



Freedom of Information request
LSB reference: 20140401

Recently, in the past few months I saw an article suggesting that your Board proposed to require Firms of solicitors to monitor and disclose the Diversity of their workforce. Pleasingly let me know whether this proposal has been implemented? I think it is extremely important that employers are required to disclose diversity information.

Does your Board provide diversity information regarding its employees?

If such information is available, please provide me with that information.

From: [Adewale Kadiri](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Response to your freedom of Information request
Date: 17 April 2014 13:58:00
Attachments: [Workforce Diversity within the Profession\[1\].pdf](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

I write in response to your email of 1 April 2014, in which you enquire whether the LSB's requirement that diversity information about the solicitor profession be published has been implemented.

By way of introduction, the Legal Services Board (LSB) was created, under the auspices of the Legal Services Board 2007, to oversee the regulation of the legal services market in England and Wales. There are ten separate frontline regulators, the largest of which are the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), the Bar Standards Board (BSB) and the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX). In other words the LSB does not itself directly regulate lawyers, but oversees the work of those who do.

Following the passing of the Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty, the LSB consulted with the frontline regulators on how objectives of the duty would be met within the legal profession. In July 2011, the LSB issued a response document to the consultation, including statutory guidance in accordance with section 162 of the Legal Services Act. Among other things this document obliged the frontline regulators to:

- Gather a more comprehensive evidence base about the diversity characteristics of the legal workforce
- Ensure the transparency of diversity data
- Collate diversity data to give an aggregate view of the diversity of each branch of the profession.

You have asked specifically about compliance with this requirement within the solicitor branch of the profession. I attach for your attention a document, which can be found on the SRA website titled: *Diversity in the legal profession: Workforce data for solicitors firms 2012*. This was published in April 2013, and provides detailed information on diversity within that part of the profession.

With regard to information of diversity within the LSB itself, the link below is to the outcome of a staff diversity survey carried out in 2012. In considering these statistics, please note that the LSB is a very small organisation with a total staff complement of 31.

http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/about_us/our_staff/equality_and_diversity/pdf/diversity_graphs_june_2012_comp.pdf

I hope that this has been of assistance, but if you are dissatisfied with this response to your request for information, you have the right to ask for an internal review or to submit a complaint (see LSB's Freedom of information – Complaints procedure:

http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/can_we_help/lspb_policies_procedures/freedom_of_information/index.htm)

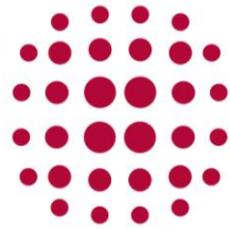
Yours sincerely

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Solicitors
Regulation
Authority

**Diversity in the legal profession:
Workforce data for solicitors firms 2012**

April 2013

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Introduction

1. The Legal Services Board (LSB) set out its expectations of approved regulators in relation to the collection and publication of workforce diversity data at individual firm level in its decision document 'Increasing diversity and social mobility in the legal workforce: transparency and evidence' published in July 2011.
2. The main purpose of collecting workforce diversity data from firms is to:
 - gather evidence about the composition of the legal sector workforce across a wide range of diversity indicators, to enable firms and regulators to make informed decisions about actions needed to encourage greater diversity in the legal workforce
 - to achieve transparency about the workforce diversity of individual firms.
3. The SRA welcomes the LSB's initiative, collecting and monitoring diversity data is a key element of our work in meeting one of our regulatory objectives 'to encourage an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession'.
4. It is also considered to be a key element of the work that regulated firms are doing to comply with Principle 9 to 'encourage equality of opportunity and respect for diversity' and we hope firms will use their own firm based diversity data to evaluate their approach to equality and diversity. We carried out a thematic supervision review of how firms were complying with Principle 9 in the Autumn of 2012 and part of our discussion with firms was about the requirement to collect workforce diversity data. We have reported the outcome of the thematic review separately and have summarised the feedback we received from the firms about the diversity survey below.
5. The SRA is pleased to publish its first annual report of the diversity data collected from solicitors firms in 2012. This will inform our work and in future years will allow us to monitor trends across the profession.
6. We have set out the aggregated data across the whole profession in a series of tables. We have kept the tables simple for this first year of reporting. In subsequent years, as the data set improves and we are able to report on trends we will consider a more in depth report.

How the data was collected

7. As 2012 was the first year of implementing the LSB's requirement, we decided to keep the requirement as simple as possible by taking on most of the burden of collecting this data from individual firms. We commissioned Surveylab, a specialist online survey company, to undertake a one off diversity survey on our behalf.
8. The LSB requirement applies to all firms regulated by the SRA, so we contacted over 10,000 separate entities to take part in the survey. However, we

asked firms which had several linked entities (such as corporate partners or trustee firms) to provide a single response from the main regulated firm to avoid duplication.

