



THE FACULTY OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Diversity in the Notarial Profession 2023

A summary of the latest available diversity data for Notaries

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Abstract

Triennially the Faculty Office collates and reviews the diversity data provided by Notaries during the practising certificate renewal process. This information is used to identify trends and patterns as well as inform the work of the Faculty Office in improving diversity of the notarial sector. The work of the Faculty Office is directed, in part, by the Master's priorities.¹ The collation of diversity data assists in identifying what progress has been made towards achieving these priorities and where there remains scope for further improvement. The COVID-19 pandemic has occurred during the last survey cycle and has had far reaching effects on the economy and society. Consequently, we are keen to identify any implications of the pandemic on the notarial profession and consumers.

In this report comparisons are made to other legal professions such as barristers and solicitors. It should be noted that there are statistical limitations in comparing professions of dissimilar sizes. For example, there are currently 165,359 practising solicitors in contrast to 742 Notaries.² The substantially smaller population of Notaries means that small differences and trends can be transformed into statistically significant differences even if in practice their significance is far less profound. Additionally, though the broad topics of the questions are the same for all legal regulators' surveys, the exact wording can vary and as such this also adds further limitation to the ability to compare between professions.

Since the 2020 diversity report the Faculty Office has conducted a consumer survey which received 159 responses. The survey was provided to Notaries with a request that they make a link available to their clients. This information has helped the Faculty Office to better understand the makeup of those seeking notarial services. The results were encouraging in general terms with high levels of customer satisfaction. The data provided important information about the characteristics of consumers including their age, gender, ethnic group and disability. It is the view of the Faculty Office that ensuring a diverse workforce of Notaries is imperative to ensuring that a diverse community of consumers can be effectively serviced. We will repeat the Consumer Survey in 2024.

The highlights of the 2023 data collected include:

- Increase of representation of women in the profession and in particular those 0-4 PQE.
- Childcare responsibilities of Notaries are shared almost equally between the genders.
- There has been a reduction in the number of Notaries who attended independent/fee paying schools.
- There continues to be a stark contrast between the benchmark figure of disabled workers and the percentage of disabled notaries (and generally those of legal professions).

The report also considers where amendments can be made in future questionnaires to improve the quality and completeness of the data collated. Additionally, it considers the work being done by other regulators in respect of diversity in the complaints and enforcement procedure and how the Faculty Office can implement this work.

We are grateful to all the Notaries for their time taken in completing the diversity survey.

¹ <https://www.facultyoffice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Appendix-I-Business-Plan-for-consultation.pdf>

² [SRA | Regulated population statistics | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)





Introduction

The Legal Services Act 2007 provides that in discharging their functions, Approved Regulators³ must comply with and thus promote eight (soon to be nine) regulatory objectives:

- Protecting and promoting the public interest
- Supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law
- Improving access to justice
- Protecting and promoting the interests of consumers
- Promoting competition in the provision of legal services
- Encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective profession
- Increasing public understanding of the citizen's legal rights and duties
- Promoting and maintaining adherence (by authorised persons) to the professional principles⁴
- (Promoting the prevention and detection of economic crime).⁵

This report focusses on the sixth of these objectives. A diverse profession is one that reflects the society that it serves – including understanding and responding to the differing needs of a varied range of clients. The Legal Services Board's guidance⁶ for encouraging a diverse profession requires the Approved Regulators to collect and publish data on the diversity of their regulated communities and, critically, ensure this is embedded in all regulatory activity. Equality Impact Assessments are required to be carried out whenever Approved Regulators seek to make changes to their Rules or other regulatory arrangements and in setting the annual practising certificate fee level. This report forms part of the Faculty Office's commitment to improving the diversity of the sector and its compliance with the requirements set out by the Legal Services Board and data within assists us when conducting Equality Impact Assessments in accordance with our obligations.

The Faculty Office collects diversity data on a three-year cycle which reflects the small size of the profession and the relatively small numbers joining and leaving the profession annually. It remains our view that this is the appropriate interval at which to review the data notwithstanding the relative increase in the number of new entrants to the profession. We will review the continued appropriateness of the three-year cycle duration at the 2026 data collection.

The report below sets out a summary of the data which has been collected and collated over the five collection cycles to date. To ensure that we have the data necessary to effect change, the Faculty Office has required, since 2020, that the diversity survey be completed when a Notary renews their practising certificate. This is particularly important for the notarial sector which already has a very small population. This has resulted in a 100% response rate to the 2020 and 2023 surveys. In years prior we saw a steady rise in the response rates to the survey (48.3% in 2011; 68.7% in 2014; 87.7% in 2017). We intend to continue to make completing the survey mandatory in future cycles in order

³ Legal Services Act 2007, schedule 4.

⁴ Legal Services Act 2007, section 1.

⁵ Shortly to be inserted by the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 20223, section 209.

⁶

http://legalservicesboard.org.uk/what_we_do/regulation/pdf/2017/S162_Guidance_For_Regulators_On_Encouraging_A_Diverse_Profession.pdf



to ensure that the sample group is as large as possible. We view this approach as the appropriate method to achieve this aim and do not intend to review this in the foreseeable future.

Entering the notarial profession

Unlike other legal professions, there is only one qualifying course for Notaries in England and Wales. Consequently, there are a small number of graduates each year. For the years this report covers there has been the following number of graduates on the Notarial Practice Course:

- 2020 - 41 graduates
- 2021 – 40 graduates
- 2022 – 35 graduates
- 2023 – 54 graduates⁷

The diversity of the intake on the Notarial Practice Course directly impacts the diversity of the incoming Notaries. This is because, except for those having qualified from other jurisdictions and having been granted exceptions, all notaries must complete the Notarial Practice Course. University College London (UCL) as the sole course provider is responsible for ensuring the equality, diversity and inclusion objectives are met during the qualification. For example, UCL is responsible for determining reasonable adjustments for students sitting exams.⁸ Additionally, UCL is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010⁹, this means that they must:

- 1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- 2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it; and
- 3) Foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.

There has been an upward trend in the number of graduates from the Notarial Practice Course. It is unclear the exact cause of this trend though it is thought that the continuous availability of courses to obtain a Certificate of Exemption (though the Law Training Centre¹⁰) has improved entry to the Notarial Practice Course. Additionally, the promotional work of the Faculty Office and the professional societies to raise the profile of the profession may have helped increase the number of new entrants.

For students enrolled on the Notarial Practice course between 2020-2023 the gender and age demographics are as follows:

Year	Female	Male
2020-2021	24	16
2021-2022	18	23
2022-2023	37	20

⁷ In contrast to an average 9978 LPC graduates each year ([40% of LPC students not getting training contracts | News | Law Gazette](#)) and 1685 on the BTC (<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/static/e7d22219-ffb2-4f36-a206b21736e2d2d8/BPTC-Key-Statistics-Report-2021-All-parts.pdf>)

⁸ [Reasonable adjustments to your assessments | Students - UCL – University College London](#)

⁹ Equality Act 2010, section 149. This duty applies to Higher Education Institutions and Colleges because they are authorities with functions of a public nature.

