

Diversity at the Bar 2024

**A summary of the latest available
diversity data for the Bar**

Published January 2025

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Research Team on Research@BarStandardsBoard.org.uk

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1. Executive Summary

This report presents a summary of the latest available diversity data for the Bar (covering pupils, practising King's Counsel - KC - and practising non-KC barristers). The report assists the Bar Standards Board (BSB) in meeting its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and sets out an evidence base from which relevant and targeted policy can be developed.

Overall, this year has seen the continuation of several longer term trends, including an increase in the proportion of practising barristers who are female; who are from a minority ethnic background; who have primary care of a child; and who are aged 55 or more.

The practising Bar

- The overall number of practitioners (including all pupils) at the Bar as of 1 December 2023 stood at 18,730: Of this number 589 were pupils, 2,089 were KCs, and 16,052 were non-KC barristers.
- This year has seen an increase in individuals currently undertaking pupillage. The number in the practising or non-practising stage of pupillage as of December 2023 was 589, which is 17 higher than that seen in December 2022, and the highest number seen for any Diversity at the Bar report (the report started in 2015).
- The number of non-KC and KC barristers has increased year on year (an increase of 313 non-KCs and 44 KCs.) The increase in the number of non-KCs at the Bar is larger than that seen in previous years since 2015, whereas the increase seen for KCs is a little lower than the average over this period.

Response Rates

- The response rate increased across all collected data in 2023 with the exception of small drops in the response rate for gender and ethnicity. While there have been small drops in the response rate for gender in past Diversity at the Bar reports, this is the first year in which the response rate for ethnicity has fallen since these reports started in 2015.
- In 2024 the year on year increases in disclosure rates range between 0.4-1.7 percentage points (pp) for the majority of the characteristics reported on (all except for gender, ethnicity and age, which already have a high response rate). Increases in response rate in the last couple of years have slowed down quite considerably for monitoring questions on gender identity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic and caring responsibilities.

| Monitoring Category | 2024 response rate (%) | 2023 response rate (%) |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| Gender¹ | 97.9 | 98.0% |
| Gender Identity² | 52.9 | 51.5% |
| Sex³ | 40.8 | 37.1% |
| Ethnicity | 95.0 | 95.1% |
| Disability | 66.4 | 64.7% |
| Age | 90.2 | 89.6% |
| Religion or Belief | 62.1 | 60.4% |
| Sexual orientation | 63.5 | 62.1% |
| Type of school attended from 11-18 | 62.5 | 62.1% |
| First generation to attend university | 58.6 | 58.1% |
| Free school meals | 37.4 | 33.6% |
| Occupation of main household earner when aged around 14 | 23.0 | 17.0% |
| Caring responsibilities for children | 62.4 | 61.9% |
| Caring responsibilities for others | 60.6 | 60.2% |

Gender

- When excluding non-responses,⁴ the overall percentage of women at the Bar increased by 0.6pp from December 2023 to December 2024 to 41.2 per cent. This compares to an estimate of 50.8 per cent of the UK working age (16-64) population being female as of September 2024.⁵ 58.6 per cent of the Bar were male, and 0.2 per cent were non-binary or used a different term for their gender.
- Excluding non-responses, the proportion of KCs who are female increased from 20.3 per cent in 2023 to 21.1 per cent in 2024, a 0.8pp increase. This represents an increase of 8.1 percentage points in the ten years since 2015. However, there remains a large disparity between the proportion of the Bar who are female and the proportion of KCs who are female (41.2 per cent compared to 21.1 per cent).
- The proportion of women at the Bar has increased by 5.3 percentage points overall in the ten years since the 2015 Diversity at the Bar Report (when excluding non-responses). The increase has been 5.1pp for female non-KC barristers, and 8.1pp

1. The monitoring question for this is: What best describes your gender?

2. The monitoring question for this is: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

3. The monitoring question for this is: What is your sex?

4. In previous Diversity at the Bar Reports, the first figure reported for gender was including non-responses. As the proportion on non-responses has increased, providing this comparison year on year would give a poor representation of overall trends.

5. Calculated from the 'Labour Force Survey: Population aged 16-64: Female: Thousands: SA', and 'Labour Force Survey: Population aged 16-64: UK: Male: Thousands: SA' datasets published by the Office for National Statistics on ons.gov.uk

for female KC barristers.

- The proportion of female pupils (excluding those who have not provided information on gender) was lower compared to December 2023 and stood at 58.3 per cent, a decrease of 1.1 percentage points. Although 2022 saw the highest proportion of female pupils (at 59.9%) in the last ten years, 2023 and 2024 had higher proportions of pupils who were female than any other previous Diversity at the Bar Report. The proportion of pupils in 2024 represents an increase of 8.2 percentage points compared to 10 years ago.

Ethnicity

- When excluding those that have not provided information, around 17.3 per cent of the Bar is from a minority ethnic background. This compares to around 19.1 per cent of the 16-64 working age population in England and Wales as of Q3 2024.
- The proportion of the Bar from a minority ethnic background (excluding non-responses) has increased by 0.4pp compared to December 2023, and by 4.3pp in the last ten years. Since 2023, the percentage of non-KC barristers from a minority ethnic background has increased from 17.5% to 17.9%, and the percentage of KCs from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased from 10.7 per cent to 10.8 per cent. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background showed a decrease from 24.9% to 24.5% compared to December 2023 but remains higher than that seen for most other Diversity at the Bar reports (with the exception of 2020 and 2023).
- There is still a disparity between the overall percentage of barristers from minority ethnic backgrounds across the profession (17.3%), and the percentage of KCs (10.8%) from minority ethnic backgrounds, although the disparity is reducing over time. This may reflect some previous trends (e.g. a lower percentage of such barristers entered the profession in the past.) It may also suggest barriers to progression to KC status for practitioners from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- There are some notable differences when further disaggregating by ethnic group. When excluding those that have not provided information, there was a year-on-year increase in the overall proportion of Asian/Asian British barristers and Mixed/Multiple ethnic group barristers (an increase of 0.4pp for Asian/Asian British barristers and 0.2pp for Mixed/Multiple ethnic group barristers). The proportion of Black/Black British barristers remains the same as in December 2023, whereas the proportion of White barristers has decreased by 0.4pp over the same period.
- There is a greater proportion of Asian/Asian British practitioners at the Bar compared to the proportion of Asian/Asian British individuals in the UK working age population (8.4% compared to 8.0%), and the same can be said for those from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds (3.9% compared to 1.9%). By contrast, there is a smaller proportion of those from Black/Black British backgrounds (3.6% compared to 5.4%), and for those from other ethnic groups (1.5% compared to 3.8%).
- There is also a greater disparity in the proportion of all non-KCs from Black/Black British backgrounds compared to the proportion of all KCs from the same

background, with the disparity being particularly high for those of Black/Black British – African ethnic backgrounds. (discounting those that did not provide ethnicity data, 1.3 per cent of KCs are from a Black/Black British background, compared to 3.8 per cent of non-KCs).

Disability

- When excluding those that had not provided information, there has been an increase of 0.9 percentage points in the proportion of the Bar with a declared disability. The increase was largest for pupils - the proportion of pupils declaring a disability was 1.7pp higher than in December 2023; while the respective figures for non-KCs showed a year-on-year increase of 0.7pp, and an increase of 0.5pp seen for KCs.
- There still appears to be an underrepresentation of disabled practitioners at the Bar. Although there is a relatively low response rate of 66.4 per cent, among those who provided information on disability status, 8.9 per cent per cent of the Bar; 17.4 per cent of pupils; 8.9 per cent of non-KC barristers; and 5.1 per cent of KCs had declared a disability as of December 2024. Although the proportion of pupils with a declared disability is similar to the estimated 17.9 per cent of the employed working age UK population with a declared disability, the proportions for Non-KC barristers and KCs is significantly lower, although it has increased over time.

Age

- When excluding those who have not provided information, those aged between 25 and 54 make up around 72.1 per cent of the Bar. This is a decrease compared to December 2023 of around 1.5 percentage points (72.1% compared to 73.6%), with relatively more of the Bar in the 55-64 and 65+ age ranges compared to 2023.
- 26.7 per cent of those who have provided information on age are aged 55+. This continues a general trend of an increasing proportion of the Bar in the oldest age bands and compares to figures of 25.4 per cent in 2023 (a 1.3pp increase); and 14.8 per cent in the first Diversity at the Bar Report in 2015.

Religion and Belief

- Including those that have not provided information, the largest group at the Bar is Christians (25.5%) followed by those with no religion (23.4%), although for pupils this pattern is reversed. When excluding those who have not provided information, the profile of the Bar in comparison to the wider population of England and Wales is quite similar for religion and belief for most religious groups.

Sexual Orientation

- Excluding those that have not provided information, 7.5 per cent of the Bar as a whole, 17 per cent of pupils, 7.4 per cent of non-KCs, and 5.6 per cent of KCs provided their sexual orientation as one of Bisexual; Gay or Lesbian; or used another term for their sexual orientation (not including heterosexual). This compares to an estimate of 4.0 per cent of the UK population aged 16 and over as of 2022.

Socio-economic background

- The data suggest that a disproportionately high percentage of barristers attended a UK independent school between the ages of 11-18. As of December 2024, 19.4 per cent of the Bar (including non-respondents) attended an independent school between 11-18, compared to approximately 6.5 per cent of school children in England, and 9.7 per cent of UK domiciled full-time first degree entrants in the UK. Of those providing information on school attended, around one in three attended an independent school in the UK.
- When excluding non-responses, as of December 2024 53.7 per cent of barristers had parent(s) who attended university; and 46.3 per cent did not have parent(s) who attended university.