9. The authorised signatory of every regulated firm was sent an email at the end of July 2012, asking them to confirm the number of individuals working at the firm so that we could build up a baseline for the number of responses we could expect from the diversity questionnaire across the whole regulated firm population.
 10. Once we received a response from the firm, a further email was sent to them which included a link to a diversity questionnaire, and firms were asked to circulate this so as to give every individual at the firm the opportunity to complete the diversity questionnaire themselves. The responses were collated by Surveylab and we monitored the response rates from firms, sending reminders and chasing email to firms which either had not responded or which had no diversity survey responses or very low response rates from their staff.
 11. The survey closed at the end of October 2012 and we reported back to individual firms in December 2012. Each firm was sent a report setting out aggregated data for the firm for each diversity question, with the exception of religion and belief and sexual orientation data. This data was sent on request only to firms which were able to confirm they had appropriate data protection arrangements in place.
 12. The individual data collected by Surveylab and reported to us was anonymous, so it was not possible to trace back any of the questionnaire responses to any particular individual at the firm who had submitted their questionnaire.
-

Views from the profession about the diversity survey

13. As this was the first year of implementing the LSB's requirements to collect diversity data at a firm level, we talked to firms about the exercise during our thematic supervision review of equality and diversity and dealt with a large number of enquiries from the profession as the survey was ongoing. It was a relatively straightforward process and judging by the enquiries received, any user problems were solved promptly.
14. Most firms in the thematic supervision review found the online survey worked well. When we asked firms about the purpose and value of the exercise, there were mixed reactions. A number of firms were already collecting diversity data and fully supported and understood why the LSB had introduced this requirement. However, these firms did not find the survey approach particularly helpful as they found themselves either suspending their own survey for 2012 or asking staff to participate in two diversity surveys. These firms also found the firm level data that we provided back to them less helpful than having access to their own full data sets.
15. The Diversity and Inclusion team at the SRA responded individually to almost 2,000 enquiries from the profession about the survey. The majority of questions were about the scope of the exercise - which firms were expected to

return diversity data and who in the firm was to be included in the survey. We responded to the questions being asked by revising the information on our website to better explain the scope of the survey as it progressed, but will learn lessons from last year's exercise and ensure that the information we provide is more clear this year.

16. A number of small firms and sole practitioners contacted us to check whether the survey applied to them, questioning how it was relevant and raising concerns about the confidentiality of such personal data. Of these, a small number felt strongly that the exercise was a waste of time and were very much opposed to it.
17. The diversity data collection is an annual process and we are taking a different approach this year which is summarised in broad terms at the end of this report.

About the respondents

18. Some headline numbers:
 - 9,408 firms participated in the survey
 - These firms reported they have a total of 221,845 people working for them
 - 93,074 individuals completed the survey
 - The response rate per firm was an average of 42%
 - 37% of the respondents are solicitors
19. On average, 42% of the workforce completed the survey per individual firm, the results in the graphs below are therefore indicative of this sample and not the entire population.
20. The response rate for firms with 5 or fewer people working for them is higher than for larger firms as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response rate by firm size

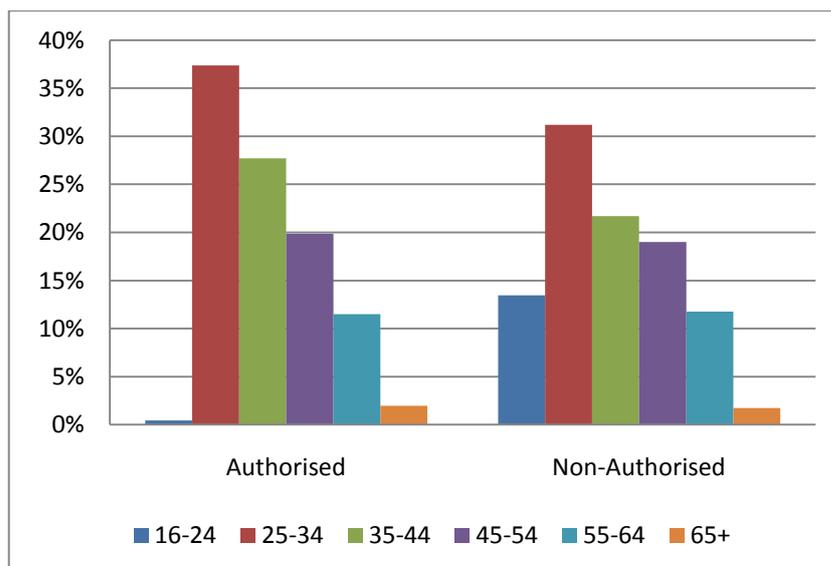
Size of Firm	Total Number of Individuals working at the firm	Total Number of Respondents	Response Rate
< 6	10,119	5,141	51%
6 to 25	39,090	15,286	39%
>25	172,636	72,647	42%
Total	221,845	93,074	42%

21. The size of firm in this table is determined by the firms response to us, setting out the total number of individuals working at the firm.