¹⁰ [Legal qualifications for lawyers. Fully accredited courses. \(ltckent.co.uk\)](http://ltckent.co.uk)



Year	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70
2020-2021	6	12	13	9	0
2021-2022	11	11	10	7	2
2022-2023	8	15	15	6	2

The Notarial Practice Course is provided mainly by distance learning on the weekends and weekdays (evenings and daytime). The online and flexible schedule offered by the course serves to relieve some barriers to entry particularly for those with existing work and caring responsibilities.

Additionally, having the course held in this format helps to mitigate the impact of the geographical barriers presented due to there being only one course provider in England and Wales. Holding the course sessions online may also help to prevent some of the ancillary costs (such as overnight accommodation) associated with completing the course and therefore limit the financial barriers of studying to become a notary.

The course fees (currently set at £9,500 for the two years) may represent a barrier to entry for some who are interested in pursuing a career as a notary. However, the current cost of the course through UCL is lower than the previous course at the University of Cambridge, is lower than the average cost of a postgraduate diploma and compares favourably to the costs of equivalent courses such as the Legal Practice Course and Bar Professional Training Course. On the other hand, students are ineligible for governmental student loans or targeted grants such as the Disabled Students Allowance.¹¹ The Notaries Society has offered a small number of bursaries.

The Faculty Office has noticed (anecdotally) a trend of notaries being supported through their studies by their employer which alleviates much of the financial barrier to entering the course. However, in turn this may affect the diversity and profile of new entrants to the profession if access is effectively contingent on also working on a solicitors' firm (or a firm of Scrivener Notaries).

Going forward we will consider what data we collect from recent graduates and how this information may inform our diversity strategy. In November 2023 we renewed our Memorandum of Understanding with UCL, and it remains the case that UCL is the sole provider of the Notarial Practice Course from 2024-2029. Under the new Memorandum of Understanding it will be open to UCL to review the fees charged on an annual basis (rather than every two years). Additionally, we will consider what additional financial support could be provided to prevent economic barriers to entering the profession including the potential introduction of scholarships.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa/eligibility>



Gender and gender identity

Gender

The ‘gender-gap’ has been slowly but steadily decreasing both within the notarial profession and the wider work force. Today 72.3% of women aged 16 to 64 are in the work force.¹² The percentage of women in the notarial profession has gone up from 24.8% in 2011 to 36% in 2023. The national benchmark for women in the workforce is 47%, so there is a way to go before that is reached though the profession is going in the right direction. Notaries currently rank last across the legal professions in this characteristic – with women representing 38.5% of barristers¹³, 52% of solicitors¹⁴ and 76.9% of legal executives¹⁵. To increase the number of female Notaries there are two key aspects: increase the number of female entrants to the profession and reduce the number of women leaving the profession during their career (such as those leaving when having children). We have seen positive representation of women in new entrants to the notarial profession. For new entrants to the profession (those who are 0–4-years’ PQE) 55% of notaries are female.

Gender identity

One of the questions that the survey asks is to identify those whose gender identity is different from that assigned at birth (i.e., those who are transgender). In our 2020 report (when we first asked this question) there was an unusually high number of responses indicating that notaries were identifying as transgender (7%). We noted that this response may have been erroneous given that it was significantly higher than is reported in the population at large¹⁶. The national benchmark in the UK population is 0.5%¹⁷ and most of the legal professions are at or close to that benchmark¹⁸.

In order to remove the perceived confusion, we rephrased the question in the 2023 survey to ask, “Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth” making the question ostensibly the same as the one asked by the census. As of 2023 there are 0.13 % of notaries whose gender identity is different from that assigned at birth. These figures indicate that the responses are now more in line with the expected the results based on general population statistics and there is no need to further amend the questions in the next survey. Given that only one of the respondents identified as transgender we do not consider it appropriate to request further detail on the specific gender identity (i.e., transgender male or non-binary). This is because this data would not be publishable and represents a risk of inadvertently identifying individuals’ characteristics. We will continue to monitor the trends of this characteristic.

¹² [Female employment rate \(aged 16 to 64, seasonally adjusted\): % - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

¹³ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/static/8e1b9093-b2f7-474f-b5faa3f205d26570/b27faf30-cee6-44c0-ae127bfe6fe0a38c/BSB-Report-on-Diversity-at-the-Bar-2022-FinalVersionv2.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/equality-diversity/diversity-profession/diverse-legal-profession/>

¹⁵ [Diversity and Inclusion – CILEx Regulation](#)

¹⁶ [England and Wales census counts trans and non-binary people for first time | Census | The Guardian](#) Population level is between 0.5% and 3.1% depending on the survey.

¹⁷ [2021 census: What do we know about the LGBT+ population? \(parliament.uk\)](#)

¹⁸ For example, solicitors have 0.9% of the workforce identifying as a gender different to which they were assigned at birth.

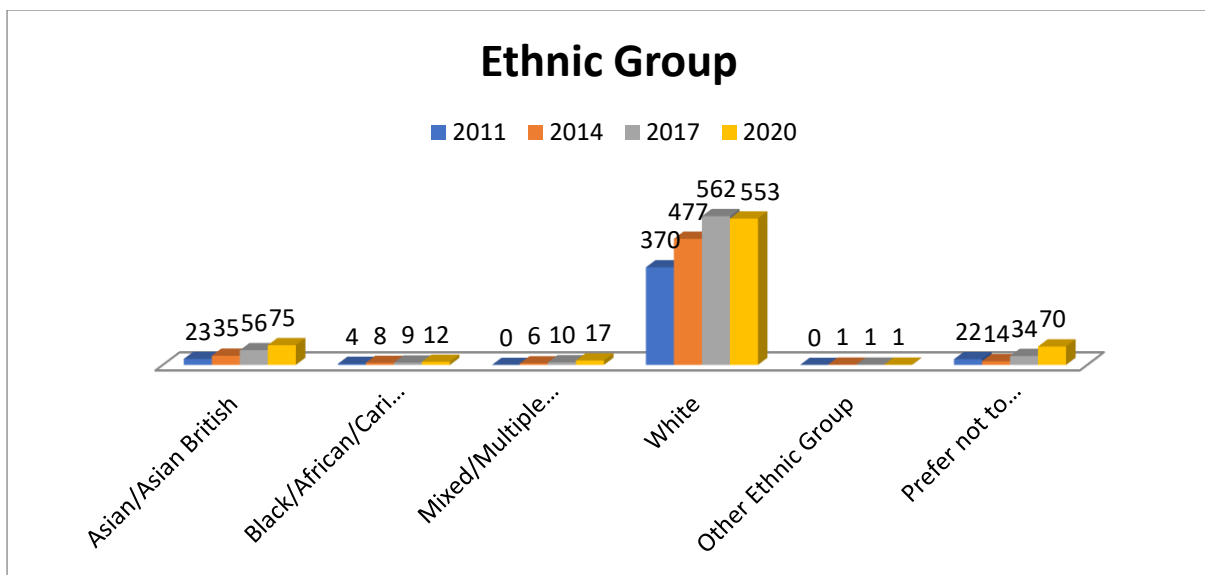


Ethnicity

The ethnic diversity of the profession gives a much better overall picture with notaries at or above the national benchmark. 72% of the profession is white and 16.7% from the BAME community – 81.7% of the overall UK workforce is white¹⁹. From amongst the BAME community, those of Asian ethnicity represent 11.4%, 2.8% are Black and 2.3% from mixed ethnic backgrounds (the UK workforce is 9.3% Asian, 2.5% Black and 8.7% mixed²⁰).

