of lawyers attended a state school, up from 63% in 2021.
  - 20% attended selective schools, no change since 2021.

    - 44% attended non-selective schools, up from 43% in 2021.
- 9% attended schools outside the UK, up from 8% in 2021.

Looking at the ratio of those who attended independent/fee-paying schools compared to state schools, we can see there has been very little change since 2021:

- For every lawyer from a fee-paying school in 2023, there were 3.05 lawyers who attended a state school, up from 2.86 in 2021.
- For every partner from a fee-paying school in 2023, there were 2.48 partners who attended a state school, up from 2.31 in 2021.
- For every solicitor from a fee-paying school in 2023, there were 3.42 solicitors who attended a state school, up from 3.25 in 2021.

Excluding the 'prefer not to say' responses, 23% of lawyers attended an independent/fee-paying school compared to 6.5% of all students in England in 2023/24 [https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2023-24] . Only 6% of lawyers preferred not to declare their school type (no change from 2021).

By seniority

Parental occupation

There is little difference in the socio-economic background of partners and solicitors.

Background	Full-equity partners	Salaried partners	Solicitors
Professional	56%	59%	57%
Intermediate	13%	13%	13%
Lower socio-economic	17%	17%	18%
Preferred not to declare	11%	8%	8%

School attended

A greater proportion of partners attended an independent/fee-paying school compared to solicitors.

School type	Full-equity partners	Salaried partners	Solicitors
Independent/fee-paying	25%	24%	19%
State	60%	65%	65%
Outside the UK	8%	6%	11%
Preferred not to say	8%	5%	5%

By firm size

Parental occupation

There is a greater proportion of lawyers from a professional background in larger firms:

- 65% of lawyers in firms with 50+ partners are from a professional background (down from 68% in 2021), compared to 44% in one-partner firms, down from 48% in 2021.
- 9% of lawyers in firms with 50+ partners are from an intermediate background (up from 8% in 2021), compared to 16% in one-partner firms, up from 14% in 2021.
- 14% of lawyers in firms with 50+ partners are from a lower socio-economic background (no change since 2021), compared to 19% in one-partner firms, up from 17% in 2021.

Seventeen per cent of lawyers in one-partner firms preferred not to declare their parental occupation (down from 19% in 2021), compared to 7% in 50+ partner firms (up from 5% in 2021).

School attended

There is a greater proportion of lawyers who attended an independent/fee-paying school in larger firms:

- 28% of lawyers in firms with 50+ partners attended an independent/fee-paying school (down from 29% in 2021), compared to 15% in one-partner firms (down from 16% in 2021).
- 56% of lawyers in firms with 50+ partners attended a state school (up from 55% since 2021), compared to 62% in one-partner firms (up from 60% in 2021).
- 13% of lawyers in firms with 50+ partners attended school outside the UK (up from 11% in 2021), compared to 12% in one-partner firms (up from 11% in 2021).

Only 4% of lawyers in firms with 50+ partners preferred not to declare their school type (no change since 2021), compared to 11% of lawyers in one-partner firms (down from 12% in 2021).

By work type

Parental occupation

There are differences in socio-economic background by work type with a greater proportion of lawyers from a professional background mainly doing corporate work:

- 67% of lawyers in firms which mainly do corporate work are from a professional background (down from 71% in 2021), compared to 42% in firms mainly doing criminal work (no change since 2021).
- 22% of lawyers in firms which mainly do criminal work are from a lower socio-economic background (up from 21% in 2021), compared to 11% in firms which mainly do corporate work (no change since 2021).

Eight per cent of lawyers in firms which mainly do corporate work preferred not to declare their parental occupation (up from 5% in 2021). This compares to 20% in firms which mainly do criminal work (down from 22% in 2021).