Survey Results

22. In this section, we have set out graphs to represent the responses to the diversity questions asked within the survey. The graphs show the percentage response for each category split by Authorised and Non-Authorised persons and we have shown the aggregated data across the whole firm population in England and Wales.
23. Authorised persons are individuals regulated by one of the approved regulators, so this will include solicitors holding a practicing certificate as well as other regulated individuals such as barristers and chartered legal executives. 93% of the Authorised persons who responded to the survey are solicitors.
24. We have amalgamated the role categories in this way to keep the report simple, although the survey allowed respondents to select one of 14 different roles. The full range of role categories is set out in **Appendix 1**.
25. For the ethnicity table at Figure 5 below, we have amalgamated the 18 different ethnicity categories which were available for selection within the survey into 5 groups: Asian, Black, Mixed, White and Other. The full range of ethnicity categories is set out in **Appendix 2**.
26. There is a table for each graph, setting out the numerical responses, which are in **Appendix 3**. The tables show the total individuals and the percentage response rate for each category by role.

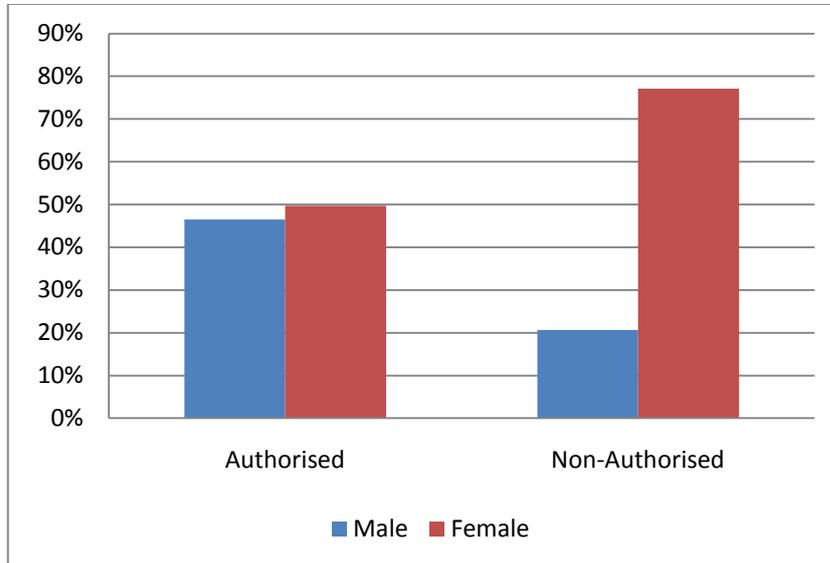
Figure 1: Please indicate the category that includes your current age in years



27. Very few individuals become an Authorised person before the age of 25 due to the education and training this requires. This causes a positive shift in the age distribution of Authorised category compared to Non-Authorised category.

Gender

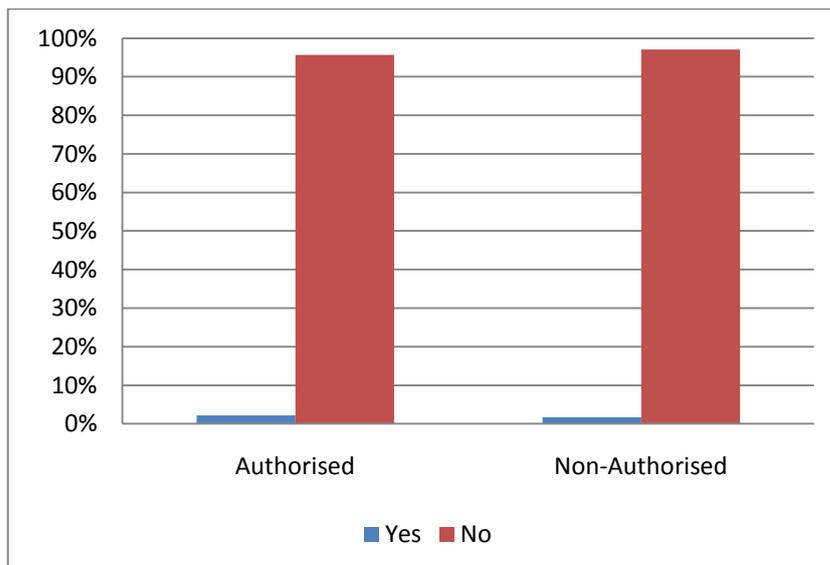
Figure 2: What is your gender?



28. Women made up 46% of the UK workforce in quarter 3 of 2012.¹ The survey reports that there is a similar proportion of males and females working in an Authorised role within firms regulated by us but a much high proportion of Non-Authorised roles are held by females.