For the first time our 2023 survey collected more detailed information on the breakdown of ethnic representation within the profession. For example, within the Asian ethnic group options included Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Arab, and any other Asian background. As this is the first time, we have collected this data there is limited scope to conduct comparisons. However, we will continue to collect this data going forward so that comparative work can be conducted in future cycles. Included below are the graphs showing the 2011 to 2020 data and the new 2023 categories.

The higher representation of BAME individuals in the notarial sector may be owed to the predominately international nature of notarial work which often attracts those with additional language skills or who wish to serve a specific community.

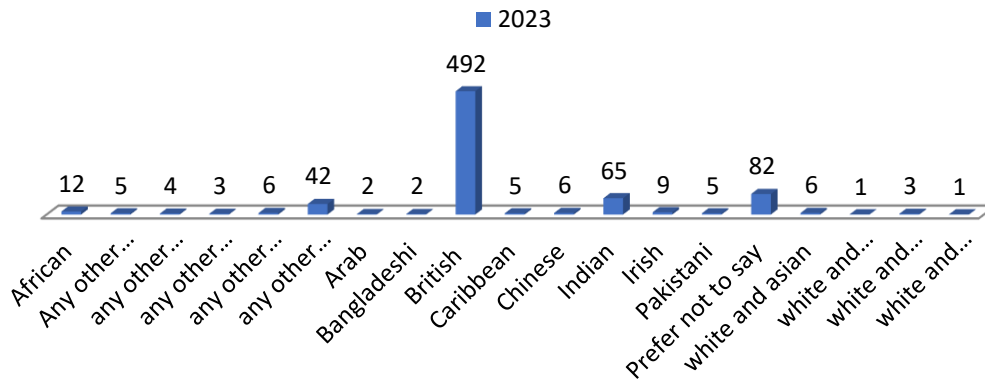


¹⁹ [Ethnic group, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

²⁰ [Ethnic group, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)



Ethnic group



Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.²¹ 16% of the workforce declared a disability and 23% of the working age population are disabled.²² None of the legal professions come close to this benchmark with 6% of barristers and legal executives and 5% of solicitors and 3% of notaries identifying as having some form of disability. The notarial sector in contrast to other parts of the legal sector may present more barriers to disabled practitioners due to the information based nature of the work. There has been no change in the percentage of disabled notaries between the 2020 and 2023 survey. The data collected through the survey does not provide an indication as to whether the disability affects physical or mental health (or both). We will consider in future iterations if such questions would be appropriate.

We also ask an additional question to Notaries about whether their day-to-day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability. 35 Notaries stated that their activity is limited (in contrast to 22 who stated they have a disability) with six Notaries having their day-to-day activities limited a lot. It is therefore apparent that there are Notaries who are not disabled whose activities are limited due to health reasons.

For both questions relating to disability there has been a marked increase since 2011 in the number of individuals who opted for the “prefer not to say” option. The cause of which is unknown but may be attributable to the change in making the survey mandatory. We will continue to monitor this statistic in future cycles.

If the underlying cause of these “prefer not to say” responses is fear of negative implications from disclosing a disability, then there may be work, to do in two areas. Firstly, reiterating that the responses to the survey are anonymised and in no way could be used to identify who a disabled individual is nor are they shared with anyone outside of the Faculty Office. Secondly, we may consider asking a question about whether “if you had a disability are you in an environment where you would feel comfortable disclosing your disability.”

Given the underrepresentation of disabled individuals in the notarial profession a number of potential work streams have been identified for this area:

- how can we encourage more individuals with disabilities to consider a career as a notary? For example, removing any barriers to entry of the profession that are specific to individuals with disabilities.
- how can we retain notaries who develop a disability during their career to continue working as a notary?

The Faculty Office, professional societies and inspectors (where appropriate) signpost existing support for wellbeing, for example LawCare²³ who provides mental health support for those in the legal professions. It is important that given the potentially individualistic and isolated nature of

²¹ Equality Act 2010, section 6.

