

Population of solicitors in England and Wales

The SRA regulates solicitors and their firms, as well as other lawyers and non-lawyer managers working in law firms across England and Wales. We also regulate those working as registered European lawyers or registered foreign lawyers. Our purpose is to protect the public by ensuring that solicitors meet high standards, and by acting when risks are identified.

The chart below shows the trend in the number of practising solicitors (those holding practising certificates) in England and Wales. There are currently 156,928 practising solicitors.

Each year we carry out a practising certificate bulk termination exercise where we terminate those practising certificates which have not been renewed. The results of this exercise can be seen by the falls in the numbers of solicitors holding practising certificates on the chart above in December 2009, January 2011, August 2012, March 2013, February 2014, December 2014, December 2015, December 2016, December 2017, December 2018, December 2019, and December 2020.

We also carry out a keeping of the roll exercise. The results of this exercise can be seen by a fall in the number of all solicitors on the roll in November 2012, August 2013 and July 2014.

Snapshot of solicitors

As well as practising solicitors, we also regulate registered European lawyers, registered foreign lawyers, and exempt European lawyers and the current numbers of these three groups can be seen in the table below.

The total number of solicitors on the roll at the end of October 2021 was 212,601.

Date range	All solicitors on the roll	Practising solicitors	Registered European lawyers	Registered foreign lawyers	Exempt European lawyers [#n2]
October 2021	212601	156928	181 [#n1]	5836	1982 [#n2]
September 2021	212218	156323	191 [#n1]	5778	1732 [#n2]
August 2021	210152	154273	171 [#n1]	5723	1732 [#n2]
July 2021	209181	153246	181 [#n1]	5652	1732 [#n2]
June 2021	208859	152762	171 [#n1]	5587	1732 [#n2]

May 2021	208645	152393	151 [#n1]	5541	1732 [#n2]
Aprì 2021	208366	151885	151 [#n1]	5463	1742 [#n2]
March 2021	207916	154170	141 [#n1]	5632	1772 [#n2]
February 2021	206972	153616	141 [#n1]	5596	1772 [#n2]
January 2021	206488	152997	141 [#n1]	5587	1772 [#n2]
December 2020	206271	152528	759	2917	3800
November 2020	205823	153560	756	2885	3793
October 2020	205688	153082	763	2856	3776
September 2020	204641	152060	776	2816	3765
August 2020	203156	150695	778	2801	3762
July 2020	202460	150021	781	2779	3762
June 2020	202265	149621	781	2758	3715
May 2020	201873	149152	784	2729	3699
April 2020	201547	148770	792	2699	3672
March 2020	201186	148284	826	2648	3618
February 2020	200320	147333	820	2609	3599

January 2020	200021	146791	793	2572	3604
December 2019	199742	146092	753	2542	3588
November 2019	199503	149005	769	2688	3576
October 2019	199181	150349	761	2685	3564
September 2019	198692	149806	741	2662	3548
August 2019	196324	147403	733	2638	3522
July 2019	195952	146913	731	2602	3500
June 2019	195660	146418	728	2568	3489
May 2019	195334	146046	732	2544	3469
April 2019	194969	145547	722	2515	3432
March 2019	194464	144845	715	2439	3400
February 2019	193451	143683	690	2390	3385
January 2019	193162	143187	679	2369	3305
December 2018	192866	143198	667	2364	3222
November 2018	192516	145999	694	2493	3217
October 2018	192121	146625	689	2491	3203
	191621	146050	699	2470	3191

September 2018					
August 2018	189236	143652	693	2449	3174
July 2018	188880	143184	677	2406	3164
June 2018	188557	142665	668	2396	3147
May 2018	188274	142286	661	2383	3120
April 2018	187961	141811	649	2348	3097
March 2018	187469	141121	647	2331	3052
February 2018	186560	140064	642	2315	3004
January 2018	186269	139579	635	2278	2996
December 2017	185900	139797	633	2258	2978
November 2017	185596	142359	673	2420	2968
October 2017	185240	143072	676	2407	2938
September 2017	184736	142515	676	2398	2923
August 2017	182324	140083	667	2389	2920
July 2017	181982	139638	661	2364	2919
June 2017	181619	139084	654	2350	2907
May 2017	181347	138758	651	2327	2892