Disability

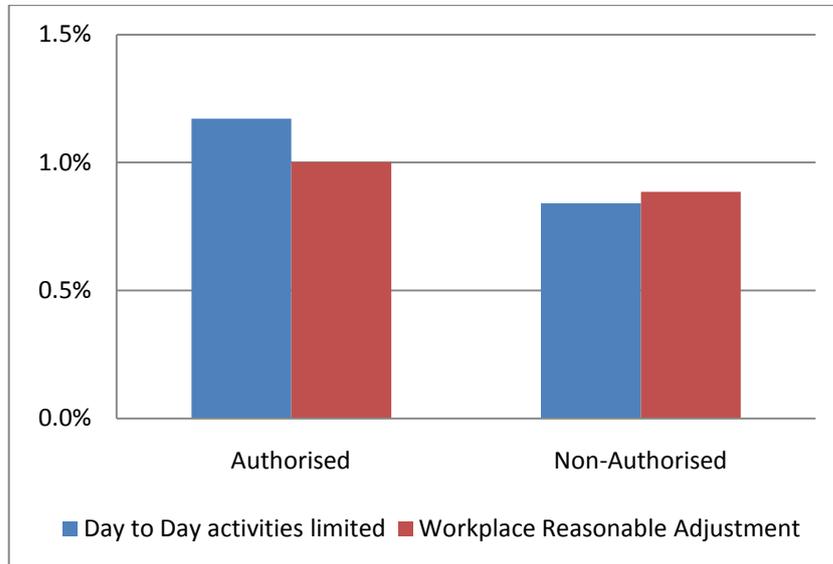
Figure 3: Do you consider yourself to have a disability according to the definition of the Equality Act?



¹ Labour Market Statistics, Office National Statistics (ONS), November 2012

29. Approximately 2% of the of both groups of respondents to the Survey reported that they have a disability according to the definition of the Equality Act.

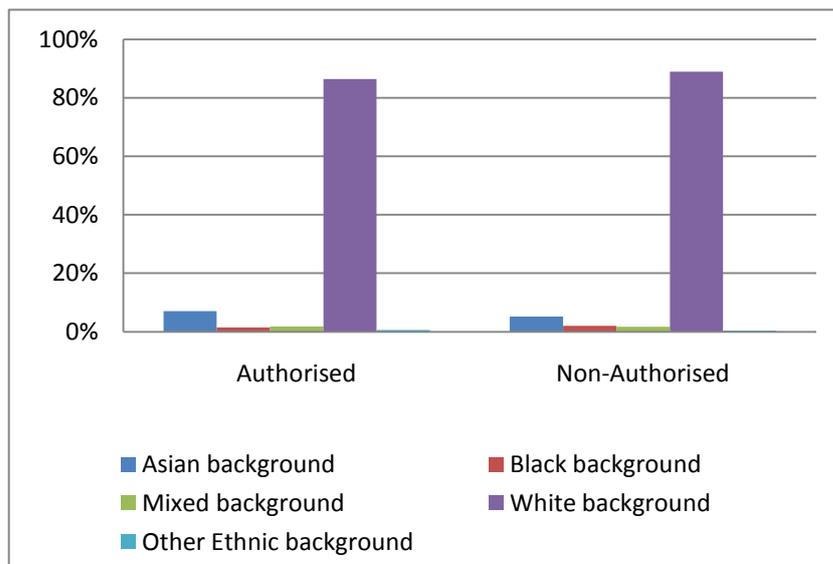
Figure 4: Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months and do you have a workplace reasonable adjustment in place?



30. Approximately one percent of the survey respondents' day to day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability and roughly one percent have a workplace reasonable adjustment in place.

