

Reporting your firm data

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Firm diversity data requirements

All regulated firms have to collect, report and publish data about the diversity make-up of their workforce every two years. Our next collection exercise will be in 2021

Publish a summary of your data

If you have not already done so, please publish a summary of your firm's diversity data in a way that does not identify anyone. Read more in the publishing data tab.

How we will use the data

We may use the information we collect from firms in the following ways:

- to update our law firm diversity tool [[solicitors/resources/diversity-toolkit/law-firm-diversity-tool/](#)] so you can see the make-up of law firms across the sector
- to inform our publications or engagement with people as part of our work to promote diversity in the profession
- in our regulatory reform work to help us monitor the diversity impact of the changes we make
- to help us meet our public sector equality duty, for example monitoring our decision making by protected characteristics
- to facilitate research and analysis by others
- to meet reporting requirements to the Legal Services Board or the Ministry of Justice.

We will make sure that no-one can be identified from any data that we publish or share with others.

Read more about privacy, data and information at the SRA [[sra/how-we-work/privacy-data-information/](#)].

If you have any questions, please contact us [[home/contact-us/](#)].

Collecting diversity data

The diversity questionnaire

You can download a Microsoft Word version (DOC 6 pages, 173K) [[globalassets/documents/sra/equality-diversity/example-diversity-questionnaire.doc?version=4a1aba](#)] of the questionnaire we used for collecting firm diversity data in 2019. This included some changes to the questionnaire we used in 2017.

The changes we have made since 2017 include:

- a slight change to the wording of the trans question
- minor changes to the sexual orientation response categories
- changes to the questions we ask about schooling and parental education
- a new question about parental occupation.

Encourage your staff to complete the questionnaire

When you collect diversity data from people working at your firm, please do not make assumptions about them. Everyone should be allowed to complete the questionnaire themselves.

Although you must give people an opportunity to respond, you cannot compel anyone to provide their diversity information. However, they may want to take part if they understand they can choose 'prefer not to say' for the questions they would rather not answer.

Think about data protection before you start the collection

Before you start, you should tell people how the data will be used and who will have access to it. Make sure you comply with the data protection legislation when you collect, store and process this information.

Please also remember that the data reported to us can be seen by all authorised signatories and organisation contacts for your firm.

You may prefer to collect the data on an anonymous basis, however the information will be much more useful to you if it is linked to an individual, eg by reference to a confidential identification number. Then it can be used to monitor a range of employment activities over time, such as promotion, pay rates, or recruitment practices. People are more likely to provide information which can be traced back to them if you reassure them about confidentiality and tell them how your firm will keep their data secure.

Who should be included in the collection?

Everyone working at your firm is covered by the firm diversity data collection, not just solicitors. You should include:

- Full-time and part-time employees.
- Employees on maternity leave or on long term sick leave (but only if they are in contact with the firm during their absence and are willing to respond).
- Temporary employees, those on a secondment contract, consultants or other contracted staff working with you for three months or longer.

You should not include:

- People engaged in work which has been outsourced by the firm.
- Barristers or other experts engaged by the firm on individual matters.
- People who are normally based outside England and Wales.

If someone works for more than one firm, they must only complete one questionnaire. This should be for the firm where they do the majority of their work and spend most of their time.

Role categories

Everyone must be put into one of these role categories. Make sure your staff know which category they are in if you are conducting an anonymous survey.

If someone falls into more than one category, they should use the one which most accurately reflects their main role.

Please note that reference to solicitors includes Registered European Lawyers and Registered Foreign Lawyers.

Role category	Notes
Solicitor partner (sole practitioner, member or director)	Partners, members or directors who are not solicitors should be recorded in the "Managerial role" category below
Solicitor (not partners)	All other practising solicitors including assistant solicitors, associates or consultants.
Other fee earning role	Includes fee earners such as trainee solicitors, members of CILEx who are not Chartered Legal Executives (Fellows) or CILEx Practitioners and paralegals, i.e. those who are not "authorised persons"
Role directly supporting a fee earner	Includes legal secretaries, administrators, legal assistants, and non fee earning paralegals
Managerial role	Includes non lawyer partners, directors, or members and others such as practice managers, finance or account managers etc
IT/HR/other corporate services role	Includes non-managerial staff working in support services - including finance or accountancy roles
Barrister	People who are authorised by the Bar Standards Board
Chartered Legal Executive (Fellow)/CILEx Practitioner	People who are authorised by CILEx Regulation
Licensed Conveyancer	People who are authorised by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers
Patent or Trade Mark Attorney	People who are authorised by the Intellectual Property Regulation Board
Costs Lawyer	People who are authorised by the Costs Lawyer Standards Board
Notary	People who are authorised by the Master of the Faculties
Prefer not to say	"
An "authorised person" is a person who is authorised by one of the approved regulators to carry on the relevant activity (defined by the Legal Services Act 2007). Solicitors with a current practising certificate, registered European lawyers and registered foreign lawyers are "authorised" by us.	

