Solicitors Regulation Authority

Understanding your firm's diversity data

Diversity tool

The diversity tool is an interactive and easy way to view diversity information about firms by size, work type and location.

The data only covers people working in law firms in England and Wales, it does not cover solicitors working in-house or in other employed roles.

Some of the figures in the tool may add up to 99 or 101 percent. This is because we have rounded all our percentages to the nearest 1 percent which may not add up to 100 percent exactly.

Searching by population

We have combined the role categories in the questionnaire into three populations:

- Partners
- Solicitors/other lawyers
- Other staff

You can view each population separately, all three populations together or you can view ‘All lawyers’ (which consists of Partners and Solicitors/other lawyers). Definitions for these populations are available by clicking on the "Show help" tab underneath the population drop down box.

Work type categories

When using the work type categories, a firm will be classed in a particular category if they have told us they do 50 percent or more of that work type.

Using the filters

You can only use one filter at a time. Firms with branches in more than one area are recorded under the region where the firm's head office is located.

Comparing your firm with other groups of firms

You can compare the information in the data tool with information from your own firm to see if certain groups of people are under represented. You can use this information to investigate if there are any unintentional barriers for these groups in getting a job or a promotion at your firm.

To create your own comparison tables or charts:

- Sign in to the firm diversity data reporting site - remember that only your firm’s Organisation Contacts and Authorised Signatories can access the information.
- View the summary table of your data and select the option to download the data – which will present the data in an Excel spreadsheet.
- Use the firm diversity data tool to select the breakdown you want, for example the partner breakdown by ethnicity for all firms with 50 plus partners.
- Select ‘copy table to clipboard’ and past it into your spreadsheet
- Use Excel in the usual way to create tables or charts to compare your firm with firms in the sector you have chosen.

To compare the diversity of your staff with the general population in your region, you can use data from the 2011 Census which you get from the Office for National Statistics.

Statistical modelling

As with most surveys, the information given to us by firms includes gaps where people did not respond, or gave the response 'prefer not to say'. In order to improve the quality of the data in the tool and 'fill in the gaps', we used a proven statistical method called 'bootstrap re-sampling' to estimate what it would look like if we had a complete response or nobody had said 'prefer not to say'.

The statistical modelling gives a better estimate of diversity in the legal sector. However, where fewer people provided their data, for example in response to the question about sexual orientation, our estimate is not as precise as for other characteristics such as gender or age, where we had a good response rate.

Comparing the diversity figures in the original response data and those in the tool, we can see the effects that the statistical modelling has had. For example, the tool shows a slightly larger proportion of BAME solicitors working in law firms than the original survey response data. This is because the pattern of 'prefer not to say' responses was not equally spread across the population. Confidence intervals show how confident we are in the accuracy of each figure. This involves selecting a sample of raw data taken from all firms which had a high rate of response. This sample is subjected to repeated testing and is adjusted to ensure that it is representative of all the different categories against which the data can be filtered (location, work type and size by number of partners and number of branches).

When you view a characteristic that could be less accurate, a warning will be displayed on the screen. You can also view our table of confidence intervals, which shows how confident we are in each figure. A confidence

interval tells you how reliable the data is. For example, 34 percent with a confidence interval of one percent, means that there is a 95 percent probability that the accurate figure lies between 33% or 35%.The original response data is available to view in a table format.