Ethnicity

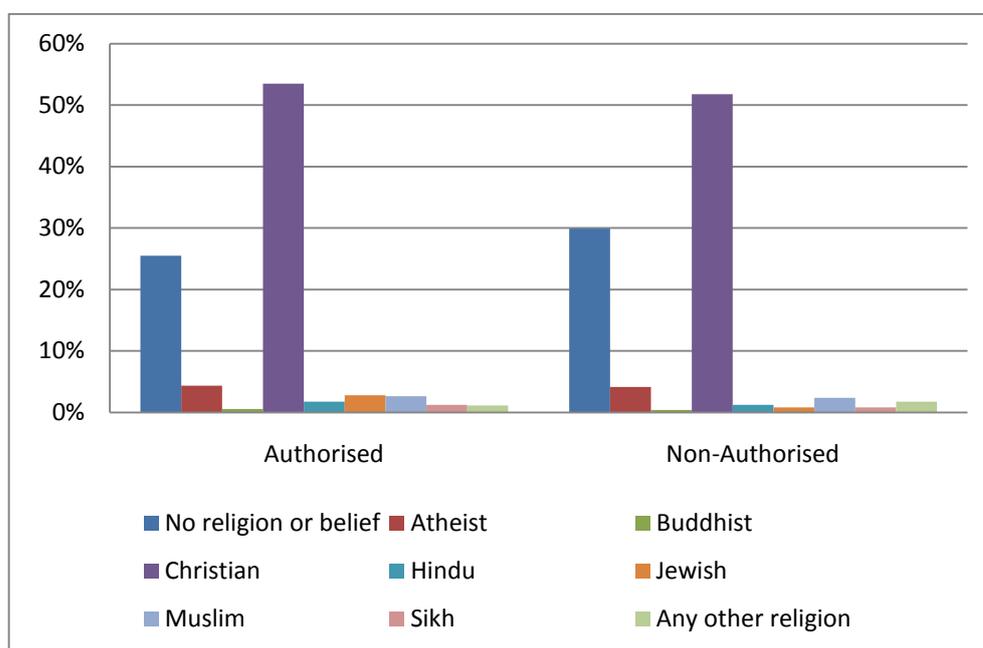
Figure 5: What is your ethnic group?



31. In the 2011 Census,² 86% of the population of England and Wales were classified as having a white background and it has been reported that 12.4% of the UK workforce is from an ethnic minority background.³ 87.5% of the survey respondents are from a white background.
32. Looking at the Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) groups as a whole, there is a slightly higher proportion of individuals from a BME background in the Authorised roles (11% as compared to 9% in Non-Authorised roles).

Religion or belief

Figure 6: What is your religion or belief?



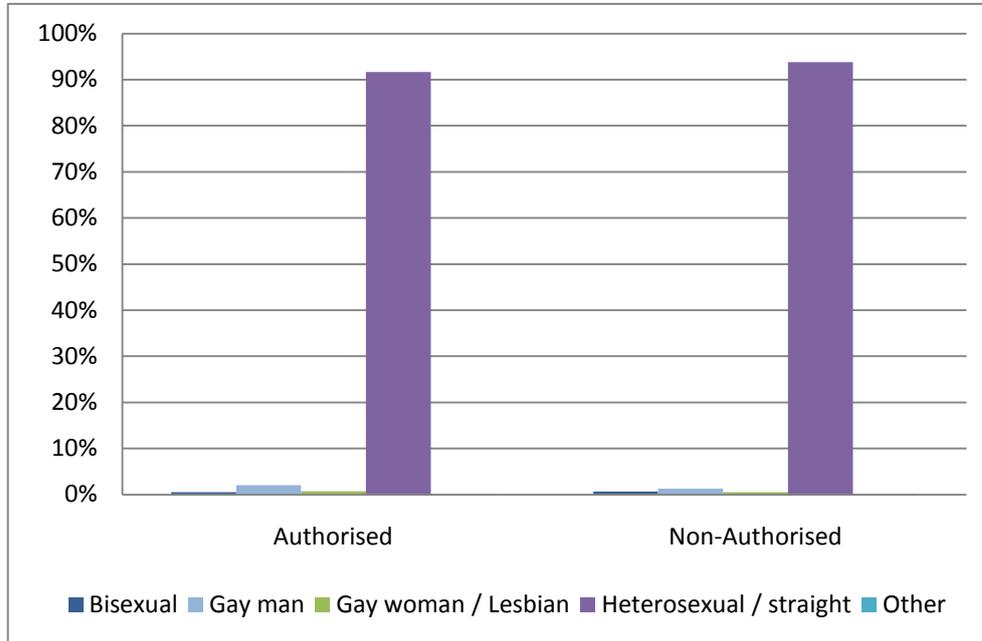
33. The largest religious group for individuals in both Authorised and Non-Authorised roles is Christian (53% and 52% respectively). The next largest group are those individuals who have declared themselves to be atheist (4% for both role groups) or to have no religion (26% of individuals in the Authorised group and 30% in the Non-Authorised group).

² 2011 Census, ONS, 2012

³ 2012 Benchmarking Trends Analysis Report, Business in the Community, December 2012