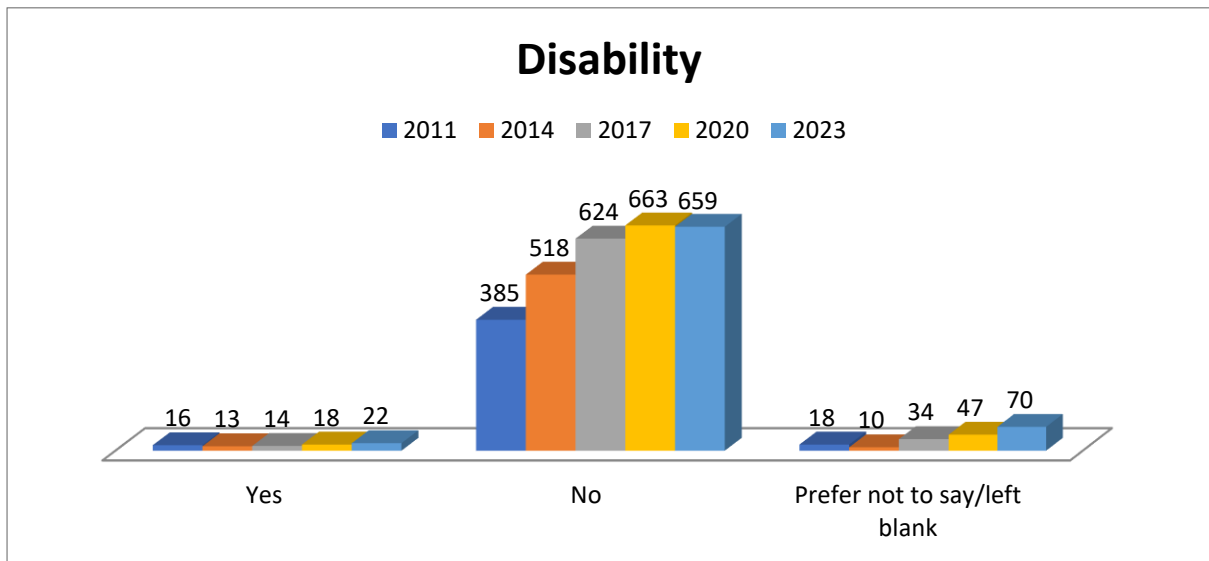
²²

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusofdisabledpeoplea08>

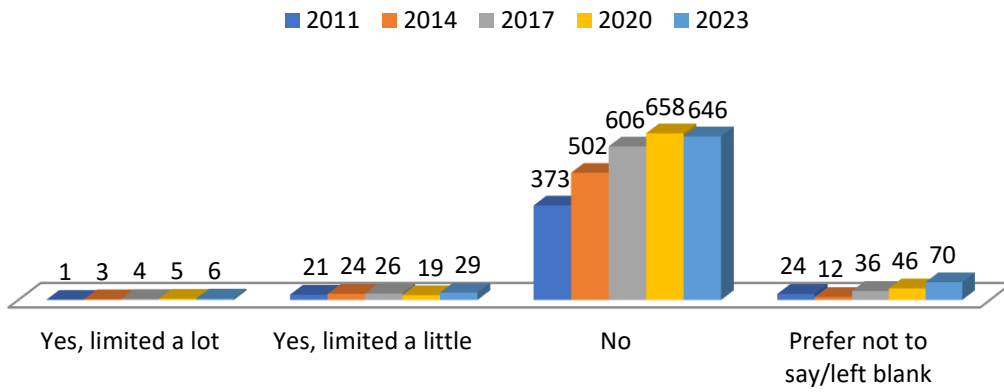
²³ <https://www.lawcare.org.uk/>



notarial work that appropriate mental health support is provided to professionals. We will continue to assess the efficacy of the signposting of support and where it can be improved.

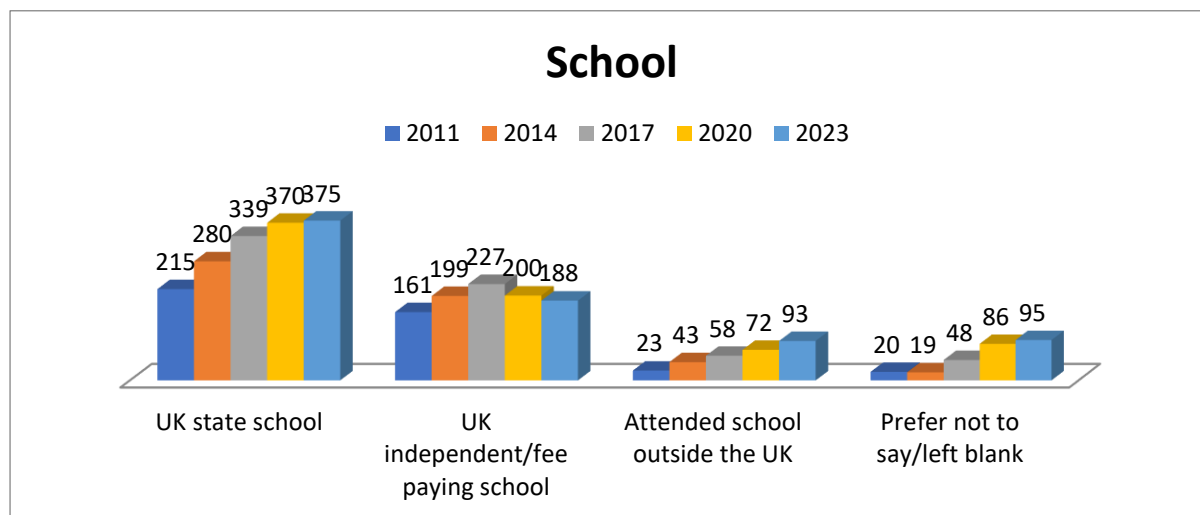


Day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability



Socio-economic background

This characteristic has historically been measured in terms of those notaries who attended a fee-paying school. The benchmark here is based on the UK population of whom just 9% attended a fee-paying (public or private) school.²⁴ Legal executives are just under that figure at 6%.²⁵ Most of the other legal professions have significantly higher fee-paying school attendees with 23% of solicitors²⁶, 25% of notaries and 34% of barristers in that category²⁷. This represents a slight reduction from 27.5% in 2020 and indicates that new entrants to the profession are more diverse in this respect.



Limitations in measuring socio-economic background through school type attended

Measuring socio-economic background through the school an individual notary attended is vulnerable to inaccuracies as schools do not directly correlate with socio-economic background. This is because of the following reasons:

- not all independent schools charge equal fees;
- there is no consideration for those on fee-reductions nor does it consider those from well off backgrounds whose parents did not enrol them at independent schools (for example because they went to a highly selective grammar school);
- information about an individual having attended a school outside the UK provides little to no indication of socio-economic background as they may have attended school abroad because that is where their family resided, or they may have attended an international boarding school;
- additionally asking questions about whether individuals attended selective state schools is problematic because grammar schools ceased to exist in many local authorities (and today only exist in a handful of areas) – this may result in older notaries who were state educated disproportionately having attended selective state schools.

²⁴ [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2022/23 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

²⁵ [Diversity and Inclusion - CILEx Regulation](#)

²⁶ [Diversity and Inclusion - CILEx Regulation](#)

²⁷ [Diversity and Inclusion - CILEx Regulation](#)



In order to address these limitations CILEX has introduced questions about whether or not those who attended fee-paying schools received a bursary (of over 90% of the fees).²⁸ In asking for this information they are able to better delineate between those who attended fee-paying schools by virtue of the socio-economic background and those for whom it was only because of financial assistance that it was within their gift. This also echoes the approach suggested by the Social Mobility Commission.

We propose to include the following changes in the 2026 survey to improve the quality of information obtained on socio-economic status:

- When asking about the school attended including the following additional categories:
 - o Fee-paying – no bursary or bursary/scholarship worth up to 90% of fees.
 - o Fee-paying – bursary/scholarship worth over 90% of fees.
 - o Overseas state/government run school
 - o Overseas fee-paying/private school.

We will then monitor the quality of the results provided following these amendments and reflect of their efficacy when compared the data obtained in previous cycles.

Free school meals and parental occupation

New for the 2023 survey we have included questions about eligibility for Free School Meals (if a Notary finished school after 1980) and the occupation of the main household earner when the Notary was aged 14. These questions have been included to mitigate the limitations in measuring socio-economic background solely through type of school attended.