Caring responsibilities

- When excluding non-responses, 31.5 per cent of the Bar; 7.5 per cent of pupils; 32.5 per cent of non-KCs; and 26.8 per cent of KCs have primary caring responsibilities for one or more children. Overall, the proportion of the Bar with primary caring responsibilities for one or more children has increased by around 9.5pp since 2015, 6.5pp since 2019 and 0.5pp since 2023.
- The increase in the proportion of barristers who provide primary care for a child is seen for both male and female barristers, although there is a large disparity in the proportions involved: overall, excluding non-responses, around 41 per cent of female barristers, and 23 per cent of male barristers provided primary care for a child.
- Figures produced by the UK Office of National Statistics suggest that as of September 2024, 37.0 per cent of employed males, and 40.5 per cent of employed females are a primary carer for one or more children: This suggests that while the proportion of female barristers with primary caring responsibilities for children matches the UK workforce as a whole, the equivalent proportion for male barristers is significantly lower.
- Of those that provided a Yes/No response, around 15.6 per cent of respondents provided care for another person (excluding dependent children) for 1 or more hours per week as of December 2024. This is in line with the proportion of those in work in the UK who are carers.

2. Introduction

The BSB is committed to providing clear and transparent statistical diversity data for every stage of a barrister’s career. This diversity data report is published annually, in line with the Specific Duties Regulations of the Equality Act 2010 and the statutory guidance of the Legal Services Board. It is a summary of the diversity data on practising barristers available to the BSB as of 1 December 2024.

This report provides an overview of diversity at the Bar,⁶ and establishes evidence for both policy development and assessing the effectiveness of current BSB initiatives aimed at increasing equality and diversity at the Bar. All data are presented anonymously.

Unless stated otherwise, all analysis in this report is broken down by seniority. Table 1 (below) shows the simple breakdown of practising members of the profession.

Table 1. Total number of people at the Bar (numbers)

| Seniority | Numbers | Year on year difference (compared to December 2023) |
|--|---------------|---|
| Pupil | 589 | 17 |
| Non-King’s Counsel (Non-KC)⁷ | 16,052 | 313 |
| King’s Counsel (KC) | 2,089 | 44 |
| Total | 18,730 | 364 |

There has been a year-on-year increase of 364 in the number at the Bar as of 1 December 2024. This is higher than the increase seen in 2023 compared to 2022, where the equivalent increase was 330.

The net increase in the number of non-KCs at the Bar is the highest seen in any Diversity at the Bar report (although the number of non-KCs increased by 312 between 2015 and 2016). The increase of 44 for KCs is below year on year trends seen since 2016, as shown in Table 2 (the average annual increase in the number of KCs during this period is 53).

The number of pupils is the highest seen in any Diversity at the Bar Report, although a smaller increase (17) year on year than that seen for the last Diversity at the Bar report (where the number of pupils increased by 84 between December 2022 and December 2023).

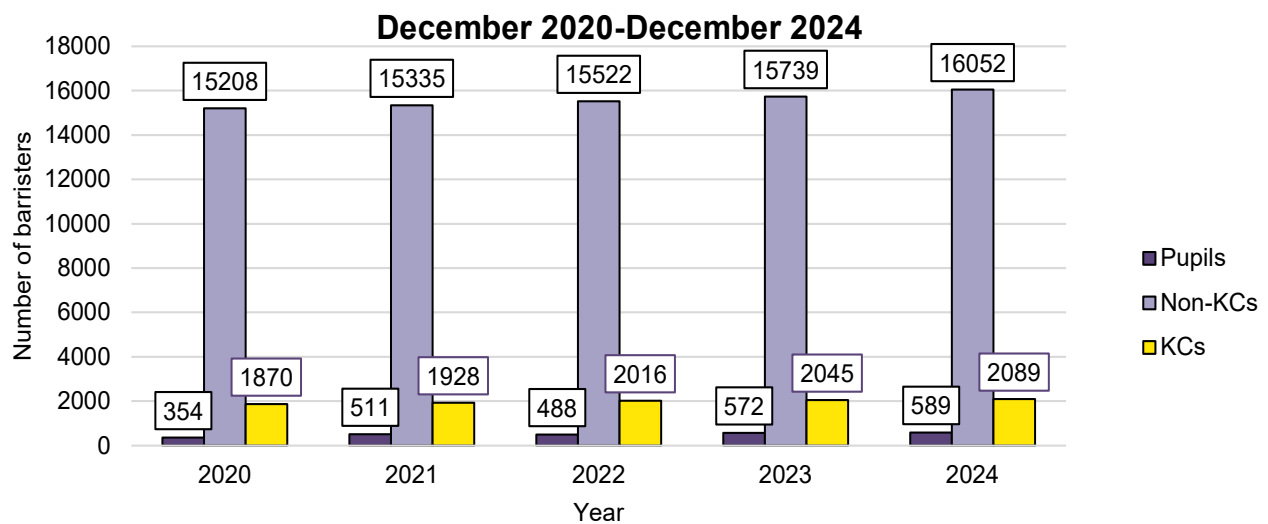
6. Usage of the term ‘the Bar’ in this report refers only to practising barristers and pupils (including non-practising first six pupils) as of 1 December 2024.

7. Usage of the term “non-KC” in this report refers to practising junior barristers; a barrister who has not taken silk

Table 2. Year on year change in the number of people at the Bar

| Seniority | 2016 -2017 | 2017 -2018 | 2018 -2019 | 2019 -2020 | 2020 -2021 | 2021 -2022 | 2022 -2023 | 2023 -2024 |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Pupils | 23 | 5 | -24 | -121 | 157 | -23 | 84 | 17 |
| Non-KCs | 269 | 132 | 312 | 60 | 127 | 187 | 217 | 303 |
| KCs | 57 | 31 | 72 | 36 | 58 | 88 | 29 | 44 |
| Overall | 349 | 168 | 360 | -25 | 342 | 252 | 330 | 364 |

As of 1 December 2024, there were 24 pupils undertaking pupillages that commenced more than one year ago. Pupils undertaking extended pupillages are not included in this report to avoid double counting pupils from one Diversity at the Bar Report to the next.

Chart 1: Number of pupils, Non-KC barristers and KC barristers at the Bar:

There are three sections to this report: protected characteristics⁸, socio-economic background, and caring responsibilities for dependent children and others.

8. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic as defined by the 2010 Equality Act: at the time of publishing the protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

3. Methodology

The data for practitioners⁹ in this report are from the BSB's records.

BSB Records

The Barrister Records Team receives data on the profession via MyBar, the online "Authorisation to Practise" system. MyBar enables barristers to renew their practising certificates and input or update their diversity monitoring data at any time.

The rate of completion varies for individual monitoring strands, as each question is voluntary and all can be left blank if desired.

Diversity data on pupils are collected through the Pupillage Registration Form, which must be completed before an individual commences pupillage. The data from this form are stored in the BSB's data warehouse.

The diversity monitoring information used in this report represents a snapshot of the profession as at 1 December 2024.

In general, percentages have been rounded to one decimal place, so in some cases the values may not total 100 per cent.

3.1. Response Rates

The response rate once again increased across all collected data in 2023 with the exception of gender and ethnicity. While there have been small drops in the response rate for gender in past Diversity at the Bar reports, this is the first year in which the response rate for ethnicity has fallen since these reports started in 2015.

Year on year increases in response rate in the last couple of years have slowed down quite considerably for disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic and caring responsibility questions. Prior to 2022, year on year increases of 3-5pp were frequently seen, whereas in 2024 the year on year increases range between 0.4-1.7pp. Response rates for these monitoring categories are now around 60 per cent, and with current trends, may not increase substantially from this point for some time.

This is the fourth year in which we have collected data on sex¹⁰ and whether a barrister qualified for free school meals, and the second year we have collected data on the occupation of the main earner in the household when a barrister was aged around 14. The response rates for these questions were quite low (less than 50%), and so these categories are not included in this report.

9. Usage of the term "practitioners" in this report refers to pupils, junior barristers, and KCs practising at the Bar as of 1 December 2023.

10. All previous Diversity at the Bar Reports have reported on Gender. We recently started collecting data on sex in addition to asking barristers what gender they identify with. Sex and gender are different concepts that are often used interchangeably. The UK Government (Office for National Statistics) [defines sex](#) as a binary variable categorised as female or male, with an individual's legal sex recorded at birth based on their biological characteristics. A person's gender identity may or may not correspond to their sex that was recorded at birth.

Less than 60 per cent of the Bar has responded to two of the 11 questions monitored in this report. These monitoring questions relate to whether someone was the first generation of their family to attend university, and to whether their gender identity is the same as their sex registered at birth.

Each question on MyBar and the Pupillage Registration Form contains a 'prefer not to say' option, allowing individuals the option of giving a response without disclosing any information. 'Prefer not to say' is counted as a response in the rates listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Response Rates in 2023 and 2024 (as a percentage of total barristers) and change in response rates over time

| Category | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | 2024-2023 pp. diff. | 2024-2015 pp. diff. |
|--|----------|----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Gender¹¹ | 98.0% | 97.9% | -0.1pp | -2.1pp |
| Gender Identity¹² | 51.5% | 52.9% | 1.4pp | 52.9pp |
| Sex¹³ | 37.1% | 40.8% | 3.7pp | 40.8pp |
| Ethnicity | 95.1% | 95.0% | -0.1pp | 3.7pp |
| Disability | 64.7% | 66.4% | 1.7pp | 35.4pp |
| Age | 89.6% | 90.2% | 0.4pp | 3.8pp |
| Religion or Belief | 60.4% | 62.1% | 1.7pp | 34.3pp |
| Sexual orientation | 62.1% | 63.5% | 1.4pp | 34.2pp |
| Type of school attended from 11-18 | 62.1% | 62.5% | 0.4pp | 35.9pp |
| Parent(s) attended university | 58.1% | 58.6% | 0.5pp | 31.9pp |
| Free school meals | 33.6% | 37.4% | 3.8pp | 37.4pp |
| Occupation of main household earner when aged around 14 | 17.0% | 24.0% | 6.0pp | 24.0pp |
| Caring responsibilities for Children | 61.9% | 62.4% | 0.5pp | 34.9pp |
| Caring responsibilities for others | 60.2% | 60.6% | 0.4pp | 34.3pp |

11. The monitoring question for this is: What best describes your gender? This question is designed to capture data on gender identity in an inclusive way, by inviting people to describe their gender in their own words. This monitoring category has been reported on since the first Diversity at the Bar Report.