Sexual orientation

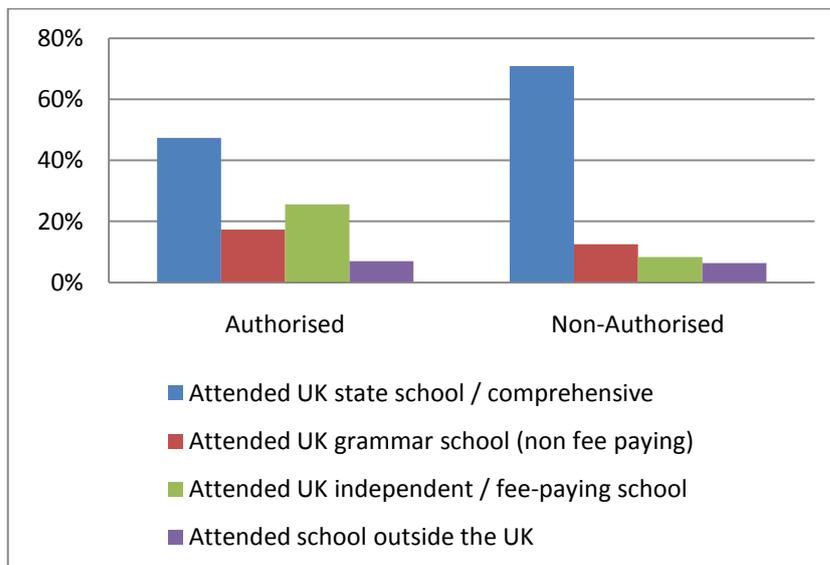
Figure 7: What is your sexual orientation?



34. There is a slightly higher proportion of individuals in the Non-Authorised roles who are heterosexual (94% as compared to 92%) and a slightly higher proportion of individuals in the Authorised roles who selected 'prefer not to say' (4% as compared to 3%).

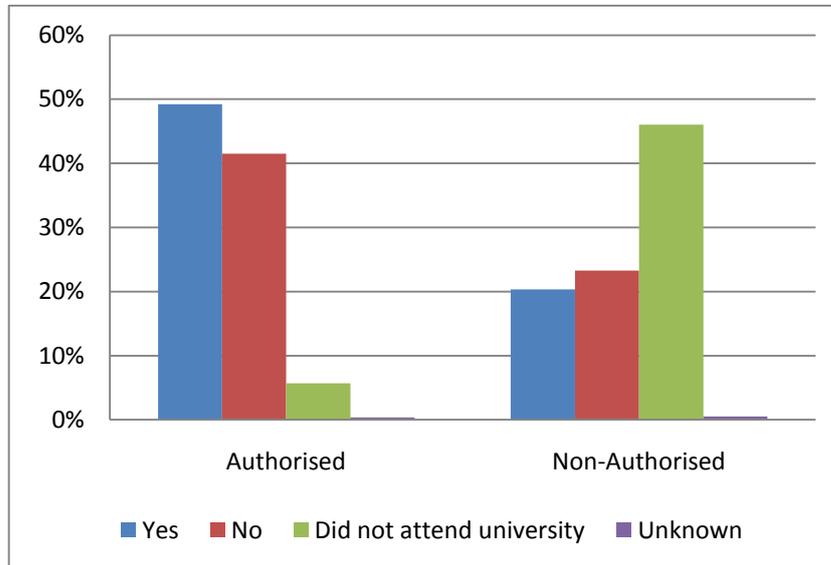
Socio economic background - education

Figure 8: Did you mainly attend a state or fee paying school between the ages of 11 to 18?



35. A higher proportion of the Non-Authorised individuals responding to the survey went to a state/comprehensive school (71%) compared to the Authorised individuals (47%).

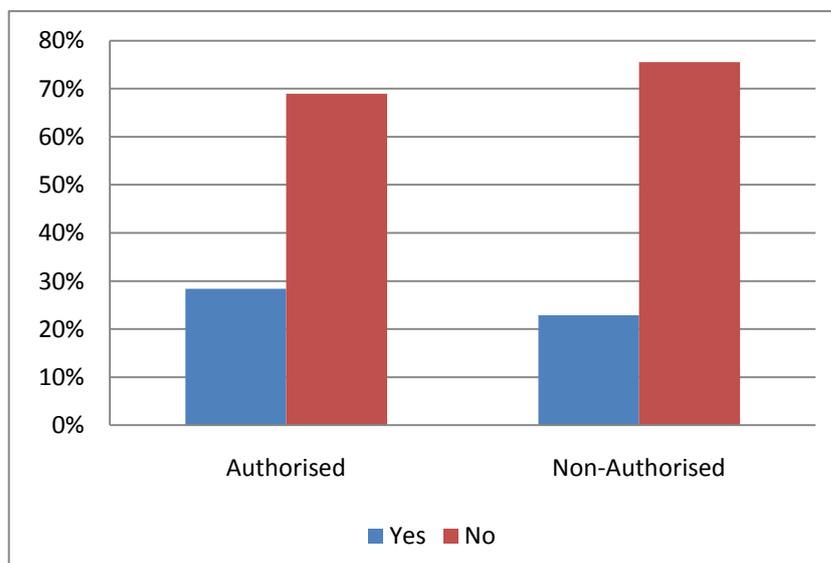
Figure 9: If you attended University (to study a BA, BSc course or higher) were you part of the first generation of your family to do so?