School attended

There is a greater proportion of lawyers in firms which mainly do corporate work who attended an independent/fee-paying school:

- 31% of lawyers in firms which mainly do corporate work attended an independent/fee-paying school (down from 33% in 2021). This is compared to 12% of lawyers mainly doing criminal work (down from 13% in 2021) and 13% doing private client work (down from 15% in 2021).
- 45% of lawyers in firms which mainly do corporate work attended a state school (no change since 2021), compared to 71% of lawyers doing criminal work (up from 70% in 2021).
- 20% of lawyers in firms which mainly do corporate work attended school outside the UK (up from 18% in 2021), compared to 4% of lawyers in firms doing criminal work (up from 3% in 2021).

Only 4% of lawyers in firms which mainly do corporate work preferred not to declare their school type (up from 3% in 2021). This is compared to 13% in firms which mainly do criminal work (no change since 2021).

Other staff

Parental occupation

For other staff working in law firms, there is a closer correlation with the national data than there is with the breakdown for lawyers.

Excluding the 'prefer not to say' responses, other staff compare to the general population [https://socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/] as follows:

- professional background – 47% of other staff compared to 37% nationally
- intermediate background – 15% of other staff compared to 24% nationally
- Lower socio-economic background – 33% of other staff compared to 39% nationally.

Nine per cent of other staff preferred not to declare their parental occupation (no change since 2021).

School attended

For other staff working in law firms, there is a closer correlation with the general public than there is with lawyers:

- 8% of other staff attended an independent/fee-paying school state school, no change since 2021
- 80% of other staff attended a state school, no change since 2021
- 9% of other staff attended a school outside the UK, up from 7% in 2021.

Excluding the 'prefer not to say' responses, 8% of other staff attended an independent/fee-paying school compared to 6.5% of all students in England in 2023/24 [https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2023-24]. Only 4% of other staff preferred not to declare their school type, down from 5% in 2021.

Wales compared to England

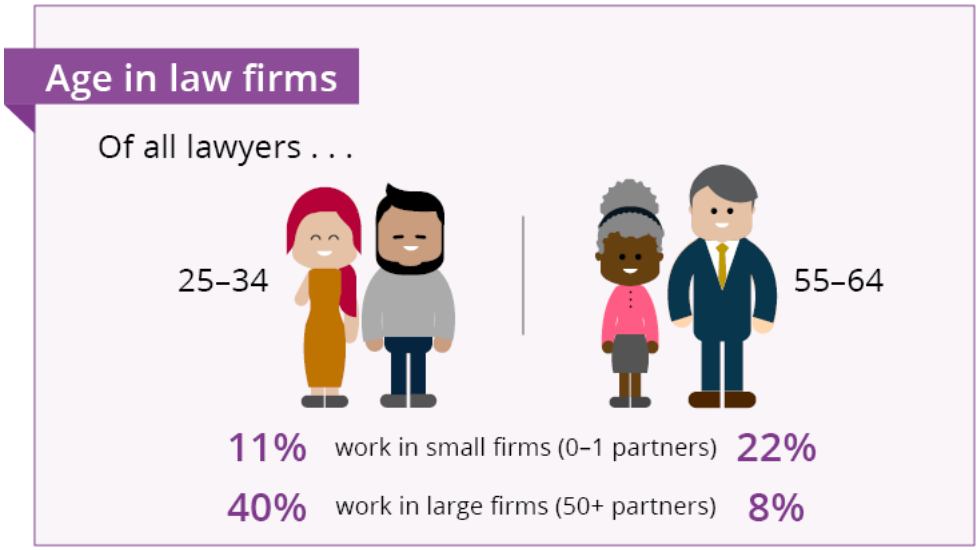
Parental occupation

There is a slightly smaller proportion of lawyers working in Wales from a professional background (52%) compared to lawyers working in England (57%). Similarly, there is a slightly larger proportion of lawyers working in Wales from a lower socio-economic background (23%) than those in England (18%).

School attended

There is a much larger proportion of lawyers working in England who went to an independent/fee-paying school (22%) than in Wales (9%). For lawyers working in Wales, 83% went to a state school, compared to 63% in England, and only 2% in Wales attended school outside the UK (10% in England).