12. The monitoring question for this is: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

13. The monitoring question for this is: What is your sex?

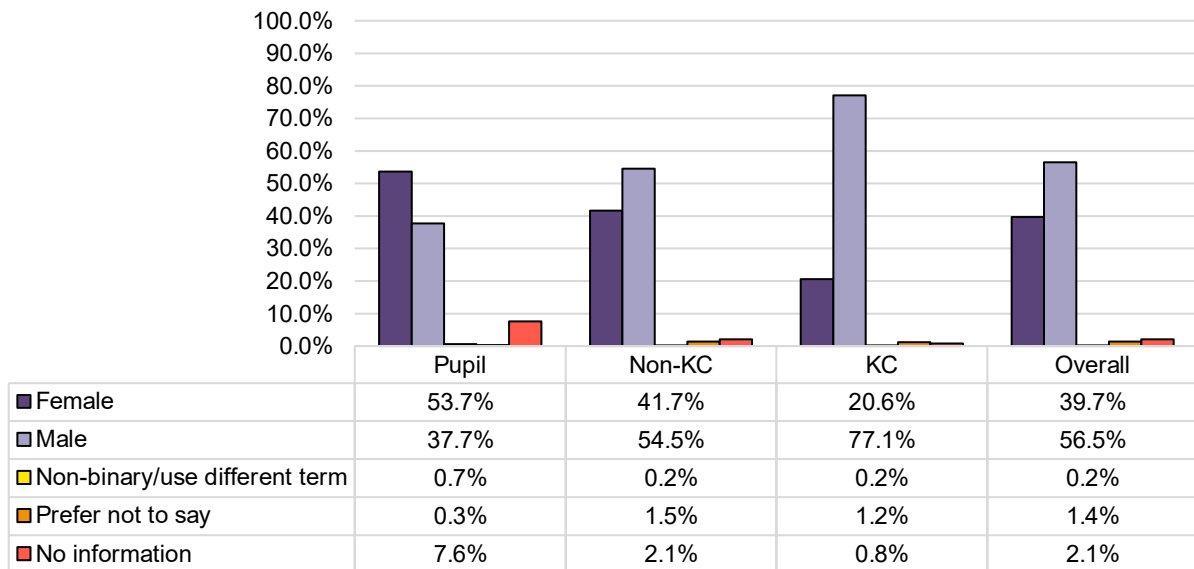
4. Protected Characteristics

Gender and Identity

4.1. Gender

Chart 2 shows the percentage of practitioners at the Bar by gender and level of seniority. The monitoring question for this on MyBar is: “What best describes your gender?”.

Chart 2: Gender at the Bar (%)



- When excluding non-responses,¹⁴ the overall percentage of women at the Bar increased by 0.6pp from December 2023 to December 2024 to 41.2 per cent. This compares to an estimate of 50.8 per cent of the UK working age (16-64) population being female as of September 2024.¹⁵ 58.6 per cent of the Bar were male, and 0.2 per cent were non-binary or used a different term for their gender.
- The overall proportion of women at the Bar has increased every year since the first Diversity at the Bar Report in 2015 (when excluding non-responses). In absolute terms, the number of female non-KCs and KCs has increased by 1,453 since 2015 (from 5,667 to 7,120). The number of male non-KCs and KCs has increased by 118 over the same period (from 10,248 to 10,366). The discrepancy is likely to be due largely to greater numbers of male barristers retiring: As of December 2024, when excluding non-responses, around 74 per cent of those

14. In previous Diversity at the Bar Reports, the first figure reported for gender was including non-responses. As the proportion on non-responses has increased, providing this comparison year on year would give a poor representation of overall trends.

15. Calculated from the 'Labour Force Survey: Population aged 16-64: Female: Thousands: SA', and 'Labour Force Survey: Population aged 16-64: UK: Male: Thousands: SA' datasets published by the Office for National Statistics on ons.gov.uk

aged 55+ at the Bar were male.

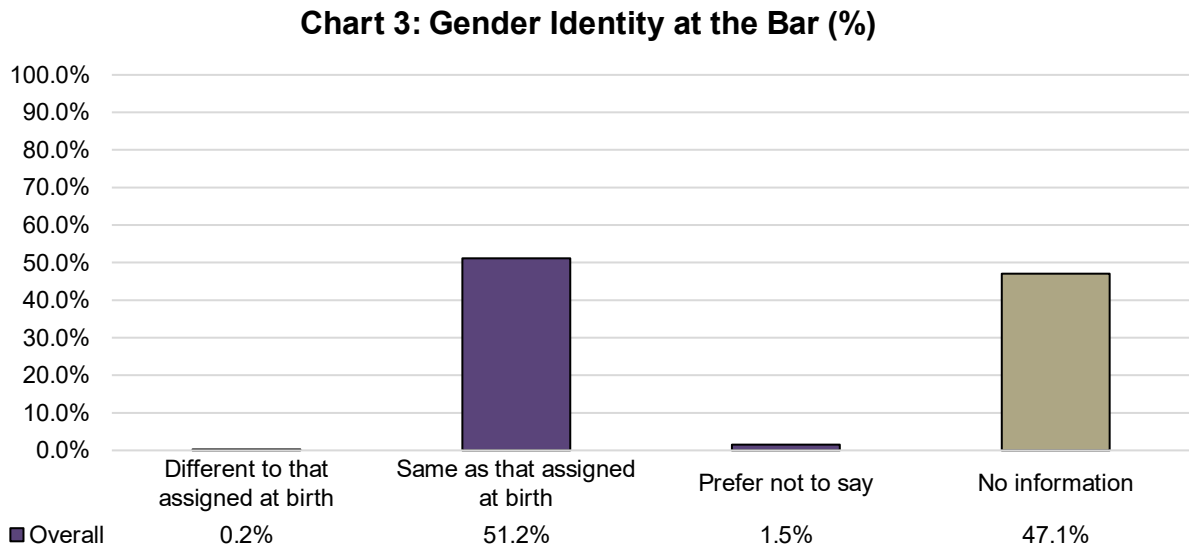
- Excluding non-responses, the proportion of female pupils was slightly lower compared to December 2023 and stood at 58.3 per cent (it was 59.4% in 2023). This is higher than the proportion of pupils who were male, which stood at 41.0 per cent. Although 2022 saw the highest proportion of female pupils (at 59.9%) 2023 and 2024 had higher proportions of pupils who were female than any other previous Diversity at the Bar Reports. Except for 2020 (where the proportions were even), the proportion of pupils who were female has been higher than that seen for males in every Diversity at the Bar Report. The proportion of pupils in 2024 represents an increase of 8.2 percentage points compared to 10 years ago.
- When excluding non-responses, the proportion of non-KCs who are female has increased by around 0.6pp since 2023 and stands at 43.2 per cent.
- Excluding non-responses, the proportion of KCs who are female increased from 20.3 per cent in 2023 to 21.1 per cent in 2024, a 0.8pp increase. This is a slightly lower percentage point increase as that seen from 2021 to 2022, and 2022 to 2023, where the increase was 1.1pp. The number of female KCs increased by 25 from 2023 to 2024 compared to an increase of 17 male KCs.
- It is still noteworthy that the overall proportion of female KCs is low (21.1% excluding non-responses) in comparison to the percentage of female barristers at the Bar (41.2%) and the percentage of female barristers at 15 or more years of call (36.3%). However, the difference between the two has narrowed over time (in 2015, 36% of the Bar was female compared to 13% of KCs). Excluding non-responses, 52.9 per cent of the net addition of KCs since 2015 has been female, compared to 47.1 per cent who have been male. If this continues, the proportion of female KCs will continue to grow closer to the proportion of female non-KCs.
- The proportion of women at the Bar has increased by 5.3 percentage points overall since the 2015 Diversity at the Bar Report (when excluding non-responses). The increase overall has been 5.1pp for female non-KC barristers, and 8.1pp for female KC barristers.

Table 4. Gender at the Bar (numbers)

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Female | 316 | 6,689 | 431 | 7,436 |
| Male | 222 | 8,756 | 1,610 | 10,588 |
| Non-binary/use different term | 4 | 36 | 5 | 45 |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 233 | 26 | 261 |
| No information | 45 | 338 | 17 | 400 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

4.2. Gender Identity

Chart 3 shows the percentage of practitioners at the Bar by response to the following question on MyBar: “Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?”.



- Around 47 per cent of practitioners had not provided a response to this question on MyBar.
- When including non-respondents, around 0.2 per cent of practitioners had a different gender identity to the one they were registered at birth.

