

## Reporting your firm's diversity data

Updated 26 February 2024

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## Firm diversity data requirements

All regulated firms, regardless of size, have to collect, report and publish data about the diversity make-up of their workforce every two years.

### Reporting your data in 2023

The reporting period for 2023 is now closed.

If you need access to the data you reported to us please [contact us \[mailto:diversity@sra.org.uk\]](mailto:diversity@sra.org.uk).

We will be checking firms have complied with this regulatory requirement later this year.

### 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 \[solicitors/resources/equality-diversity/law-firm-diversity-tool/\]](#), 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 \[sra/how-we-work/privacy-data-information/\]](#)

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

## Collecting diversity data

### The diversity questionnaire

Download a [Microsoft Word version \(DOC 6 pages, 117K\) \[globalassets/documents/sra/equality-diversity/firm-diversity-data-questionnaire-june-2023.docx\]](#) of the new questionnaire.

We have made changes to the latest questionnaire which you can read more about on our Q&A page. If you have any questions please [contact us \[/home/contact-us/\]](#)

### 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.

If you are a sole practitioner or small law firm you still need to submit your diversity data, even if you are the only person within the firm. If you are concerned about disclosing any personal information then please select 'prefer not to say'.

### Think about data protection before you start

Before you start you should tell people how the data will be used and who will have access to it. Read more about how we use the data on the [what you need to know tab \[solicitors/resources-archived/diversity-toolkit/your-data/#7744\]](#). 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 foreign lawyers.

Role category	Notes
Full equity solicitor partner/sole practitioner	Include here partners, members, directors and sole practitioners who are solicitors. Those holding these roles who are not solicitors should be recorded in the 'Managerial role' category below
Salaried or partial equity solicitor	Partners, members or directors who are not solicitors should be recorded in the 'Managerial



partners	role' category below
Solicitor (not partner)	All other practising solicitors including assistant solicitors, associates or consultants
Other fee earning role	Includes fee earners such as trainee solicitors, CILEx members who are not Chartered Legal Executives (Fellows) or CILEx Practitioners and paralegals, ie, 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 and Registered Foreign Lawyers are 'authorised' by us.

## Firm diversity data requirements

All regulated firms, regardless of size, have to collect, report and publish data about the diversity make-up of their workforce every two years.

### Reporting your data in 2023

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### What you have to do

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

You should refresh your publication as soon as you can each time you collect a new set of diversity data. This should be a minimum of every two years.

[Open all \[#\]](#)

### [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.

**Helping people to understand your data**

For larger firms your data will be more meaningful if you provide some interpretation. For example, showing any trends, highlighting areas of underrepresentation 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.

Here are some suggestions to help people understand your data:

- comparing your data to national or regional benchmarks and/or to the overall picture of diversity in law firms using the [law firm diversity data tool](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/resources/equality-diversity/law-firm-diversity-tool/) [solicitors/resources/equality-diversity/law-firm-diversity-tool/]
- include prefer not to say responses – declaration rates are important for understanding firm culture
- publish your data by grade to show the diversity profile of your staff by seniority
- consider intersectional analysis of your data, for example, to understand the breakdown of your Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff by age or sex.

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 present your data**

Here are some examples of how to set out your diversity data. Please make sure that graphs and tables published online are accessible and can be easily read by those relying on assistive technology.

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

**Breakdown by sex as a percentage of all staff with the roles reduced to six categories**

<b>Breakdown by sex as a percentage of all staff</b>		
<b>Role category</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Full equity solicitor partners	75%	25%
Salaried or partial equity solicitor partners	69%	31%
Solicitors	55%	45%
Other fee earners (eg. trainees, paralegals, legal execs)	41%	59%
Role directly supporting fee earner (eg. PAs)	12%	88%
Business services – Managerial	36%	64%
Business services – Support	38%	62%

**Age distribution of employees across the whole firm**

## Trends data showing percentage of lawyers who are disabled between 2015 and 2021

### Publishing your social mobility data

The Social Mobility Commission provides some [helpful guidance about analysing and publishing social mobility data](https://socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/) [https://socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/].

The most important indicator of socio-economic background is parental occupation and this can be reported in three groups using the guide in this table:

Response options in the diversity questionnaire	Socio-economic background
Modern professional & traditional professional occupations	Professional background
Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators	
Clerical and intermediate occupations	Intermediate background
Small business owners who employ less than 25 people	
Technical and craft occupations	Lower socio-economic background
Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations	
Long-term unemployed	
Other	Exclude
Prefer not to say	

### Parental occupation at age 14

Data showing percentage of staff within each of the socio-economic background categories. National benchmark data for parental occupation is set out in the [Social Mobility Commission's toolkit](https://socialmobilityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SMC-Employers-Toolkit_WEB_updated_July2021.pdf) [https://socialmobilityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SMC-Employers-Toolkit\_WEB\_updated\_July2021.pdf]. You could set your data out using charts similar to those used by the Social Mobility Commission as shown below.

### The socio-economic background categories

The next most important data is the type of school you attended between the ages of 11 and 16. The question has two options for those who attended a state run or state funded school – you could publish these responses separately or together.

### Type of school employee attended between the ages of 11 and 16

### Benchmarking

To benchmark your data against national data sets or the wider law firm population, you can use the following data sources:

- for gender and ethnicity, see the [government employment figures](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/employment/latest) [https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/employment/latest]
- for disability, see the [department for work and pensions national employment figures](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021) [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021]
- for sexual orientation, see data from the [Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2019) [https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2019] (ONS)
- for social mobility, compare to the Social Mobility Commission's benchmarking for [socio-economic background](https://socialmobilityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Summary-report-on-economic-background) [https://socialmobilityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Summary-report-on-economic-background]

[measurement-changes\\_FINAL-Updated-May-2021.pdf](#) and [type of school attended](#)  
[https://socialmobilityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SMC-Employers-Toolkit\\_WEB\\_updated\\_July2021.pdf](https://socialmobilityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SMC-Employers-Toolkit_WEB_updated_July2021.pdf)

### **What about data protection?**

You should not publish your diversity data in a way that might identify individuals. Therefore, sole practitioners and very small firms may find they cannot publish their data at all. And firms of all sizes which only have a very small number of staff in a particular diversity category will need to think carefully about what they can publish.

It is good practice to publish a summary which covers all categories of the diversity data you collect. However, the risk of identifying individuals can be greater for some categories of data than others. You may wish to think carefully about if and how you can publish your data about:

- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- the trans status of your staff

To minimise the risk of identifying individuals when numbers are small you could:

- publish the breakdown for the firm as a whole
- bring the Black, Asian, Mixed and Other categories together and compare this group with the White group
- merge role categories to show a high level breakdown of the data, for example by partner, solicitors and support staff.

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/) (<https://ico.org.uk/>).