Age



All lawyers

There is little change in the age profile of lawyers since 2021, with more than half (59%) aged between 25 and 44.

Age range	Percentage of lawyers	Change since 2021
25–34	30%	Up from 29%
35–44	29%	No change
45–54	22%	No change
55–64	13%	No change
65+	4%	No change
Prefer not to declare	2%	No change

By seniority

The data reflects the average career pattern of solicitors and when they might expect to become partners in a firm:

- For full-equity partners, the largest group is 45–54 (39%), followed by 55–64 (26%) and then 35–44 (23%).
- For salaried partners, the largest group is 35–44 (42%), followed by 45–54 (32%) and then 55-64 (15%)
- For solicitors, the largest age group is 25–34 (44%) followed by 35–44 (29%) and then 45–54 (14%).

Only 2% of full-equity partners, 1% of salaried partners and 1% of solicitors preferred not to declare their age.

By firm size

The largest proportion of lawyers in one-partner firms are aged 45–54. In two-to-five and six-to-nine partner firms, the largest group are aged 35–44. In 10 to 50 and 50+ partner firms, the largest are aged 25–34.

The age group of all lawyers vary depending on firm size, with a greater proportion of older lawyers in smaller firms:

- 40% of all lawyers in 50+ partner firms are aged 25–34, 8% are aged 55–64.
- 34% of all lawyers in 10-50 partner firms are aged 25–34, 11% are aged 55–64.
- 30% of all lawyers in six-to-nine partner firms are aged 35–44, 16% are aged 55–64.
- 28% of all lawyers in two-to-five partner firms are aged 35–44, 17% are aged 55–64.
- 28% of all lawyers in one-partner firms are aged 45–54, 11% are aged 25–34.

There is a greater proportion of all lawyers in one-partner firms (4%) who preferred not to declare their age, compared to 50+ partner firms (0.2%).

By work type

There are some differences in the age categories, depending on the type of legal work:

- 46% of lawyers who work in law firms which mainly do corporate work, are 25–34. This is compared to 13% in firms mainly doing criminal or private client (17%) work.
- 7% of lawyers who work in law firms which mainly do corporate work are 55–64. This is compared to 21% who work in law firms mainly doing criminal, or those who work mostly in private client or property (18%).

Four per cent of lawyers who work in law firms which mainly do criminal, private client and other work preferred not to declare their age.

Other staff

For other staff working in law firms, the largest age group is 25–34 (29%) and this is true for all firm sizes.

Wales compared to England

In England, the largest proportion of lawyers fall into the 25–34 age category (30%), closely followed by 35-44 (29%). However, in Wales, the largest proportion are aged 35–44 (28%) and there is four percentage points difference to the second largest group 25–34 (24%).

Religion

All lawyers

The largest group of lawyers is Christian, followed by those who have no religion or belief. The largest of the other faith groups is Muslim:

- 41% of lawyers are Christian, down from 43% in 2021
- 36% of lawyers have no religion or belief, up from 33% in 2021
- 6% of lawyers are Muslim, no change from 2021.

Eight per cent preferred not to say, down from 9% in 2021.

By seniority

There are some differences by seniority for the three largest groups (Christian, no religion or belief and Muslim):

- 45% of full-equity partners, 47% of salaried partners and 37% of solicitors are Christian
- 27% of full-equity partners, 34% of salaried partners and 40% of solicitors have no religion or belief
- 7% of full-equity partners, 4% of salaried partners and 6% of solicitors are Muslim.

Looking at trends over time for all partners (as we only have the full-equity and salaried split for 2023), there are some changes:

- a decrease in Christian partners from 48% in 2021 to 46% in 2023
- a decrease in Jewish partners, from 4% in 2021 to 3% in 2023
- an increase in partners with no religion or belief from 26% in 2021 to 29% in 2023.