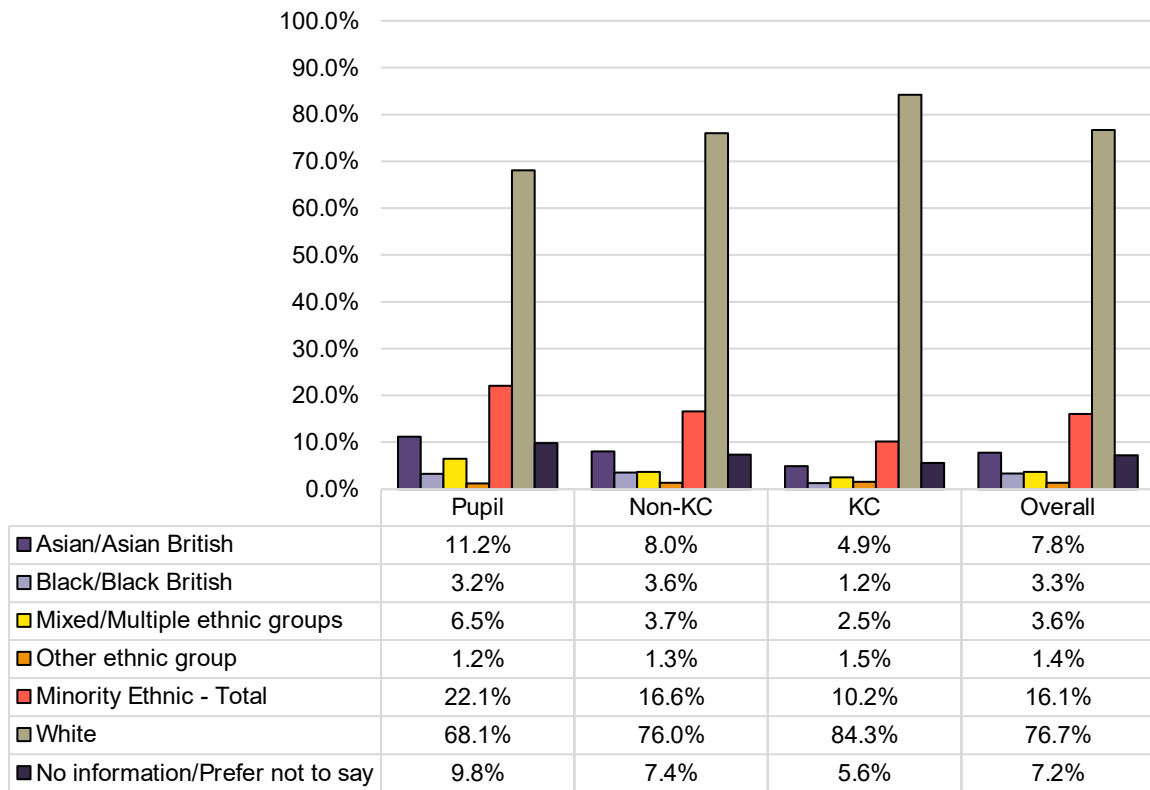
Table 5. Gender Identity at the Bar (numbers)

| Gender Identity same as that registered at birth | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Overall |
|--|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| No | 3 | 35 | 4 | 42 |
| Yes | 129 | 8,286 | 1,166 | 9,581 |
| Prefer not to say | 4 | 261 | 23 | 288 |
| No information | 453 | 7,470 | 896 | 8,819 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

4.3. Ethnicity

Chart 4 shows the percentage of practitioners at the Bar by ethnic background and level of seniority.

Chart 4: Ethnicity at the Bar (%)



- Including non-responses, the overall percentage of barristers from minority ethnic backgrounds at the Bar as of 1 December 2024 was 16.1 per cent, compared to 15.7 per cent in December 2023.
- When excluding those that have not provided information or have preferred not to disclose information, around 17.3 per cent of the Bar is from a minority ethnic background. This compares to around 19.1 per cent of the 16-64 working age population in England and Wales as of Q3 2024.
- Excluding non-responses, the proportion of the Bar from a minority ethnic background has increased by 0.4pp compared to December 2023, and around 0.9pp compared to December 2022. This is in line with the average yearly percentage point increase of 0.4pp since the first Diversity at the Bar Report in 2015 and represents an increase of 4.3pp in the last ten years.
- The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background showed a decrease of 0.4pp compared to December 2023 - from 24.9% to 24.5% when excluding non-responses (and from 22.4% to 22.1% when including non-responses). However, the 2024 figure is higher than that seen for any other Diversity at the Bar report with the exception of 2020 and 2023.

- The percentage of non-KC barristers from a minority ethnic background has increased year on year from 17.5% to 17.9% excluding non-responses (and from 16.2% to 16.6% when including non-responses). This equates to an increase of 4.2pp compared to the first Diversity at the Bar Report in December 2015.
- The percentage of KCs from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased year on year from 10.7 per cent to 10.8 per cent when excluding non-responses (although the proportion including non-responses has remained the same at 10.2 per cent). This equates to an increase of 4.3pp compared to the first Diversity at the Bar Report in December 2015.
- Since December 2015 there has been a net addition of 111 KCs from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to a net addition of 289 KCs from White ethnic backgrounds. Of those for whom we have data, around 28 per cent of the net addition of KCs since 2015 has been from a minority ethnic background. This is higher than the proportion of practitioners from minority ethnic backgrounds and may partly be explained by greater numbers of White KCs having retired since 2015, as the proportion of KCs who are White shows a general increase with age.
- It is still noteworthy that the overall proportion of KCs from a minority ethnic background is low (10.1% excluding non-responses) in comparison to the percentage of barristers from a minority ethnic background at the Bar (17.3%) and the percentage of barristers from a minority ethnic background at 15 or more years of call (15.9%). However, the ratio between the proportion of KCs from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of non-KCs from such backgrounds has narrowed over time. When excluding non-responses, in December 2015 the proportion of non-KC practitioners from a minority ethnic background was 2.1 times higher than the equivalent proportion of KCs; whereas in December 2023 the ratio between the two was 1.6.

When looking at more disaggregated data by ethnic group, and when excluding those that have not provided information on ethnicity, some notable statistics emerge.

Asian/Asian British

- Around 8.4 per cent of the Bar, 12.4 per cent of pupils, 8.7 per cent of non-KCs, and 5.2 per cent of KCs are from an Asian/Asian British background. This compares to around 8.0 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of Asian/Asian British barristers at the Bar has increased by around 1.9pp since 2015 and by 0.4pp compared to December 2023.
- Of the 8.7% of non-KCs and 5.2% of KCs from Asian/Asian British backgrounds
 - 0.8% of non-KCs and 0.3% of KCs are from an Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi background;
 - 0.7% of non-KCs and 0.3% of KCs are from an Asian/Asian British - Chinese background;
 - 3.7% of non-KCs and 2.7% of KCs are from an Asian/Asian British - Indian background;

- 2.2% of non-KCs and 1.3% of KCs are from an Asian/Asian British - Pakistani background; and
- 1.3% of non-KCs and 0.7% of KCs are from Other Asian backgrounds.

Black/Black British

- Around 3.6 per cent of the Bar, 3.6 per cent of pupils, 3.8 per cent of non-KCs, and 1.3 per cent of KCs are from a Black/Black British background. This compares to around 5.4 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of Black/Black British barristers at the Bar has increased by around 0.6pp since 2015 and has not increased when compared to December 2023.
- Of the 3.8% of non-KCs and 1.3% of KCs from a Black/Black British background:
 - 2.1% of non-KCs and 0.5% of KCs are from Black/Black British - African backgrounds;
 - 1.5% of non-KCs and 0.8% of KCs are from a Black/Black British - Caribbean background; and
 - 0.2% of non-KCs and 0.1% of KCs are from any other Black background.

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups

- Around 3.9 per cent of the Bar, 7.2 per cent of pupils, 4 per cent of non-KCs, and 2.7 per cent of KCs are from a Mixed/Multiple ethnic background. This compares to around 1.9 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of Mixed/Multiple ethnic group barristers at the Bar has increased by around 1.5pp since 2015 and increased by 0.2pp compared to December 2023.
- Of the 4% of non-KCs and 2.7% of KCs from Mixed/Multiple ethnic group backgrounds:
 - 1.4% of non-KCs and 1.0% of KCs are from White and Asian mixed backgrounds;
 - 0.4% of non-KCs and 0.2% of KCs are from White and Black/Black British - African mixed backgrounds;
 - 0.6% of non-KCs and 0.3% of KCs are from White and Black/Black British - Caribbean mixed backgrounds;
 - 0.2% of non-KCs and 0.3% of KCs are from White and Chinese mixed backgrounds; and
 - 1.4% of non-KCs and 0.9% of KCs are from any Other Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group background.

Other ethnic group

- Around 1.5 per cent of the Bar, 1.3 per cent of pupils, 1.5 per cent of non-KCs, and 1.6 per cent of KCs indicated that they were from another ethnic background. This compares to around 3.8 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of barristers in this group has remained the same since December

2023, and increased by 0.3pp since 2015.

White

- Around 82.7 per cent of the Bar, 75.5 per cent of pupils, 82.1 per cent of non-KCs, and 89.2 per cent of KCs are from a White background. This compares to around 80.8 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of barristers from a White background has decreased by around 4.3pp since 2015 and by 0.4pp compared to December 2023.
- Of the 82.1% of non-KCs and 89.2% of KCs that are from White ethnic groups overall:
 - 74.2% of non-KCs and 82.1% of KCs are from White British backgrounds;
 - 2.5% of non-KCs and 2.4% of KCs are from White Irish backgrounds; and
 - 5.3% of non-KCs and 4.7% of KCs are from any other White background.