36. A much higher proportion of the individuals within the Authorised category responding to the survey attended University than those individuals within the Non-Authorised category. However, of those who went to University, a lower proportion of Non-Authorised individuals, in comparison to Authorised individuals, were part of the first generation of their family to do so.

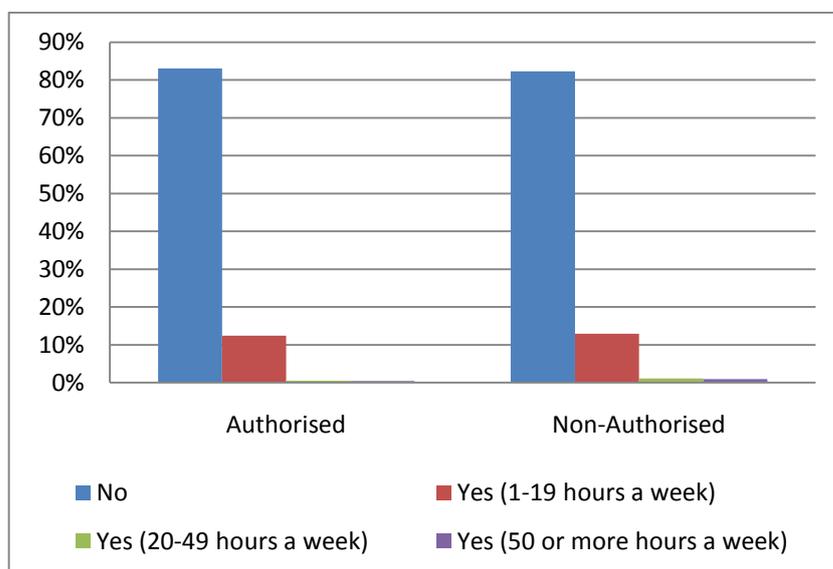
Caring responsibilities

Figure 10: Are you a primary carer for a child or children under 18?



37. A higher proportion of Authorised individuals are primary carers than those individuals within the Non-Authorised category. This could be attributable to the varying Age distributions of the two categories.

Figure 11: Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either long-term physical or mental ill-health / disability or problems related to old age?



38. The majority of the survey population do not look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either long-term physical or mental ill-health / disability or problems related to old age. Where individuals do provide this help or support it is distributed evenly across the Authorised and Non-Authorised categories.

Summary of findings

39. We have kept the tables simple for this first year of reporting. In subsequent years, as the data set improves and we are able to report on trends we will consider a more in depth report.
40. We have made the full set of aggregated data available on our website for people who are interested in more detail across the individual role categories.
41. In summary, the graphs and supporting tables in Appendix 3, indicate the following high level findings:
- **Age** - There are very few individuals aged under 25 in Authorised roles which is to be expected given the time it takes to complete the training and education requirements to become authorised.
 - **Gender** - A much high proportion of Non-Authorised roles are held by females.

- **Disability** - There is a similar percentage of staff reporting themselves as disabled in the Authorised and Non-Authorised categories - approximately 2%.
- **Ethnicity** - There is a slightly higher proportion of individuals from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background in the Authorised roles (11% as compared to 9% in Non-Authorised roles).
- **Religion or belief** - The largest religious group for individuals in both Authorised and Non-Authorised roles is Christian (53% and 52% respectively). The next largest group are those individuals who have declared themselves to be atheist (4% for both role groups) or to have no religion (26% of individuals in the Authorised group and 30% in the Non-Authorised group).
- **Sexual orientation** - There is a slightly higher proportion of individuals in the Non-Authorised roles who are heterosexual (94% as compared to 92%) and a slightly higher proportion of individuals in the Authorised roles who selected 'prefer not to say' (4% as compared to 3%).
- **School age education** - A significantly higher proportion of individuals in Non-Authorised roles went to UK state/comprehensive schools (71% compared to 47%).
- **University education** - Of those who went to University, a lower proportion of Non-Authorised individuals, in comparison to Authorised individuals, were part of the first generation of their family to do so.
- **Primary caring responsibilities for children under 18** - 28% of individuals in the Authorised roles were primary carers of children compared to 23% of individual in Non-Authorised roles.
- **Other caring responsibilities** - the responses were similar for both role groups, with over 80% indicating they did not have such caring responsibilities.

Proposals for 2013

42. Our arrangements for collecting the diversity data will be different this year and we have taken into account the feedback received from firms that is summarised above.
43. The main changes are as follows:

- each firm will be required to collect, publish and report its workforce diversity data to us
 - the questionnaire will be closely aligned to the LSB model questionnaire
 - there will be more clarity provided as to what is expected, in particular with the new requirement this year on firms to publish a summary of their data.
44. More detail about the arrangements will be published at the earliest opportunity and these arrangements will be consistent for 3 years so that the profession does not need to change their systems and we can begin to indentify trends.