By firm size

There are some differences by firm size for the three largest groups, with a greater proportion of Christians and those with no religion or belief in the largest firms compared to the smallest firms. The opposite is true for Muslims. Key findings include:

- 35% of lawyers in one-partner firms are Christian compared to 41% in firms with 50+ partners
- 21% of lawyers in one-partner firms have no religion or belief compared to 41% in firms with 50+ partners
- 18% of lawyers in one-partner firms are Muslim, compared to 2% of lawyers in firms with 50+ partners.

And 14% of lawyers in one-partner firms preferred not to declare their religion, compared to 7% in the firms with 50+ partners.

By work type

There are some differences for the three largest groups by work type for all lawyers.

Corporate law:

- Christian – 38%
- No religion or belief – 43%
- Hindu – 3%
- Jewish 3%
- Muslim – 2%
- Other religion or belief groups - 2%
- Sikh – 1%
- Buddhist – 1%.

Criminal law:

- Christian – 33%
- No religion or belief – 27%
- Muslim – 14%
- Sikh – 4%
- Hindu – 3%.

Other staff

For other staff working in law firms:

- No religion or belief – 43%
- Christian – 37%
- Muslim – 6%
- Another religion – 3%
- Hindu – 2%
- Sikh – 1%
- Buddhist – 1%
- Jewish – 1%

And 7% of other staff preferred not to declare their religion, down from 8% in 2021.

Wales compared to England

The largest group for both England and Wales is Christian, 40% for England and 49% for Wales. For both, 36% said they had no religion or belief.

For the smaller faith groups, there is a larger difference. Six per cent of all lawyers in England are Muslim, 3% Hindu and 2% Sikh and Jewish. In Wales, Muslim lawyers make up just 2% of all lawyers, and the proportions of Hindu, Jewish and Sikh lawyers all round down to 0% of the lawyer population.

Caring responsibilities

All lawyers

Over a third of lawyers have primary caring responsibilities for children (35%), up from 33% in 2021. Eight per cent care for others with long-term physical or mental ill health cause by disability or age, the same as in 2021.

Those who preferred not to say whether they had a childcare responsibility was 4%, down from 5% in 2021. Those who preferred not to say whether they had other care responsibilities, was 5%, down from 6% in 2021.

By seniority

The proportion of those with caring responsibilities is slightly higher for full-equity partners and salaried partners than solicitors:

- 37% of full-equity partners, 49% of salaried partners and 31% of solicitors have childcare responsibilities.
- 41% of all partners have childcare responsibilities, up from 38% in 2021. And, 31% of solicitors have childcare responsibilities, no change since 2021.
- Six per cent of full-equity partners, 4% of salaried partners and 4% of solicitors preferred not to say whether they had childcare responsibilities.
- 9% of full-equity partners, 9% of salaried partners and 7% of solicitors have other caring responsibilities.
- 9% of all partners have other caring responsibilities, down from 10% in 2021. Seven per cent of solicitors have childcare responsibilities, no change since 2021.
- Seven per cent of full-equity partners, 4% of salaried partners and 5% of solicitors preferred not to say whether they had other caring responsibilities.

By firm size

There are some differences by firm size, with a higher proportion of lawyers caring for children in mid-sized firms. There were 38% in six-to-nine partner firms, 37% in 10 to 50 partner firms and 36% in two-to-five partner firms. This compares to 32% in one-partner firms and 33% in 50+ partner firms. There is a higher proportion of lawyers caring for others in six-to-nine partner firms at 9%, with 8% in one-partner, two-to-five partner and 10 to 50 partner firms and 7% in 50+ partners firms.

By work type

There are differences when we look at the type of legal work undertaken by lawyers with caring responsibilities:

- 39% of lawyers working in firms which mainly do litigation work are caring for children, compared to 30% of those doing criminal work and 28% of those doing corporate work.
- 9% of lawyers working in firms which mainly do criminal work are caring for others, compared to 6% of those doing corporate work.
- For those mainly doing criminal work, 10% of lawyers preferred not to say whether they had childcare and caring responsibilities.