Table 6: Ethnicity at the Bar (numbers)

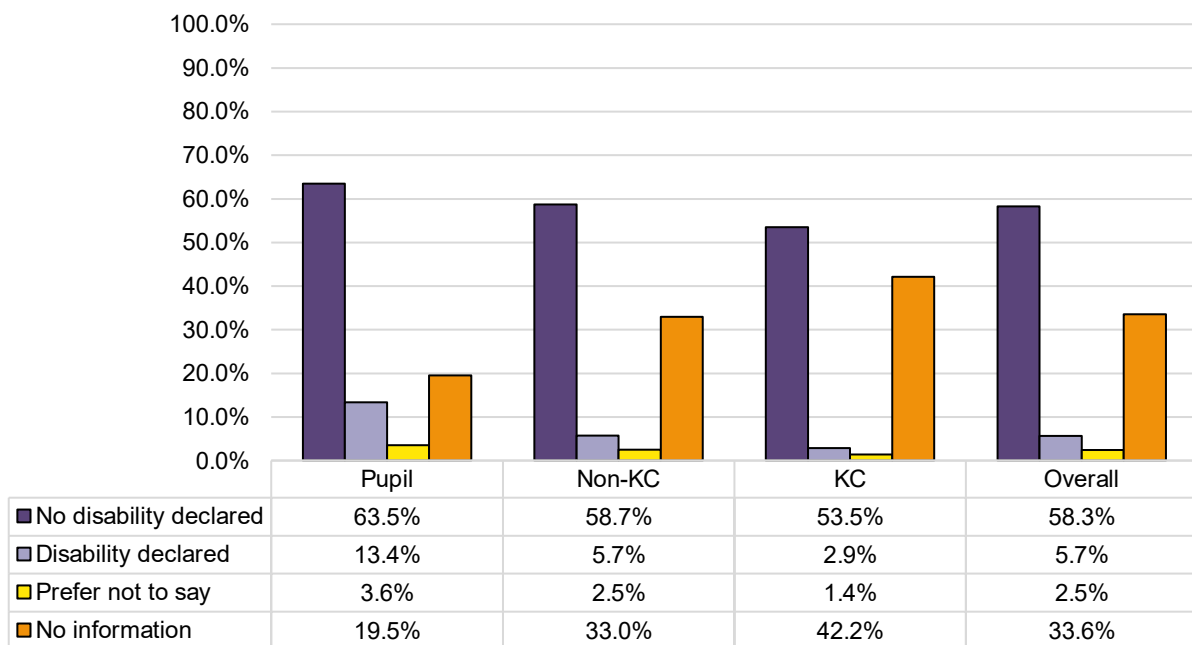
| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|---|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Asian/Asian British | 66 | 1,287 | 102 | 1,455 |
| Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi | 6 | 124 | 5 | 135 |
| Asian/Asian British - Chinese | 12 | 97 | 5 | 114 |
| Asian/Asian British - Indian | 26 | 545 | 54 | 625 |
| Asian/Asian British - Pakistani | 14 | 328 | 25 | 367 |
| Any other Asian background | 8 | 193 | 13 | 214 |
| Black/Black British | 19 | 572 | 26 | 617 |
| Black/Black British - African | 13 | 313 | 9 | 335 |
| Black/Black British - Caribbean | 6 | 222 | 16 | 244 |
| Any other Black background | 0 | 37 | 1 | 38 |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups | 38 | 591 | 53 | 682 |
| White and Asian | 14 | 206 | 20 | 240 |
| White and Black African | 5 | 65 | 4 | 74 |
| White and Black Caribbean | 5 | 84 | 6 | 95 |
| White and Chinese | 0 | 23 | 5 | 28 |
| Any other mixed/multiple background | 14 | 213 | 18 | 245 |
| White | 401 | 12,203 | 1,760 | 14,364 |
| White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British | 382 | 11,039 | 1,620 | 13,041 |
| White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| White - Irish | 3 | 367 | 47 | 417 |
| Any other White background | 16 | 793 | 93 | 902 |
| Other ethnic group | 7 | 216 | 32 | 255 |

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Arab | 3 | 28 | 2 | 33 |
| Any other ethnic group | 4 | 188 | 30 | 222 |
| Prefer not to say | 16 | 364 | 44 | 424 |
| No information | 42 | 819 | 72 | 933 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

4.4. Disability

Chart 5 shows the percentage of practitioners at the Bar by declared disability status and level of seniority.

Chart 5: Disability declared at the Bar (%)



- Including those that have not provided information on disability, 5.7 per cent of the Bar; 13.4 per cent of pupils; 5.7 per cent of non-KC barristers; and 2.9 per cent of KCs had declared a disability as of December 2024. The overall year on year percentage point increase for those declaring a disability is 0.6pp (5.1% to 5.7%). The increase may be linked to an increase in response rates.
- When excluding those that had not provided information, 8.9 per cent per cent of the Bar; 8.9 per cent of non-KC barristers; 17.4 per cent of pupils; and 5.1 per cent of KCs had declared a disability as of December 2024. The proportion of pupils declaring a disability was 1.7pp higher than in December 2023, while the respective figures for non-KCs showed a year-on-year increase of 0.7pp, and an increase of 0.5pp seen for KCs. In comparison to these figures, it is estimated that around 17.9 per cent of the UK employed working age population (those aged 16-64) has a declared disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010 as of Q3

2024¹⁶, and so the proportion seen for the Bar overall appears to be substantially lower, although it has increased over time.

- The figures also suggest that the percentage of those with a declared disability may decrease as level of seniority increases. The response rate for this question is now over 60 per cent, and this is a trend that has remained present alongside an increase in response rates.

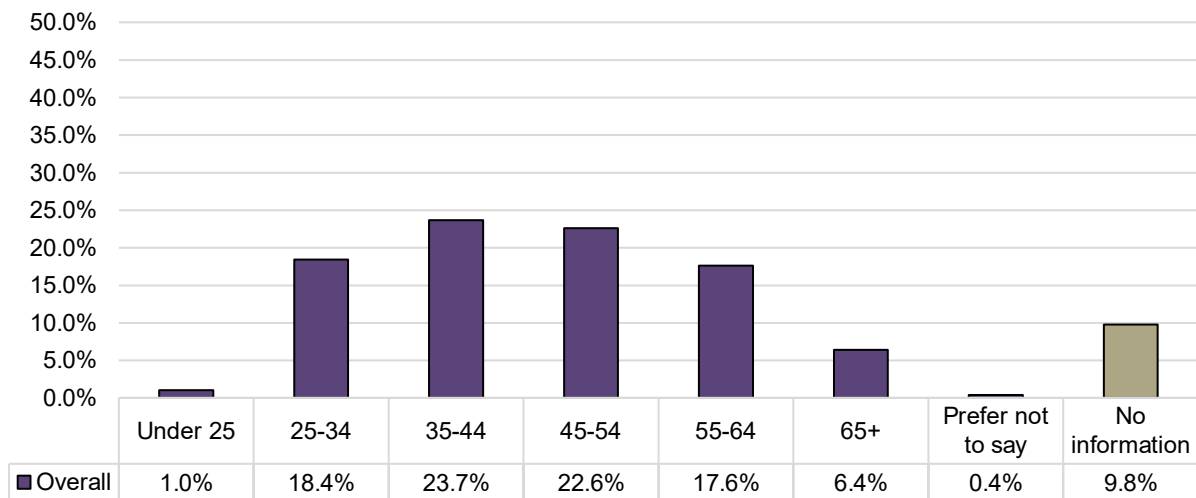
Table 7. Disability at the Bar (numbers)

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|------------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| No disability declared | 374 | 9,430 | 1,118 | 10,922 |
| Disability declared | 79 | 922 | 60 | 1,061 |
| Prefer not to say | 21 | 408 | 30 | 459 |
| No information | 115 | 5,292 | 881 | 6,288 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

4.5. Age

Chart 6 shows the percentage of practitioners at the Bar by age band.

Chart 6: Age of the Bar (% of total for the Bar)



Of those that have provided information on age:

- Those aged between 25 and 54 make up around 72.1 per cent of the Bar. This is a decrease compared to December 2023 of around 1.5 percentage points (72.1% compared to 73.6%), with relatively more of the Bar in the 55-64 and 65+ age ranges when compared to 2023.
- 26.7 per cent of those who have provided information on age are aged 55+. This carries on a general trend in the age profile of the Bar and compares to figures of

16. Calculated for Jul-Sep 2024 from Office for National Statistics datasets: A08: Labour market status of disabled people using Equality Act Levels (People).

25.4 per cent in 2023 (a 1.3pp increase); and 14.8 per cent in the first Diversity at the Bar Report in 2015. 4,499 of those that had declared their age were in this group in December 2024, compared to 2,073 in December 2015 (the proportion of those not providing information on age has remained relatively stable over the same period).

- The two largest cohorts are those aged from 35-44 (26.4% of all barristers) and those aged from 45-54 (25.2% of all barristers). The proportion of those at the Bar aged under 25 stood at 1.1 per cent as of December 2024, when excluding non-responses.
- The majority of those aged under 35 are pupils - 66.5 per cent of pupils were aged 25-34 as of December 2024, and 10.7 per cent were aged 35+.
- The proportion of KCs aged 55+ also appears to be continuing to increase year on year. Excluding non-responses 55.6 per cent of KCs in 2024 were aged 55+, compared to around 52.2 per cent in 2023. It is worth noting that around 19 per cent of data on age is missing for KCs, however.