Eligibility for free school meals is an indicator of extreme economic disadvantage.²⁹ We found that 5.7% of Notaries were eligible for Free School Meals. This is much lower than the average of 28.6%³⁰, however the figures provided by the Department for Education only consider pupils in State Schools and they reflect current student populations. 50% of those survey either were not eligible for free school meals, did not know if they were in receipt or preferred not to answer. This makes analysing this data difficult, though it is likely that individuals who received free school meals are underrepresented in the notarial sector.

The Social Mobility Commission identifies parental occupation as the most reliable indicator of socio-economic status because it is applicable to all Notaries regardless of age or where they were raised.³¹ In respect of parental occupation, the largest group was “traditional professional occupation” (n=138) with “modern professional occupations” slightly behind (n=131). This question received a large number of “prefer not to say” responses (n=130) which skews the accuracy of the data. For context the Social Mobility Commission states that for parental occupation at age 14 37% are in professional jobs, 24% are in intermediate jobs and 39% are in working class jobs.³² It is unclear why, in contrast to other parts of the survey this question received so many “prefer not to

²⁸ [Diversity and Inclusion - CILEx Regulation](#)

²⁹ The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the UK. [Measurement - Social Mobility Commission \(socialmobilityworks.org\)](#)

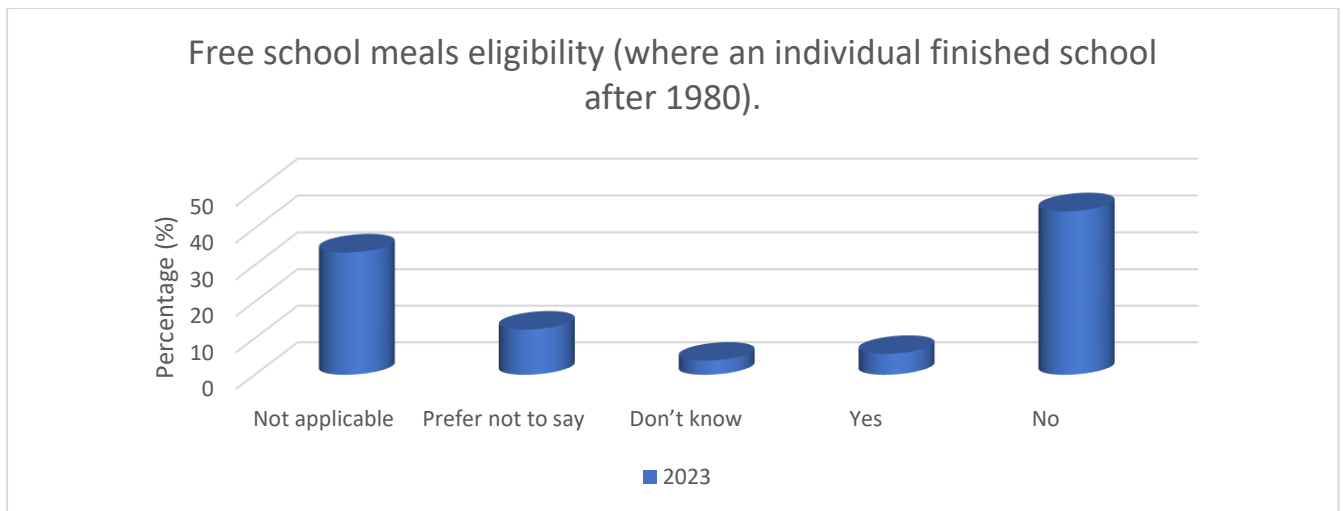
³⁰ [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2022/23 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

³¹ [Measurement - Social Mobility Commission \(socialmobilityworks.org\)](#)

³² [Measurement - Social Mobility Commission \(socialmobilityworks.org\)](#)



say” responses. We intend to include this question in the next survey and monitor the results for any trends. We will also consider what revisions to the question can be made to improve the quality of the responses submitted.



First in family to attend university

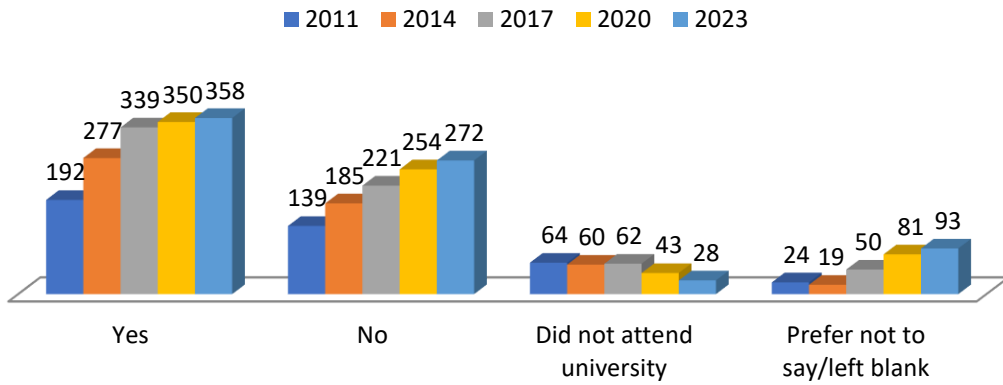
Although not directly correlated with socio-economic background we continue to collect data about whether Notaries were the first in their families to attend university. We do this because having parents/guardians who attended university gives a nuanced form of cultural advantage. Being the ‘first in family’ to attend signals a potential lack of support to navigate university and subsequent entry into the graduate workforce. 48% of Notaries who attended university were the first in their family to attend, this reflects no substantial change from the 2020 survey. Thus, indicating that new entrants to the profession are not more diverse on this metric than in previous survey cycles.

There has been a decline in the number of individuals who did not study at university. We believe this is due to the fact that these individuals (who likely completed articulated clerkships or qualified as Scrivener Notaries³³ without a degree) are retiring. Of the 28 respondents in the 2023 study who did not attend university 21 are aged 65+ and the remaining seven are aged 55-64. We expect this decline to continue unless there is a significant increase in the number of new entrants to the profession who do not have degrees (i.e., those qualified through CILEX). Note that under rule 3 of the Notaries (Qualification) Rules 2017 the Notaries Practice Rules, an applicant to be a Notary must be a solicitor of the Senior Courts of England and Wales, or a barrister at law or a Chartered Legal Executive or hold a Degree.

³³ In former times, Scrivener Notaries did not need to be university educated but the courses they were required to do and the examination required, could be equated to a masters level requirement. <https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Rule-change-application-FO-accessible-October-2021.pdf>



First generation to study at university



Primary carer for child/children

Since 2011 there has been a steady increase in the number of Notaries who are the primary carer for a child or children. In 2011 15.5% of notaries had a primary caring responsibility, by 2020 this had increased to 23.4% and as of 2023 this is 23.6%. Therefore, there has been a very small change in this characteristic during this cycle. Caring responsibilities intersect with other diversity goals (such as gender and socio-economic status). Of the 177 notaries who are primary carers to a child or children, 99 were female and 78 were male – demonstrating that caring responsibilities are borne in almost equal numbers by both genders. This is a positive sign that childcare responsibilities are not being borne disproportionately by one gender.