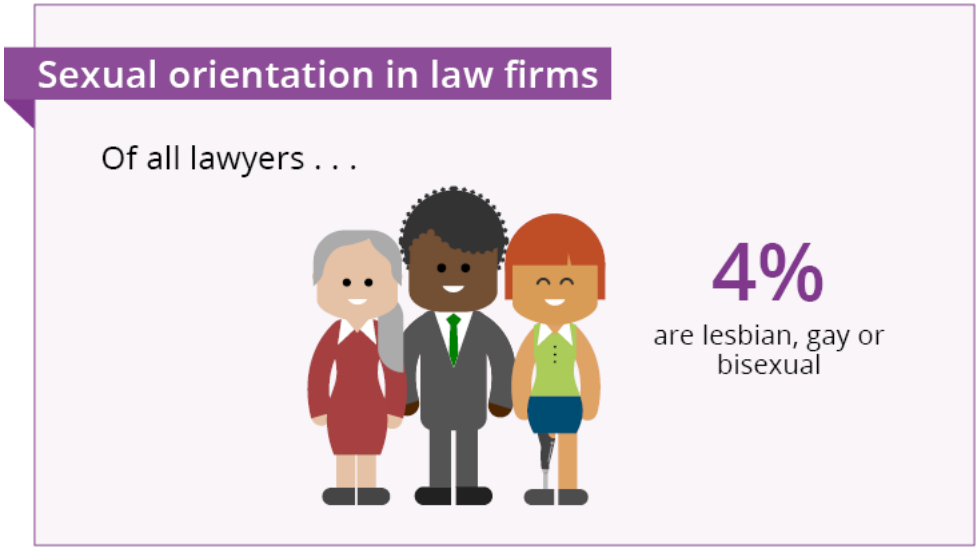
Other staff

For other staff working in law firms, 25% are caring for children and 9% had other caring responsibilities.

Wales compared to England

There are some differences in Wales compared to England in terms of lawyers with caring responsibilities. Thirty-seven per cent of lawyers working in Wales have caring responsibilities for children compared to 35% in England. Additionally, 10% working in Wales have care responsibilities for others, compared to 8% in England.

Sexual orientation



All lawyers

There is a slight increase in the proportion of lawyers who are lesbian, gay, bi (LGB) or prefer another description. Because of the small numbers and to allow closer comparison with national data, we have provided the percentages rounded to one decimal point.

Identify as	Percentage of lawyers	Change since 2021
Heterosexual	89.2%	No change
Lesbian or gay	2.6%	Up from 2.4%
Bi	1.4%	Up from 1.0%
Another description	0.4%	Up from 0.3%
Preferred not to say	6.3%	Down from 7%

Excluding the 'prefer not to say' response, lawyers compare to the UK population [https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2021and2022] figures for 2022 as follows:

- 2.8% of lawyers are lesbian or gay, compared to 1.8% of the UK population
- 1.5% of lawyers are bi, compared to 1.5% of the UK population
- 0.4% of lawyers prefer another description compared to 0.6% of the UK population.

By seniority

There is a larger proportion of solicitors who identify as LGB than partners:

- 4.6% of solicitors are LGB (1.8% bi, 2.8% lesbian or gay), up from 3.9% in 2021.
- More salaried partners identify as LGB (3.4%) than full-equity partners (2.7%).
- 3% of partners are LGB (0.7% bi, 2.3% lesbian or gay), up from 2.8% in 2021.

Eight point four per cent of full-equity partners, 5.1% of salaried and 7.2% of partners prefer not to declare their sexual orientation (down from 8.4% in 2021). This is compared to 5.9% of solicitors (down from 6.2% in 2021).

By firm size

Although the numbers are small, there are some variations when we look at the data by firm size, as there is a lower proportion of lawyers who identify as LGB in smaller firms:

- 5.1% of LGB lawyers are in the largest firms with 50+ partners (up from 4.4% in 2021).