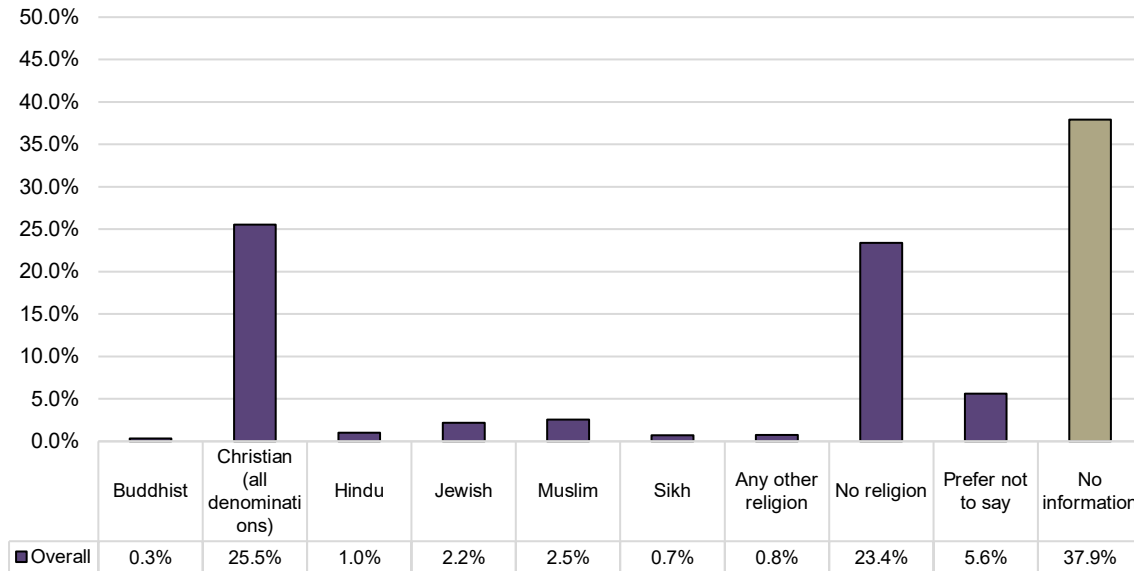
Table 8. Age at the Bar (numbers)

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|
| Under 25 | 133 | 60 | 0 | 193 |
| 25-34 | 387 | 3,067 | 0 | 3,454 |
| 35-44 | 50 | 4,296 | 91 | 4,437 |
| 45-54 | 8 | 3,571 | 659 | 4,238 |
| 55-64 | 4 | 2,622 | 675 | 3,301 |
| 65+ | 0 | 932 | 266 | 1,198 |
| Prefer not to say | 0 | 70 | 9 | 79 |
| No information | 7 | 1,434 | 389 | 1,830 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

4.6. Religion and Belief

Chart 7 shows the religion or belief of practitioners at the Bar.

Chart 7: Religion/Belief of the Bar (% of total for the Bar)



- Around 38 per cent of the Bar have not provided information on religion or belief through MyBar. The response rate for this question is up by 1.7 percentage points year on year.
- Including those that have not provided information, the largest group at the Bar is Christians (25.5%) followed by those with no religion (23.4%), although for pupils this pattern is reversed.
- The profile of the Bar in comparison to the wider population of England and Wales is quite similar for religion and belief when excluding non-responses. Christians make up around 45.2 per cent of the Bar compared to around 49.1 per cent of the population of England and Wales (as of the 2021 Census).¹⁷ Other comparative figures are as follows. No religion: 41.4% of the Bar compared to around 40% for E&W, Muslim: 4.5% of the Bar compared to 6.9% for E&W, Jewish: 3.8% of the Bar compared to 0.5% for E&W, Hindu: 1.8% of the Bar compared to 1.8% for E&W, Sikh: 1.2% of the Bar compared to 0.9% for E&W, and Buddhist: 0.6% of the Bar compared to 0.5% for E&W.

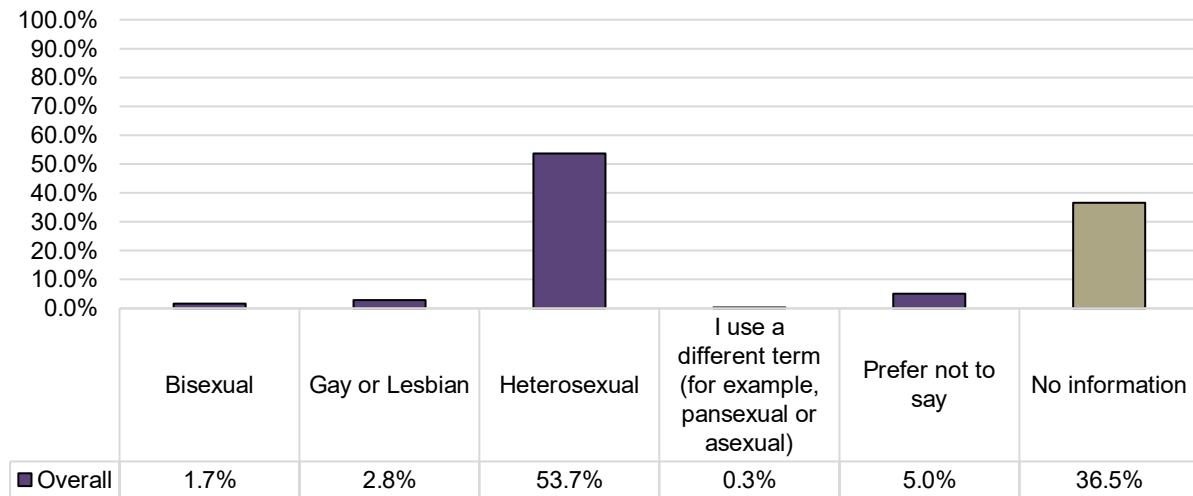
17. Data calculated from Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021 – Figure 1 data, excluding non-responses

Table 9. Religion and Belief at the Bar (numbers)

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Buddhist | 2 | 61 | 2 | 65 |
| Christian (all denominations) | 120 | 4,174 | 489 | 4,783 |
| Hindu | 10 | 164 | 15 | 189 |
| Jewish | 5 | 305 | 95 | 405 |
| Muslim | 22 | 435 | 20 | 477 |
| Sikh | 4 | 113 | 13 | 130 |
| Another religion | 4 | 129 | 9 | 142 |
| No religion | 205 | 3,747 | 428 | 4,380 |
| Prefer not to say | 54 | 910 | 89 | 1053 |
| No information | 163 | 6,014 | 929 | 7,106 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

4.7. Sexual Orientation

Chart 8 shows the sexual orientation of practitioners at the Bar.

Chart 8: Sexual orientation of the Bar (% of total for the Bar)

- The response rate for sexual orientation has increased by around 1.4pp in comparison to December 2023. This is slightly lower than the 1.8pp increase seen from 2022 to 2023.
- Excluding those that have not provided information,¹⁸ 7.5 per cent of the Bar as a whole, 17 per cent of pupils, 7.4 per cent of non-KCs, and 5.6 per cent of KCs provided their sexual orientation as one of Bisexual; Gay or Lesbian; or used another term for their sexual orientation (not including heterosexual). This

18. Only 56.9% of pupils and 54.3% of KCs compared to 59.1% of non-KCs provided an answer (excluding prefer not to say). The lower response for pupils and KCs limits the reliability of these figures.

compares to an estimate of 4.0 per cent of the UK population aged 16 and over identifying as one of Bisexual, Gay or Lesbian or another (non-heterosexual) sexual orientation as of 2022 when excluding non-responses.¹⁹

Table 10. Sexual Orientation of the Bar (numbers)

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|--|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Bisexual | 36 | 268 | 8 | 312 |
| Gay or Lesbian | 27 | 441 | 58 | 526 |
| Heterosexual | 271 | 8,721 | 1,066 | 10,058 |
| I use a different term (for example, pansexual) | 1 | 49 | 2 | 52 |
| Prefer not to say | 42 | 830 | 70 | 942 |
| No information | 212 | 5,743 | 885 | 6,840 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

19. Calculated from Table 1 in UK Office for National Statistics Bulletin: Sexual orientation, UK: 2021 and 2022. The calculation involved excluding non-responses from the table and recalculating the percentages.

5. Socio-Economic Background

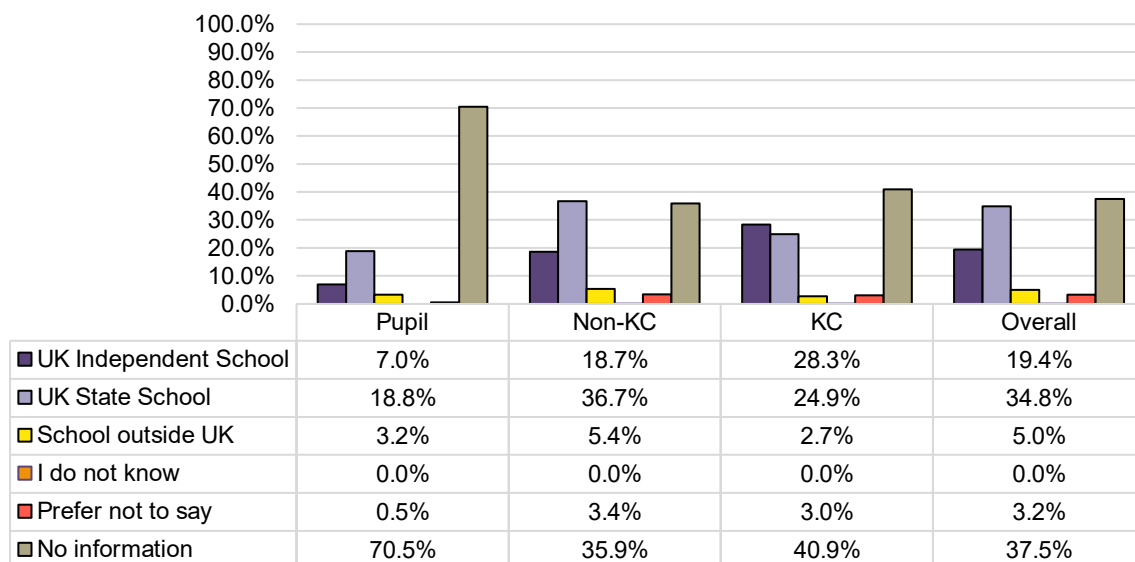
Socio-economic background is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, a representative socio-economic profile may be one indicator of a more meritocratic profession.

Unfortunately, accurately measuring socio-economic background can be challenging, and there is no universal proxy for gathering such data. As shown in table 3, the BSB has four monitoring questions for socio-economic background on the MyBar monitoring questionnaire and Pupillage Registration Form, although only two currently have enough data to use in this report. These questions use educational background of the barrister, and of their parents, as a proxy for determining a barrister's social class. There is a strong correlation between a person's social background and a parent's level of educational attainment – particularly when choosing the type of school to attend, type of university, and career choice.²⁰

5.1. Type of School Attended

Chart 9 shows a summary of the type of school mainly attended between the ages of 11-18 for practitioners at the Bar.