Appendix 1: The role categories against which the diversity data was collected

In the graphs we have amalgamate the roles into Authorised and non- Authorised individuals and the table below sets out the role categories included in each group.

Group	Role categories in the survey
Authorised	Solicitor
	Barrister
	Chartered Legal Executive
	Licensed Conveyancer
	Patent Attorney
	Trade Mark Attorney
	Costs Lawyer
	Notary
	Non-Authorised
Role directly supporting a fee earner	
A managerial role	
IT / HR / other corporate services role, excluding managerial roles	
Accountancy or finance role, excluding managerial roles	
Prefer not to say	

Appendix 2: Ethnicity categories in the survey

Ethnic Group	Ethnicity categories in the survey
Asian background	Bangladeshi
	Chinese
	Indian
	Pakistani
	Any other Asian background
Black background	African
	Caribbean
	Any other black background
Mixed background	White & Asian
	White & Black African
	White & Black Caribbean
	Any other mixed background
White background	British (English / Welsh / Northern Irish / Scottish)
	Irish
	Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller
	Any other white background
Other Ethnic background	Arab
	Any other ethnic background

Appendix 3: Tables showing further information for each graph

The tables show the responses to the questions within the Survey and include the total number of individuals and the percentage response rate for each category by role.

Please indicate the category that includes your current age in years:

Role	Total Individuals	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	0%	37%	28%	20%	12%	2%	1%	0%
Non-Authorised	53876	13%	31%	22%	19%	12%	2%	1%	0%
Unknown	2052	12%	18%	16%	17%	15%	4%	17%	1%

What is your gender?

Role	Total Individuals	Male	Female	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	47%	50%	1%	3%
Non-Authorised	53876	21%	77%	1%	2%
Unknown	2052	24%	58%	15%	3%

Do you consider yourself to have a disability according to the definition of the Equality Act?

Role	Total Individuals	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	2%	96%	2%	0%
Non-Authorised	53876	2%	97%	1%	0%
Unknown	2052	2%	81%	16%	1%

Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Role	Total Individuals	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	1%	1%	0%	98%
Non-Authorised	53876	1%	1%	0%	98%
Unknown	2052	1%	1%	0%	98%

Do you have a workplace reasonable adjustment in place?

Role	Total Individuals	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	1%	1%	0%	98%
Non-Authorised	53876	1%	1%	0%	98%
Unknown	2052	1%	1%	0%	98%

What is your ethnic group?

Role	Total Individuals	Asian background	Black background	Mixed background	White background	Other Ethnic background	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	7%	1%	2%	86%	1%	2%	1%
Non-Authorised	53876	5%	2%	2%	89%	0%	1%	0%
Unknown	2052	6%	2%	2%	72%	0%	16%	2%

What is your religion or belief?

Role	Total Individuals	No religion or belief	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Atheist	Any other religion	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	26%	1%	53%	2%	3%	3%	1%	4%	1%	6%	1%
Non-Authorised	53876	30%	0%	52%	1%	1%	2%	1%	4%	2%	5%	1%
Unknown	2052	22%	1%	41%	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%	24%	3%

What is your sexual orientation?

Role	Total Individuals	Heterosexual / straight	Bisexual	Gay man	Gay woman / Lesbian	Other	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	92%	1%	2%	1%	0%	4%	1%
Non-Authorised	53876	94%	1%	1%	0%	0%	3%	1%
Unknown	2052	74%	1%	1%	1%	0%	21%	2%

Did you mainly attend a state or fee paying school between the ages of 11 to 18?

Role	Total Individuals	Attended UK state school / comprehensive	Attended UK grammar school (non fee paying)	Attended UK independent / fee-paying school	Attended school outside the UK	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	47%	17%	26%	7%	3%	0%
Non-Authorised	53876	71%	12%	8%	6%	2%	0%
Unknown	2052	54%	11%	6%	8%	20%	1%

If you attended University (to study a BA, BSc course or higher) were you part of the first generation of your family to do so?

Role	Total Individuals	Yes	No	Did not attend university	Unknown	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	49%	42%	6%	0%	2%	1%
Non-Authorised	53876	20%	23%	46%	1%	2%	8%
Unknown	2052	14%	22%	33%	1%	21%	9%

Are you a primary carer for a child or children under 18?

Role	Total Individuals	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	28%	69%	2%	1%
Non-Authorised	53876	23%	76%	1%	1%
Unknown	2052	17%	64%	17%	3%

Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either long-term physical or mental ill-health / disability or problems related to old age?

Role	Total Individuals	No	Yes (1-19 hours a week)	Yes (20-49 hours a week)	Yes (50 or more hours a week)	Prefer not to say	No Response
Authorised	37146	83%	12%	1%	0%	3%	1%
Non-Authorised	53876	82%	13%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Unknown	2052	63%	12%	1%	1%	21%	2%