- 4.7% of LGB lawyers are in firms with 10 to 50 partners (up from 4.2% in 2021).
- 3.6% of LGB lawyers are in firms with six-to-nine partners (up from 3.2% in 2021).
- 2.9% of LGB lawyers are in firms with two-to-five partners (up from 2.5% in 2021).
- 2.3% of LGB lawyers are in one-partner firms (up from 2.2% in 2021).

There is a larger proportion of lawyers who preferred not to respond on their sexual orientation in smaller firms (11.7% in one-partner firms), than larger firms (4.9% in 50+ partner firms).

By work type

There is some variation in the proportion of people who identify as LGB when we break down the data by work type:

- corporate – 6.1% of lawyers identify as LGB
- property– 2.5% of lawyers identify as LGB.
- criminal – 2.2% of lawyers identify as LGB.

There is a larger proportion of lawyers working in firms that mainly do criminal work that preferred not to respond on sexual orientation (12.9%) than those in mainly corporate (6%) or litigation firms (5.6%).

Other staff

For other staff working in law firms, the proportion of those that identify as LGB is slightly larger than the proportion of all lawyers:

- 88.7% of other staff identify as heterosexual (down from 89.6% in 2021)
- 5% of other staff identify as LGB (up from 4.2% in 2021)
- 0.7% of other staff prefer another description (up from 0.5% in 2021).

Excluding the 'preferred not to say' responses for other staff:

- 2.4% are lesbian or gay, compared to 1.8% of the UK population
- 2.9% are bi, compared to 1.5% of the UK population
- 0.7% prefer another description compared to 0.6% of the UK population.

There were 5.6% of other staff who preferred not to declare their sexual orientation, down from 5.7% in 2021.

Wales compared to England

There is a higher proportion of lawyers identifying as LGB in England (4.1%) than in Wales (2.8%). More lawyers working in Wales selected prefer not to say (7.9%) than lawyers working in England (6.3%).

Gender identity

We aligned this question to that used in the 2021 Census, asking people if their gender identity is the same as their sex registered at birth.

Because of the small numbers, we have provided the percentages rounded to one decimal point. In the diversity data tool, we are rounding to whole numbers.

All lawyers

The proportion of lawyers who have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth is 0.5%, down from 0.9% in 2021. This has fallen by almost 2% from 2.4% in 2017.

This data was collected for the first time in the 2021 census [https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/genderidentity/bulletins/genderidentityenglandandwales/census202 , where there was a 6% non-disclosure rate (please note the caveat in relation to this data on the ONS website). Less than one per cent of the general population (0.5%) also answered that their gender identity was different to their sex registered at birth. Only 3% preferred not to say, up from 2.8% in 2021.

By seniority

There is a slightly higher proportion of solicitors who have a gender identity different to their sex registered at birth (0.5%) than partners (0.4%). There is also a slightly higher proportion of salaried partners who have a gender identity different to their sex registered at birth (0.4%) than full-equity partners (0.3%). More full-equity partners preferred not to say (3.8%) than salaried partners (2.9%). There is a slightly higher proportion of partners (3.5%) than solicitors (2.8%) who preferred not to say.

By firm size

Although the numbers are very small, there are some differences by firm size, with 0.2% lawyers in one-partner firms who have a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth (down from 0.5% in 2021).

This is compared to 0.7% in firms with 50+ partners (down from 0.2% in 2021). Four point eight per cent preferred not to say in one-partner firms compared to 2.9% in firms with 50+ partners.

By work type

There are small variations when we look at types of legal work, with the smallest proportion of lawyers who have a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth working in firms which mainly do corporate work (0.6%), compared to those that mainly do criminal or property work (0.3%).

Other staff

For other staff working in law firms, 1.2% have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth (compared to 0.5% of the general population and lawyers) and 2% preferred not to say.

Wales compared to England

There is a higher proportion of lawyers who have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth in Wales (0.9%) than in England (0.5%). For Wales, this is an increase of 0.6% from their 2021 data (0.3%).