

How diverse are in-house lawyers?

About the data

In-house solicitors are employed directly by their employer and by organisations that are not regulated legal businesses. These include local authorities, the education sector, not for profit organisations and commerce and industry. Essentially in-house solicitors look after the legal needs of the organisation they work for and work will vary depending on the nature of the business and the size of the legal team

Under our current rules in-house solicitors cannot provide services to the public. However, under [our proposed new regulatory arrangements](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/lttf-phase-two-handbook-reform/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/lttf-phase-two-handbook-reform/], in-house solicitors will be able to provide services directly to the public if they wish to do so.

Information provided to us through mySRA, our online portal for solicitors, shows 17% of all solicitors on the roll work in-house. In 2016, this number was 19%. There has also been an overall increase in the overall number of solicitors working in-house and in law firms.

Key findings

- 66% of in-house solicitors work in private businesses in areas such as accountancy.
- 27% in the public sector, in areas such as health and local government.
- 7% work in other sector organisations, including advice centres, registered charities and education.
- The majority – 2 in 3 of in-house solicitors work in the private sector and are concentrated in commerce and industry (66%).
- In the public sector, 51% work for a local government body and 21% for the Crown Prosecution Service.

Services provided by in-house solicitors include advising on employment law or property law related to leasing or buying premises or general commercial law related to contracting with third parties for goods or services.

Gender

Women make-up 58%, almost 3 in 5 of the in-house population.

More women than men work in the public and other sector organisations (66%). This compares to 53% in the in-house private sector.

In the public sector, most women are employed in local government bodies. The second most popular career choice is working for the Crown Prosecution Service.

Ethnicity

14% of all in-house solicitors are BAME. They represent 15% of the public sector and 15% of other sector organisations. This compares to 11% of those in the UK workforce who are from a BAME background.¹[\[#n1\]](#)

In the public sector, 59% are employed in local government bodies. In the private sector, 13% of solicitors are BAME and nearly all work within commerce and industry.

Disability

The proportion of in-house solicitors who are disabled is lower than for those in law firms and the wider population. 1.5% of in-house solicitors have declared they have a disability compared to 3% for lawyers working in law firms and 10% of the working age population in employment in England and Wales.²[\[#n2\]](#)

Most in-house disabled solicitors work in the public sector, where they make-up 2.5% of this group.

Age

Most in-house solicitors are aged between 31 and 40, 40%, with those aged between 41 and 50 comprising 33% of this group.

5% of the in-house population are under 30 and 4% are over 60 years old.

Notes

1. [Labour Force Survey, 2015](#)
[\[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406369/labour-force-survey-disabled-people.pdf\]](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406369/labour-force-survey-disabled-people.pdf)
2. [Official Statistics: Disability facts and figures](#)
[\[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-facts-and-figures/disability-facts-and-figures#fn:3\]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-facts-and-figures/disability-facts-and-figures#fn:3)