Additionally, being able to balance work as a Notary alongside caring responsibilities is important to ensure that the profession does not see a decline of practising Notaries who have children. Where Notaries are also employed as solicitors their ability to take parental/adoption leave and return to work will likely be dictated by the terms of their employment. For Notaries who act independently of any firm they are vulnerable to the difficulties that exist for those who are self-employed and a carer (such as a lack of paid leave). This is an example of how some diversity issues that have a regulatory component are not within a regulator's power to resolve alone.³⁴

³⁴ This a challenge identified by other regulators such as CILEX (where progression for regulated CILEX members is dependent on SRA regulated entities).
https://sbstaticwebsites.z33.web.core.windows.net/what_we_do/consultations/closed/pdf/20170215/CILEx.pdf

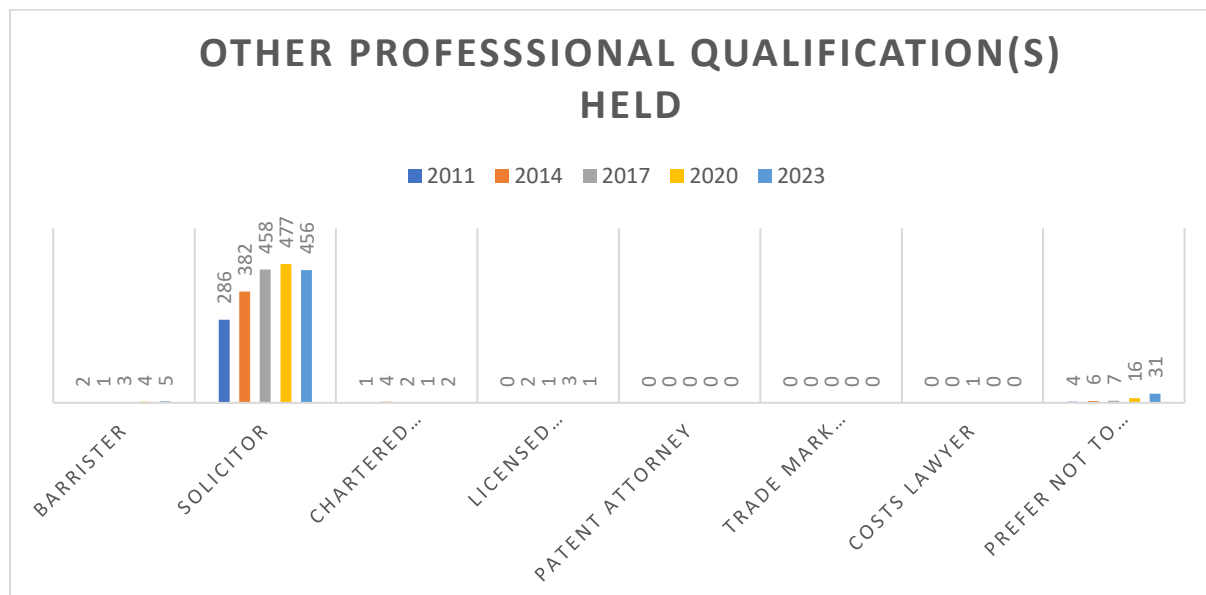


Data deep dive

Qualification of Notaries as other legal professionals.

It remains the case in 2023 that the vast majority of Notaries who are dual qualified are qualified also as a solicitor. As of 2023 there are 456 dual qualified solicitor/notaries down slightly from 477 in 2020. There were five Notaries also qualified as barristers, two qualified as Chartered Legal Executives and one Licensed Conveyancer. There are no Patent Attorneys, Trademark Attorneys or Costs Lawyers who are also qualified as a Notary. 31 Notaries preferred not to provide an answer to this question. There has been very little movement in the number of individuals dual qualified as other forms of lawyers, though as the size of the notarial profession increases their proportional representation has decreased.

Of the five barristers, three were tenants/members of chambers and two were other (including pupils). Of the solicitors 69 were associates, 217 were partners, 43 were sole principals and 127 were others (including consultants).

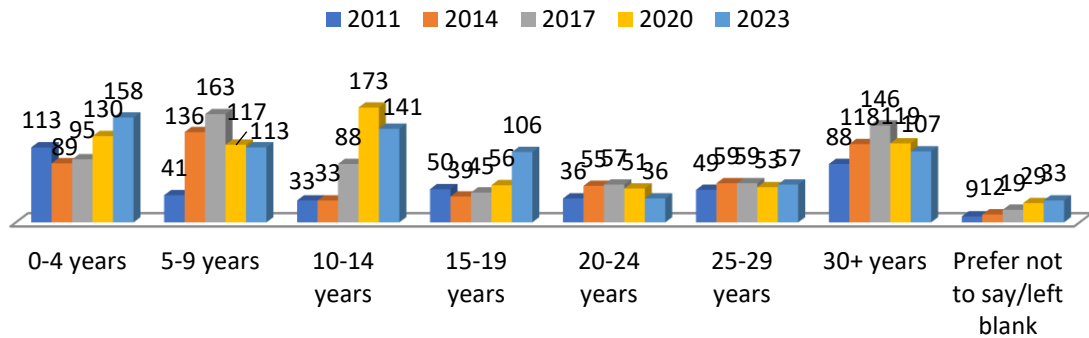


Time notarial faculty held

Since its peak in 2017, there has been a decline in the number of notaries who have held faculty for 30+ years. This is likely reflective of these notaries retiring from the profession. Conversely, there has been an increase in the number of notaries who have held faculty for between 0-4 years reflecting the larger cohorts of graduates from the Notarial Practice Course. We anticipate that this trend will continue in future years as the number of new entrants to the profession increases.