Reporting your firm's diversity data

We have concluded our diversity data collection for 2019 and you can no longer access the reporting site. if you need your firm's diversity data please contact our Diversity team [contactus]

We will be collecting firm diversity data again in 2021.

Publishing your data

What you have to do

You should publish a summary of your firm's diversity data, so long as it complies with data protection legislation.

For larger firms, your data will be more meaningful if you provide some interpretation; showing any trends and setting out any steps you are taking to promote diversity at the firm.

A much richer picture of your firm will be provided if you publish more detail, for example the gender and ethnicity breakdown of your trainees or a diversity breakdown of your new partner appointments.

You should refresh your publication each time you collect a new set of diversity data.

What about data protection?

You should not publish any diversity data in a way that might identify individuals. Therefore sole practitioners and small firms may find they cannot publish their data at all.

You do not have to include information relating to religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender. It is good practice to publish this data, but it can be quite sensitive, so make your own decision on this.

To minimise the risk of identifying individuals you could:

- Merge role categories to show a high level breakdown of the data, for example by partner, other fee earner and support staff.
- Publish data across the whole firm.
- Show the high level ethnicity categories rather than the detailed sub categories.

For more guidance about your obligations see the Code of Practice on publishing anonymous data from the Information Commissioner's Office [<https://ico.org.uk/>].

Where you should publish your data

Your diversity data should be made available to your staff and externally. Most firms will choose to publish on their website, but you can use alternative or additional publication methods such as:

- A poster in your office reception area and/or meeting rooms.
- An article in your internal or external newsletter/bulletin.

If you are publishing on your website, you should make it easy to find and understand. This could include:

- Having a "Diversity" link on your homepage with a specific page for diversity data.
- Illustrating the data using clear tables, diagrams or graphics and include a summary of what it shows.
- If you can, adding enough detail to show for example, how many of your female partners attended fee-paying schools.

- Showcasing your approach to diversity and any initiatives you have in place.

Being open with this information gives you an opportunity to highlight your firm's commitment to diversity. This could offer a competitive advantage in promoting your firm to clients and attracting the best talent to join you.

Examples of how you might set out your data

Here are some examples of how to set out your diversity data. Please ensure that graphs and tables published online can be easily read by assistive technology.

Staff ethnic breakdown with the roles reduced to four main categories and the ethnicity categories reported at the highest level.

Gender breakdown as a percentage of all staff with the roles reduced to six categories

Gender breakdown as a percentage of all staff		
Role category	Male	Female
Partners	69	31
Solicitors	55	45
Other fee earners (e.g. trainees, paralegals, legal execs)	41	59
Role directly supporting fee earner (e.g. PAs)	2	98
Business services – Managerial	36	64
Business services – Support	38	62

Age distribution of employees across the whole firm

Open all [#]

Q1. When will we next have to report our diversity data to the SRA?

We collect diversity data from firms every two years and have completed the collection for 2019. You will need to report your firm's diversity data to us again in 2021.

Q2. Which questions did you change in 2019?

We made minor changes to the trans and sexual orientation questions. More

We revised the questions about schooling and parental education used to indicate social mobility and added a new one about parental occupation.

Q3. Why did you update the diversity questionnaire for 2019?