April 2017	181000	138280	649	2308	2918
March 2017	180559	137623	650	2294	2899
February 2017	179647	136596	640	2234	2834
January 2017	179317	136068	630	2215	2816
December 2016	178972	135309	602	2194	2849
November 2016	178682	138063	612	2325	2832
October 2016	178340	139313	627	2337	2827
September 2016	177785	138905	619	2320	2830
August 2016	175582	136701	611	2309	2825
July 2016	175181	136211	599	2289	2805
June 2016	174732	135598	593	2279	2784
May 2016	174416	135221	581	2243	2776
April 2016	174095	134785	567	2211	2743
March 2016	173636	134099	551	2193	2721
February 2016	172788	133224	531	2166	2718
January 2016	172380	132635	522	2147	2713

December 2015	172033	132245	504	2166	2718
November 2015	171760	136940	531	2310	2694
October 2015	171464	136294	515	2296	2695
September 2015	170857	135976	510	2281	2682
August 2015	168663	133837	496	2266	2674
July 2015	168231	133364	482	2249	2666
June 2015	167866	132864	476	2230	2651
May 2015	167503	132520	467	2201	2616
April 2015	167147	132087	455	2175	2590
March 2015	166737	131518	431	2138	2577
February 2015	165754	130443	427	2122	2567
January 2015	165368	129922	420	2069	2567
December 2014	164951	129246	401	2027	2568
November 2014	164598	132636	439	2115	2540
October 2014	164133	133327	445	2132	2539
September 2014	163336	132975	443	2131	2531

August 2014	161091	130846	424	2102	2527
July 2014	160546	130419	412	2082	2527
June 2014	166423	129552	414	2071	2513
May 2014	166119	129552	408	2044	2495
April 2014	165781	129083	392	2021	2471
March 2014	165242	128425	383	2003	2464
February 2014	164365	127423	374	1994	2452
January 2014	163898	130612	405	2140	2433
December 2013	163514	131134	397	2130	2420
November 2013	163015	130812	384	2106	2414
October 2013	162367	130643	383	2095	2340
September 2013	161323	129794	380	2076	2343
August 2013	158872	127874	375	1914	2342
July 2013	167790	127575	376	1898	2338
June 2013	167457	127068	370	1889	2308
May 2013	167146	126624	364	1870	2301

April 2013	166522	126064	354	1851	2269
March 2013	165956	125192	371	1825	2239
February 2013	164998	128169	409	2018	2226
January 2013	164793	128379	401	2000	2174
December 2012	164181	128419	393	1978	2078
November 2012	163031	127890	388	1967	2077
October 2012	169338	127353	384	1955	2077
September 2012	168713	127109	368	1929	2047
August 2012	166385	124968	367	1744	2046
July 2012	166007	128710	385	1852	2042
June 2012	165748	128860	366	1835	2023
May 2012	165519	128569	360	1812	2025
April 2012	165227	128240	343	1784	2018
March 2012	164841	127884	338	1780	2016
February 2012	163978	126858	328	1768	2001
January 2012	163229	126008	327	1765	1997

December 2011	163259	125718	317	1742	1996
November 2011	163108	125473	304	1728	1997
October 2011	162818	125011	305	1722	1994
September 2011	161815	124306	300	1707	1989
August 2011	159798	122343	294	1680	1966

Notes

1. Following the UK's exit from the EU, only Swiss registered European lawyers (REL) can continue as an REL up to 1 January 2024. All other RELs are now registered foreign lawyers.
2. Following the UK's exit from the EU, most exempt European lawyers (EELs) are no longer treated as legally qualified in England and Wales. All non-UK EELs are now registered foreign lawyers. Since January 2021, this column only shows those who are UK EELs.