Chart 9: Type of school attended (%)



20. Bukodi, E. and Goldthorpe, J.H., 2012. Decomposing 'social origins': The effects of parents' class, status, and education on the educational attainment of their children. *European Sociological Review*, 29(5), pp.1024-1039.

- The data suggest that a disproportionately high number of barristers attended a UK independent school. The figures show that even if all of the barristers who chose not to respond had gone to state schools, the proportion of barristers who went to independent schools would be higher than in the wider population: as of December 2024, 19.4 per cent of the Bar (including non-respondents) attended an independent school between 11-18. This compares to approximately 6.5 per cent of school children in England at any age,²¹ and 9.7 per cent of UK domiciled young full-time first degree entrants in the UK in 2020/21.²²
- Of those that provided information on school attended, 32.7% per cent attended an independent school in the UK (when excluding those that stated they did not know what type of school they attended).
- Figures for attendance at a UK independent school are broadly in line with those that enrolled on the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) from 2014-2019. However, they are higher than that on the reformed Bar Vocational Courses. Across the 2014/15-2019/20 academic years, there was an average of 33 per cent of UK domiciled students on the BPTC having attended an independent school.²³ Across the first two years of the Bar Vocational Course in 2020 and 2021, 25.6 per cent of UK domiciled students attended an independent school. This suggests that the high percentage of those at the Bar who attended an independent school in the UK is influenced by factors prior to vocational study to become a barrister.
- The overall response rate for this information has increased by 0.4pp year on year.

Table 11. Type of School Attended from 11-18 by the Bar (numbers)

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| UK Independent School | 41 | 2,996 | 592 | 3,629 |
| UK State School | 111 | 5,889 | 521 | 6,521 |
| School outside UK | 19 | 865 | 57 | 941 |
| I don't know | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Prefer not to say | 3 | 541 | 63 | 607 |
| No information | 415 | 5,760 | 855 | 7,030 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

21. Independent Schools Council: Research. <https://www.isc.co.uk/research/> (accessed 6 January 2025). We acknowledge that this comparison is not a direct one; we are lacking data on type of school mainly attended between the ages of 11-18 for England and Wales only.

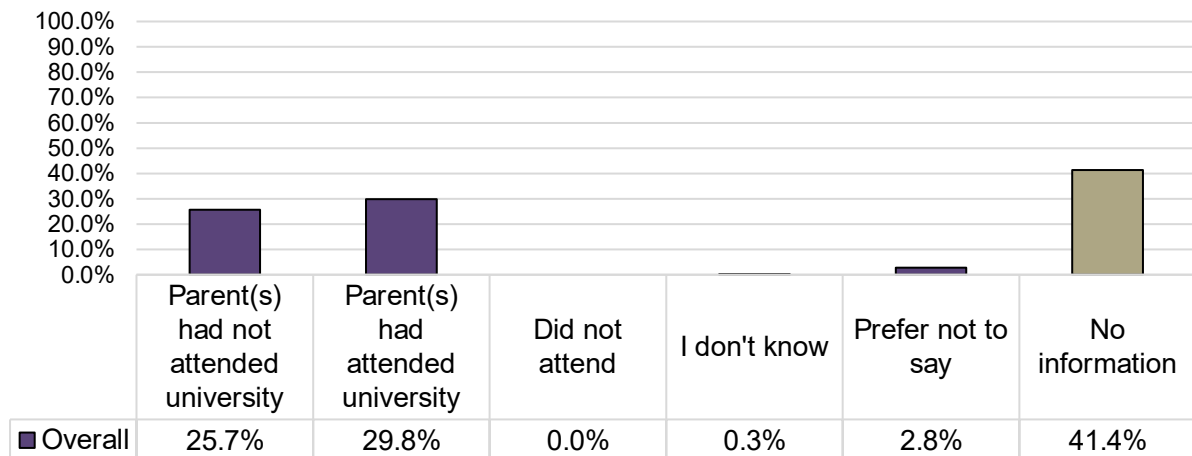
22. Higher Education Statistics Authority: Widening participation summary: UK Performance Indicators. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/performance-indicators/widening-participation-summary> (accessed 6 January 2024).

23. Data calculated from monitoring question for the Bar Course Aptitude Test on school attendance between 11-18 and data provided to the BSB by BPTC providers. Statistics on school attended following the Bar Training reforms is not provided as following the removal of the requirement for students to take the BCAT in 2022, the proportion of students providing this information fell from over 80% to less than 20%.

5.2. Whether parent(s) attended university

Chart 10 shows whether members of the profession were the first generation to attend university or not. On the MyBar monitoring questionnaire, the question asked is: “If you went to university (to study a BA, BSc or higher), had either (or both) of your parents or carers attended university by the time you were 18?”.

Chart 10: Whether parent(s) attended university (% of total for the Bar)



- There has been an increase in the response rate to this question of around 0.5pp this year (to 58.6%).
- When excluding non-responses and those who prefer not to say, as of December 2024: 53.7 per cent of barristers had at least one parent who attended university; and 46.3 per cent did not have a parent who attended university.

Table 12. Whether members of the Bar had parent(s) who attended university (numbers)

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|---|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| No, neither of my parents attended university | 59 | 4,261 | 500 | 4,820 |
| Yes, one or both of my parents attended university | 76 | 4,839 | 667 | 5,582 |
| I don't know | 2 | 50 | 2 | 54 |
| Prefer not to say | 4 | 477 | 46 | 527 |
| No information | 448 | 6,425 | 874 | 7,747 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

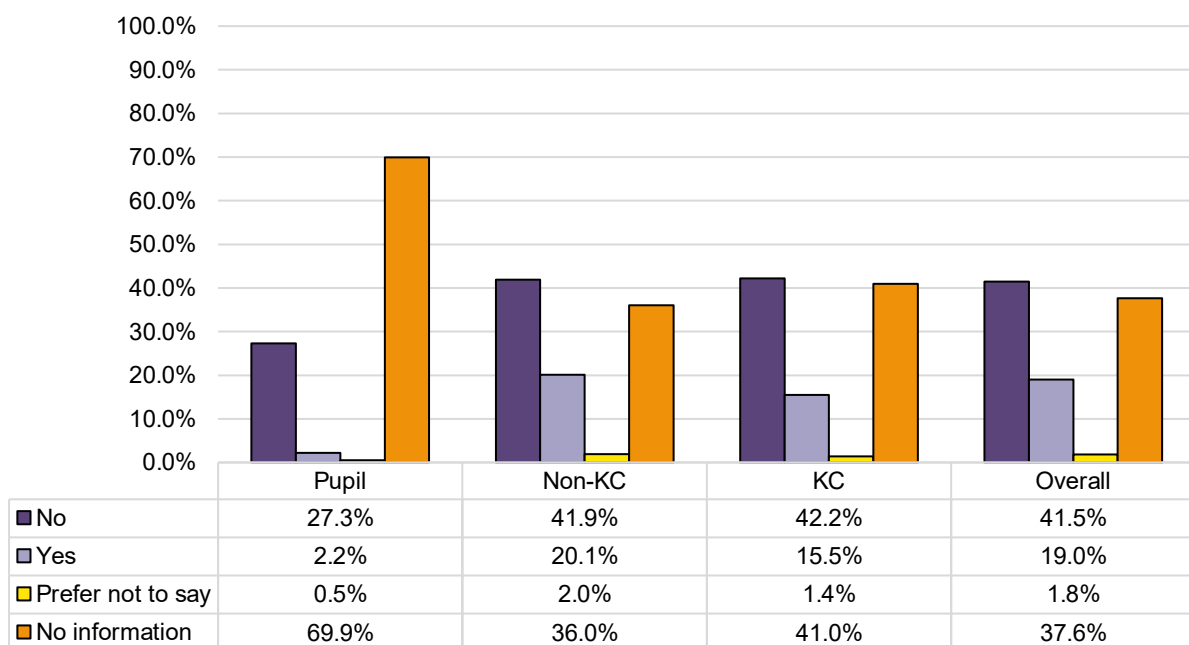
6. Caring Responsibilities

The caring responsibilities categories used in this report are aimed at ascertaining whether an individual has child or adult dependants.

6.1. Caring Responsibilities for Children

Chart 11 shows a summary of childcare responsibilities at the Bar. On the MyBar monitoring questionnaire, the question asked is: “Are you a primary carer for a child or children under 18?”.

Chart 11: Primary caring responsibilities for children (%)



- The percentage of those providing a response to this question has increased 0.5pp year on year to 62.4 per cent.
- When excluding non-responses, 31.5 per cent of the Bar; 7.5 per cent of pupils; 32.5 per cent of non-KCs; and 26.8 per cent of KCs have primary caring responsibilities for one or more children. Overall, the proportion of the Bar with primary caring responsibilities for one or more children has increased by around 9.5pp since 2015, 6.5pp since 2019 and 0.5pp since 2023.
- It appears that the increase in the proportion of barristers with primary caring responsibilities for one or more children may be being driven by both an increase in female representation at the Bar and an increase in the proportion of male barristers with caring responsibilities for children. The table below shows the proportion of barristers with primary caring responsibilities by gender and practising status, when excluding non-responses. For each figure, the percentage point difference compared to five years ago in December 2019 is shown.