We updated some of the questions in 2019 to keep the questionnaire up to date with current practice, in particular: More

- We revised the wording of the sexual orientation question to bring it into line with the approach adopted by Stonewall.
- We made minor changes to the trans question which we introduced in 2017 to help make it

clearer. We considered changing the trans question to bring it into line with the approach adopted by Stonewall but found there was no consensus among various representative groups on the wording to use. We will review the position again when we collect in 2021 and take into account any future guidance from the Office for National Statistics on the matter as a trans question is likely to be included in the next census

[<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/2021censustopicresearchupdatedecember2018>]

- We revised our approach to the questions which are used to measure social mobility to reflect the approach recommended by the Cabinet Office [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/socio-economic-background>] published in June 2018. We did not include all the questions suggested by the Cabinet Office, only those we felt would provide useful information and be proportionate in the context of our diversity questionnaire.

Q4. Does this apply to in-house lawyers

No. The requirement to collect, report and publish diversity data only applies to law firms regulated by the SRA.

Q5. What if someone works for more than one firm?

If they work for more than one firm, they must only complete one questionnaire. More

This should be for the firm where they do the majority of their work and spend most of their time. If they work for a number of firms on an equal basis, they should complete the questionnaire for the one they have been working for the longest.

Q6. Should consultants be included in the diversity data collection for our firm?

Yes, but only those who are contracted for three months or longer with you. More

It does not matter whether they are paid through invoices or through the payroll. Consultants should be included within the appropriate role category as if they were employees.

Q7. Are a firm's corporate partners or other regulated entities such as a nominee or trustee firm covered?

Yes, if they are regulated by us. You can link them to the main firm to form a group. This means you only need to collect and report one set of diversity data for all firms in the group.

Q8. We would like to outsource the collection exercise. Is this acceptable?

Yes, there are a number of companies who offer this service. Please remember that you will still need to report your firm diversity data to us.

Q9. I have already included my own diversity data in the My Profile section of mySRA. Why do I have to provide it again?

This information is personal to you. The wider firm-based diversity data collection includes everyone employed at the firm. More

It was not possible for us to merge the two sets of data, which means that solicitors are also asked to participate in the firm survey as well.

Q10. Are we required to publish our diversity data if people could be identified?

No, you must consider whether the data protection legislation prevents you from doing this. More

However there may be ways to minimise this risk, see our publishing guidance for more information [\[solicitors/resources/diversity-toolkit/your-data/#Collection_5\]](#).

Q11. Do we need to apply to the SRA for an exemption or waiver from the publication requirement if we decide we cannot publish our diversity data?

No, if you decide that you cannot publish some or all of your diversity data you do not need to apply for any exemption or waiver. [More](#)

You may wish to record your decision so that you can tell us why, if we ask you about this.

Q12. What action will the SRA take if a firm does not comply with the requirements?

This is a regulatory requirement and we expect every firm to comply. Where firms do not provide the information, we may have to take further action.

Q13. What happens if someone at my firm refuses to respond to the diversity questionnaire?

You must give people an opportunity to respond, but you cannot compel anyone to provide their diversity information. [More](#)

To encourage people to respond you should explain the purpose of the survey and reassure them about confidentiality.

Q14. How do we respond to concerns from our staff about completing the questionnaire?

If someone is concerned about answering a question, they will be able to select "prefer not to say". [More](#)

Stonewall provides excellent guidance for employers in their workplace guide [Using monitoring data: making the most of sexual orientation data collection](#) [\[http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work/research_and_guides/4907.asp\]](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work/research_and_guides/4907.asp). This advice is helpful across all areas of diversity monitoring.

Q15. Is this a regulatory requirement?

Yes. [More](#)

The requirement to collect, report and publish diversity data is set out in rule 1 of the Code of Conduct for Firms [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-firms/#rule-1\]](#) and is an important part of upholding SRA Principle 6 [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#) which is to "act in a way that encourages equality, diversity and inclusion" Monitoring the diversity of people working in your firm will help you assess whether your firm is diverse and whether you could do more to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion. You can compare your firm's data with the diversity of other firms like yours using our firm diversity tool [\[solicitors/resources/diversity-toolkit/law-firm-diversity-tool/\]](#).

Q16. Where can I get more advice about equality, diversity and inclusion?

For more advice about equality, diversity and inclusion please see: [More](#)

- [SRA Principle 6 \[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#)
- [Rule 1 of the Code of Conduct for Firms \[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-firms/#rule-1\]](#)

- [Guidance on the SRA's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion \[solicitors/guidance/sra-approach-equality-diversity-inclusion/\]](#)
- [Further resources \[solicitors/resources/diversity-toolkit/\]](#)