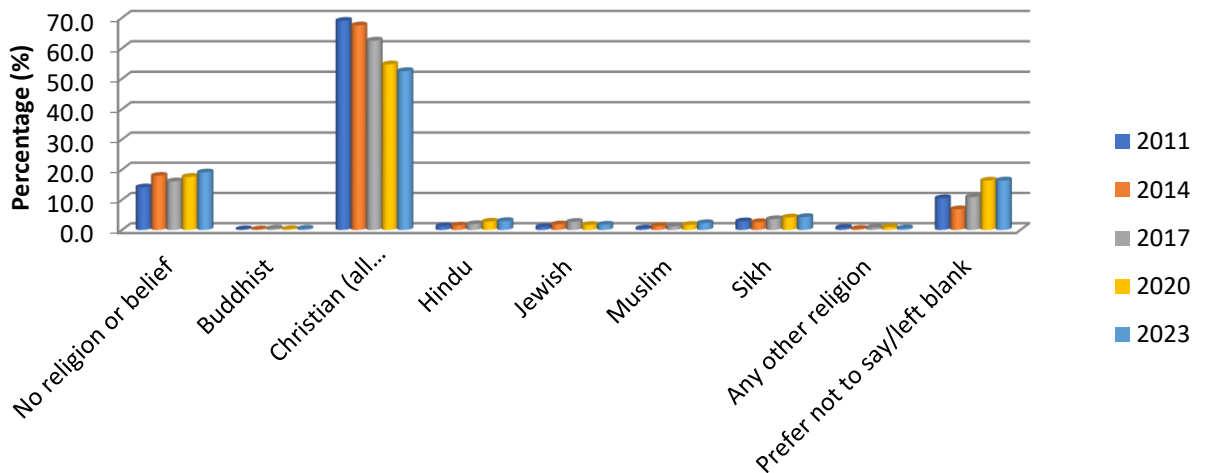
Time notarial faculty held



Religion and belief

There has been a downward trend in the number of Notaries who are Christian from 69% in 2011 to 52.5% in 2023. These figures are still higher than the benchmark statistics provided by the 2011 and 2021 censuses of 59.3% and 46.2% respectively. There has been little change in the number of Notaries who are Jewish, Buddhist and those identifying as “any other religion”. Whilst there has been an upward trend in the number of Notaries who are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, those with no religion or belief or those who “prefer not to say”.

Religion or belief

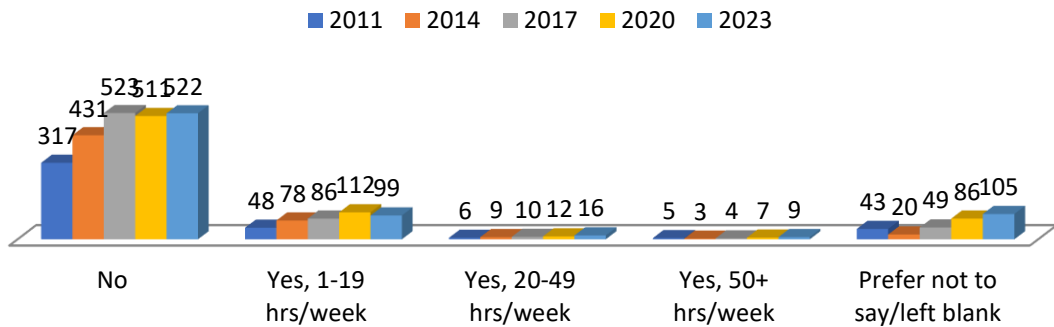


Look after family/friends/others because of long-term ill-health/disability

Currently 16% of notaries have ‘looking after’ responsibilities (other than those for children captured in a separate question). Of that 13% do this for 1-19 hours a week, 2% do this for 20-49 hours a week and 1% do this for more than 50 hours a week. These figures reflect very little change between the 2020 data.



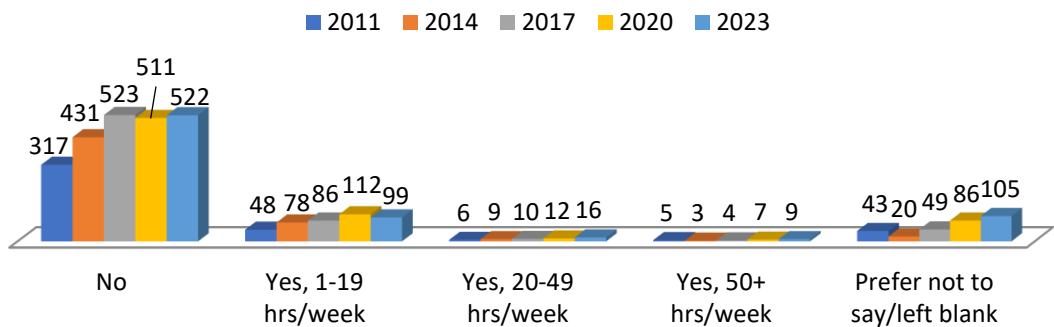
Look after family/friends/others because of long-term ill-health/disability



Ownership of your organisation

There has been a slight decline since 2011 in the percentage of notaries who are owners of their organisation. In 2011 68% of notaries were owners of their organisation, in 2023 this figure has dropped to 64%.

Look after family/friends/others because of long-term ill-health/disability

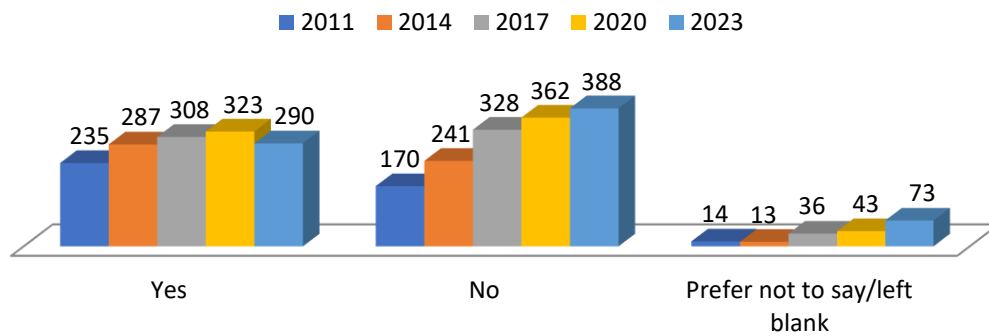


Supervisory responsibilities.

There has been a gradual decline since 2011 in the number of notaries who have responsibility for supervising or managing the work of lawyers or other employees. In 2011 56% of notaries had such responsibilities whereas in 2023 only 38.6% have supervisory or managerial responsibilities.

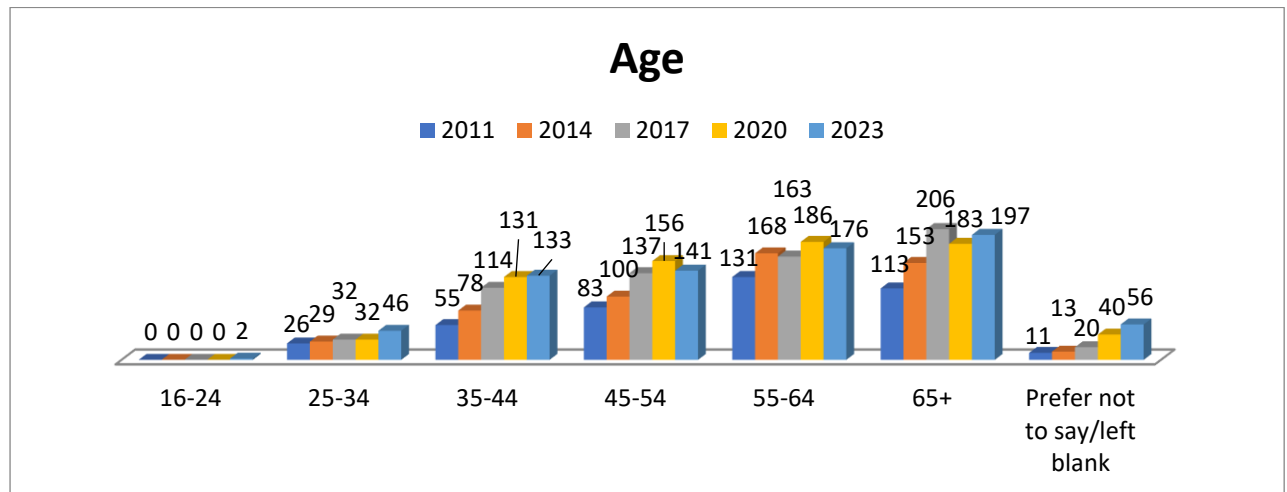


Responsibility for supervising or managing the work of lawyers or other employees