Table 13. Percentage of gender/practising group with primary caring responsibilities for Children, and percentage point change compared to five years ago - excluding non-responses

| | Percentage of group with primary caring responsibilities for one or more children, as of December 2024 | Percentage point change compared to December 2019 |
|----------------|--|---|
| Pupils | 7.5% | 0.0pp |
| Female | 7.1% | -1.4pp |
| Male | 8.6% | 2.4pp |
| Non-KCs | 32.5% | 5.1pp |
| Female | 41.1% | 2.8% |
| Male | 24.5% | 6.0% |
| KCs | 26.8% | 4.3pp |
| Female | 55.9% | -2.2% |
| Male | 16.1% | 2.3% |
| Overall | 31.5% | 5.0pp |
| Female | 41.4% | 3.2% |
| Male | 23.1% | 5.4% |

- Overall, a far greater proportion of female barristers are primary carers for children (around 41 per cent of female barristers compared to around 23 per cent of male barristers), but the relative proportions involved appear to have increased for female and male barristers over time for pupils, KCs and non-KCs. This suggests either that a greater proportion of those with children provided this information in 2024 compared to 2019, or that there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of the Bar who had primary care of a child among both male and female barristers.
- A comparison with the working age UK population may suggest that a far lower proportion of male barristers are the primary carer for a child. Figures produced by the UK Office of National Statistics²⁴ suggest that as of September 2024, 37.0 per cent of employed males, and 40.5 per cent of employed females are a primary carer for one or more children: This compares to around 41 per cent of female barristers and 23 per cent of male barristers having primary caring responsibilities for one or more children. The figure for the UK as a whole includes all ages from 16-64 grouped together, and so the proportion of those in the UK with primary care of a child is likely to be far higher for those aged 35-54, which constitutes the majority of the Bar, which means that the proportion seen for female barristers may also be lower than that seen in the UK population as a whole when controlling for age. It is worth noting that as response rates are relatively low for

24. Calculated from ONS dataset - Economic activity and employment type for men and women by age of the youngest dependent child living with them in the UK: Worksheet 1 - Table S

this question, such inferences may not be reliable.

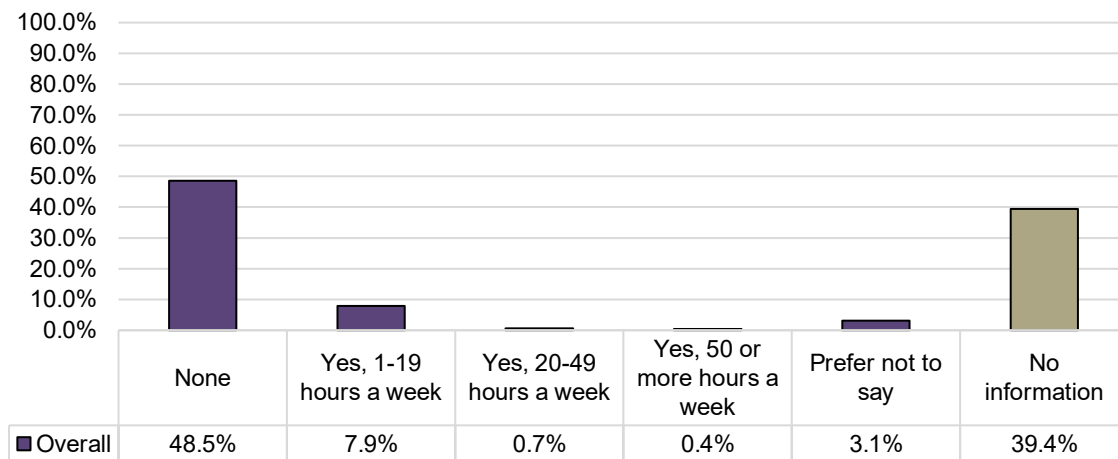
Table 14. Caring Responsibilities for Children for those at the Bar (numbers)

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|--|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Not a primary carer for one or more children | 161 | 6,725 | 881 | 7,767 |
| Is a primary carer for one or more children | 13 | 3,232 | 323 | 3,568 |
| Prefer not to say | 3 | 314 | 29 | 346 |
| No information | 412 | 5,781 | 856 | 7,049 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

6.2. Caring Responsibilities for Others

Chart 12 below shows practitioners at the Bar who have caring responsibilities for people other than children, as a percentage of the whole profession. On the MyBar monitoring questionnaire, the question asked is “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 relating to old age? (Do not count anything you do as part of paid employment)”.

Chart 12: Caring responsibilities for others (% of total for the Bar)



- The percentage of those providing a response to this question has increased 0.4pp year on year to 60.6 per cent.
- Including those that have not provided information for this question, 8.9 per cent of the Bar provides care for others for one hour a week or more.
- Of those that provided a Yes/No response, around 15.6 per cent of respondents provided care for another person for 1 or more hours per week as of December 2024. This is in line with the proportion of those in work in the UK who are carers according to figures published by Carers UK, which states that around one in seven (14.3% of) UK workers provide care for another, not including primary

care of children.²⁵ The figure seen for the Bar has been increasing over time, perhaps in line with the overall increase in those in older age ranges at the Bar (barristers in older age bands are more likely to have caring responsibilities than those in younger age bands – 23.1% of barristers aged 55 and over have caring responsibilities for others, compared to 5.7% of those aged 25-34).

- Of those at the Bar that do provide care for others, around nine in ten provide care for between 1-19 hours a week.
- Of those that have provided a response, the proportion that provide care for others is higher for KCs than for pupils and non-KCs; 10.7 per cent of pupils, 15 per cent of non-KCs, and 21.1 per cent of KCs provide care for another.

Table 15. Caring Responsibilities for Others for those at the Bar (numbers)

| | Pupils | Non-KC | KC | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| None | 150 | 8,046 | 895 | 9,091 |
| Yes, 1-19 hours a week | 16 | 1,242 | 219 | 1,477 |
| Yes, 20-49 hours a week | 2 | 109 | 14 | 125 |
| Yes, 50 or more hours a week | 0 | 68 | 6 | 74 |
| Prefer not to say | 7 | 527 | 51 | 585 |
| No information | 414 | 6,060 | 904 | 7,378 |
| Total | 589 | 16,052 | 2,089 | 18,730 |

25. See Carers UK, *Juggling Work and Unpaid Care*, 2019

7. Conclusions

Key year on year changes

Compared with 2023, there has been a relatively large increase in the overall number of barristers, largely as a result of an increase in the number of non-KC barristers. The increase in the number of KCs was slightly lower than that seen for most years since the first diversity at the Bar report.

For the monitoring categories covered in this report, the most notable changes in percentage point terms since 2023 are increases in the proportion of barristers who are female, the proportion of KCs who are female, the proportion of pupils with a declared disability, and the proportion of the Bar aged 55 and over.

All of the above represent a continuation of trends seen since the first Diversity at the Bar Report, and trends seen over a longer period of time as detailed in BSB research on retention at the Bar.

Response rates

The response rate increased across all collected data in 2023 with the exception of gender and ethnicity. While there have been small drops in the response rate for gender in past Diversity at the Bar reports, this is the first year in which the response rate for ethnicity has fallen since these reports started in 2015. Across other monitoring categories, year on year increases in disclosure rates range between 0.4 and 1.7 percentage points, which is a notably slower rate than the increases we had seen prior to 2022 for most monitoring categories (when increases of 3-4 percentage points per year were seen frequently). We will continue to encourage practitioners to provide us with information, particularly around characteristics that are under-reported. As the disclosure rate increases, so does the quality of the BSB's evidence base.

Summary of results by monitoring category

Overall, gender continues to move towards better reflecting the demographics of the UK population, with a continued increase in the proportion of practitioners who are female. In addition, the proportion of those from a minority ethnic background continues to increase. This year also shows the third greatest proportion (behind 2020 and 2022) of pupils from a minority ethnic background since we commenced reporting in 2015 (when excluding non-responses).

When excluding those that have not provided information, there is a greater proportion of Asian/Asian British practitioners at the Bar than Asian/Asian British individuals in the UK working age population (8.4% compared to 8.0%), and the same can be said for those from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds (3.9% compared to 1.9%). By contrast, there is a smaller proportion of those from Black/Black British backgrounds (3.6% compared to 5.4%), and a smaller proportion of those from other ethnic groups (1.5% compared to 3.8%).

There is also a greater disparity in the proportion of non-KCs from Black/Black British backgrounds compared to the proportion of KCs from the same background, with

the disparity being particularly high for those of Black/Black British – African ethnic backgrounds (discounting those that did not provide ethnicity data, 1.3 per cent of KCs are from a Black/Black British background, compared to 3.8 per cent of non-KCs).

There may be a lower proportion of disabled practitioners at the Bar in comparison to the population of those who are employed in the UK. The proportion of those with a declared disability appears to differ by level of seniority (with the proportion of pupils with a declared disability more similar to that found in the employed UK population, and the proportion of KCs with a declared disability far lower in comparison). The response rate for this question is now around 66 per cent, and although drawing inferences based on this level of response may be unreliable, this is a trend that has remained present alongside an increase in response rates.

Based on the data we have (and relatively low response rates for these monitoring categories); the proportion of the Bar who identify as one of Bisexual; Gay or Lesbian; or use another term for their sexual orientation (not including heterosexual) may be higher than that seen in the UK population aged 16 and over.

For religion, the largest group at the Bar is Christians followed by those with no religion, although for pupils this is reversed.

Regarding type of school attended, it appears that a disproportionately high percentage of the Bar primarily attended an independent secondary school.

The percentage of those at the Bar who provide care for another (not including primary care of a child under the age of 18) appears to be around that seen for workers across the UK. The same could be said for the proportion of female barristers who provide care for a child, as this is broadly in line with that seen for the employed UK population. In contrast, the percentage of male barristers who provide primary care for a child under the age of 18 appears to be substantially lower than that seen in the employed UK population.

The proportions of both male and female barristers who provide primary care for a child appears to be increasing over time although drawing inferences based on the level of response to this question may be unreliable (when we started annual reporting with the first Diversity at the Bar report, less than 30 per cent of barristers provided information on this question, although this has since risen to over 60 per cent).

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Contact us:

Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London WC1V 7HZ

Tel: 020 7611 1444

Email: Research@BarStandardsBoard.org.uk

Twitter/X: [@BarStandards](https://twitter.com/BarStandards)

Facebook: [/barstandardsboard](https://www.facebook.com/barstandardsboard)

LinkedIn: [/thebarstandardsboard](https://www.linkedin.com/company/thebarstandardsboard)