Age

As of the 2023 survey there are two notaries aged 16-24 (though one may be erroneous as they also said that they had 10-14 years of experience). It is likely to remain the case in future years that there are very few notaries in this age bracket owing to the educational requirements to enter the profession (a law degree and Notarial Practice Course).



Sexual orientation

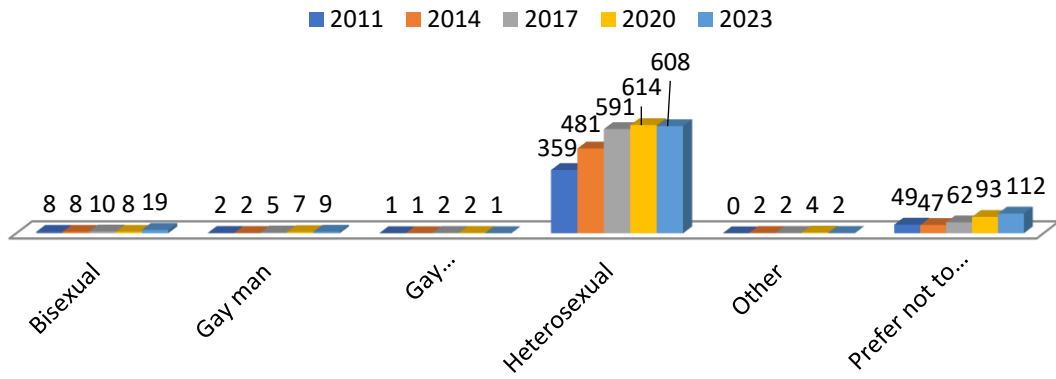
There has been a slight reduction in the percentage of heterosexual notaries (down from 84% in 2020 to 80% in 2023). This is due in part to the increase in respondents abstaining a response (13% in 2020 to 15% in 2023). Additionally, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of bisexual notaries (1% in 2020 to 2% in 2023). Overall, the percentage of lesbian, gay or bisexual notaries is 4.12% up from 2.6% in 2011. This compares to 3.5% of solicitors who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual³⁵ and 3.3% of the overall population.³⁶

³⁵ [SRA | How diverse is the solicitors' profession? | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)

³⁶ [Sexual orientation, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)



Sexual orientation



Diversity of those subject to the complaints/enforcement procedures

We presently hold no data on whether certain groups are overrepresented in the complaints and/or enforcement procedures. However, other regulators have identified overrepresentations of certain groups. For example, the SRA has identified that research there is an overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in their enforcement work.³⁷ Going forward the Faculty Office will consider how best to identify if any overrepresentation is occurring (and the underlying causes) whilst recognising the challenges of having very small sample groups.

We are particularly limited by the fact that only two to three enforcement procedures occur each year. Consequently, any trends are unlikely to be statistically significant and if this data were to be published there is the risk that personal information of the notaries in question would be identifiable. This is in contravention of our obligations under Data Protection law. Additionally, a number of cases are referred due to disciplinary procedures by other regulators. Meaning that there are factors beyond the control of the Faculty Office. In light of this we propose to review the results of the research conducted by other regulators on this topic and identify those recommendations which are appropriate for our sector.

³⁷ [SRA | Our equality, diversity and inclusion work 2021-22 | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#) and [SRA | Upholding Professional Standards 2020/21 – Diversity Monitoring, Supporting Report | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)



Consumer survey

The Faculty Office has conducted work to improve the understanding of users of notarial services. This work is important because improving the diversity of the notarial procession forms part of the objectives to provide a better service to a wider range of consumers. We received 159 responses to our survey of consumers. The results of the survey were very encouraging in general terms, with high levels of satisfaction amongst consumers and high levels of compliance with the pre-instruction price and service transparency information required under changes made to the Notaries Practice Rules 2019³⁸ following the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) Market Study on the Legal Services Sector³⁹ in 2016 and its recommendations.

The spread of notaries around the country presents more of a challenge⁴⁰ with 15% of consumers having to travel more than 10 miles each way to visit a notary and 4.2% travelling more than 20 miles each way. This may present additional barriers to access for those consumers with disabilities (specifically physical disabilities and long-term illnesses) or those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

In our 2020 diversity report we hypothesised that users of notarial services may not necessarily reflect the national benchmark figures in all areas owing to the specialist nature of notarial activities. The survey revealed the following information:

- 89% of service users did not consider themselves to have a disability. Of those with a disability the majority had either a physical disability or preferred not to state the nature of their disability.
- The largest age group of service users were those aged 50-59. A very small percentage of users were aged 29 or under or 70 and over.

This consumer survey has provided valuable information about who is using notarial services. To ensure that this data remain relevant this survey should be repeated during the 2023-2026 cycle. It is our intention to repeat the survey in 2024. Based on the information we are able to obtain we will review the appropriate frequency at which to repeat the consumer survey. We want to ensure that the data remains current without causing consumers “survey fatigue”. Additionally, it would be advantageous for us to obtain more survey responses and we will consider what steps we can take increase the number of responses including reviewing the distribution methods of the survey.

³⁸ [Notaries Practice Rules 2019 – The Faculty Office](#)

³⁹ [Review of the legal services market study in England and Wales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴⁰ As of 21 April 2022 there are 730 notaries holding a practising certificate in England & Wales of whom approximately half practise inside the M25



Looking forward

It remains the Master's priority to improve the diversity of the profession. The data collected in our 2023 return combined with the 2022 service user survey provides vital information on how this will be achieved going forward.

As part of this report, we have reviewed and identified gaps in our data which could be improved by varying/altering the questions in the next survey. This is particularly the case for missing socio-economic background. We hope that the information gathered in future surveys will provide even more insight into the diversity of the profession.



Conclusion

This piece has only covered some of the characteristics which the survey covers the raw data obtained through our survey is available to download from our website. Additionally, this information can be requested in email or print via the contact details provided on the first page of this report.

