



Diversity Report 2025

Introduction

We launched our first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy in March 2022, underscoring the central role EDI plays in our work:

“As a Board, we cherish the rich diversity of those we regulate and are firmly committed to ensuring fair access for everyone working within the legal services market. For us, promoting EDI is not an optional extra—it is at the heart of everything we do, whether as an employer, a regulator, or a partner in addressing legal issues.”

A cornerstone of our EDI strategy is the effective use of data to deepen our understanding of outcomes across our regulated community.

We publish a diversity report every two years, and the quality of diversity data collected from CILEX members has significantly improved since 2017. The 2025 survey marks the fifth comprehensive diversity data collection and the third time data has been drawn directly from the CILEX member database.

This year’s analysis includes data from 16,084 CILEX members.

Campaigns by CRL and CILEX encouraging CILEX members to provide complete information have enhanced data quality and reduced the proportion of “prefer not to say” responses for nearly all diversity characteristics. As a result, we have growing confidence in the trends and insights emerging from our analysis.

Key insights

- The data continues to indicate that CILEX qualifications offer an opportunity for people from less affluent backgrounds to pursue a legal career:
 - ◇ The percentage of CILEX members who attended an independent/fee-paying school is 6%. This compares with 7% of the UK population, and legal sector populations, licensed conveyancers 9%, solicitors 21% and barristers 31%.
 - ◇ 26% of CILEX members come from working class backgrounds compared with 39% of the UK population and 18% of solicitors.
 - ◇ Half of CILEX membership do not have a degree. 41% do have a degree - which compares to 42% UK population - and of those, 63% do not have parents that had attended university.
- Positively, as in 2023, the data indicates that Chartered Legal Executives who attended state schools have been able to progress to partnership.
- Having childcare responsibilities can lead to career progression barriers and the percentage of CILEX members with childcare responsibilities is 36%, an increase of 3% since 2021.
- As identified in 2023, males who are Chartered Legal Executives appear to be advancing their careers further than female Chartered Legal Executives.

- The declaration of disability by CILEX members compared to population rates for England and Wales continues to be just over a third. The declaration rate for Chartered Legal Executives is less than half of the broader CILEX membership and those of licensed conveyancers and solicitors. This may suggest a reluctance by individuals with a disability to declare their disability, an inability to progress their careers, or a personal choice not to progress. Equally it may suggest that the CILEX route is providing an opportunity for people with a disability to work as a paralegal.
- The age profile of CILEX members continues to get older. The trend identified in 2019 of a reduction in CILEX members in the lowest age group, 16 – 24 years, has continued.
- Since 2021, the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic CILEX members has remained constant at 15%. However, within this group, the percentage of Asian CILEX members has increased while the proportion of Black CILEX members has decreased. The proportion of these CILEX members in authorised grades has increased to 11% from 9% in 2021.
- The data continues to indicate the possibility that individuals from some ethnic minority backgrounds use the CILEX education and training pathway as a route to qualification as a solicitor.

Our aims

We have used the data to look at how CILEX members are progressing their careers and how our regulated community compares with others across the legal sector.

Our EDI strategy emphasises our belief that *“capable individuals should be able to enter and progress their legal careers, or grow their firm, as far as their ambition and talent will allow. They should not be limited by barriers formed from prejudice, unconscious bias or discrimination and should be recognised, valued, and rewarded for the contributions they make.”*

We are developing insight into CILEX member progression with the metrics available to us and have continued to test the indicators emerging from data collected in previous surveys.

We have compared our regulated community with others by using the LSB diversity dashboard¹. Our data includes “blank” and “prefer not to say” (PNS) responses because we feel this provides a more complete picture. The LSB data enables us to make a high-level comparison across the legal sector.

For some characteristics we have reported for authorised grades only (7,484), as well as for the wider CILEX membership, enabling a more direct comparison with authorised persons in other legal sectors.

CILEX membership

CILEX offers a flexible and cost-effective pathway to gaining legal qualifications. Individuals can study for degree-level qualifications while working and earning. Making CILEX qualifications an option for individuals needing to balance education with employment and other life events. The CILEX route opens doors to legal careers for people from diverse backgrounds and life circumstances, particularly those not traditionally represented in the legal profession.

CILEX offers multiple starting membership grades - student, paralegal, and advanced paralegal - allowing CILEX members to progress toward authorised status, including becoming a Chartered Legal Executive or a CILEX Practitioner.

¹ [LSB Diversity Dashboard](#)

What we focused on

In this report, we provide data across all diversity categories. Additionally, with the aim of understanding how individuals are progressing their careers, we have reported on the job roles CILEX members have declared they hold, irrespective of their CILEX grade, against different diversity characteristics.

Gender

The ratio of females to males has remained constant since 2017.



Female 77%



Male 22%

The proportion of members identifying their gender as “other” has remained at 0.1% since 2017. “Prefer Not to Say” (PNS) has also remained at just under 1%.

Of females, 77% are in authorised grades which is similar to the percentage of female regulated by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers (CLC) (76%). It is significantly higher than females regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) (53%) and females in the UK workforce (47%)².

Gender and Career Seniority

We looked at gender and seniority for regulated members in the authorised grade of Chartered Legal Executive.

Table 1 shows a higher proportion of male CILEX members, 30%, have progressed to partnership level compared to the percentage of males in overall CILEX membership, 22%. The partnership figure for male CILEX members has remained the same since 2021.

In contrast, 70% of female CILEX members were at partnership level compared to 77% of females in the broader CILEX membership. The figure for female partners has returned to the 2021 percentage, 70%, having dipped to 69% in 2023.

These findings suggest that more male CILEX members are attaining senior roles than their female counterparts, a trend consistent with data since 2019.

Chartered Legal Executives in partnership role compared to membership	2021	2023	2025	2021	2023	2025
	Female			Male		
Partnership level	70%	69%	70%	30%	31%	30%
CILEX members	77%	77%	77%	22%	22%	22%

Table 1: Some percentages do not total 100% because of ‘prefer not to say’ responses.

² [LSB Diversity Dashboard](#)

Ethnicity

Table 2 shows the ethnicity composition of CILEX membership since 2017. From 2021 diversity data has been collected via membership records.

Since 2021, the:

- proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic CILEX members has remained at 15%. Within this group, the percentage of Asian CILEX members has increased by 1%, while the proportion of Black CILEX members has decreased by 2%;
- percentage of White CILEX members has decreased by 2% from 84% to 82%; and
- proportion of CILEX members selecting PNS has remained at 2% - this is double the PNS recorded in 2017 when data was collected through a voluntary survey where participants were likely to be from a more engaged, self-selecting group.

Ethnicity	2017 (%)	2019 (%)	2021 (%)	2023 (%)	2025 (%)
Asian	6	6	7	8	8
Black	4	3	6	4	4
Mixed	2	2	2	3	3
White	86	82	84	82	82
PNS	1	2	2	2	2
(Blank)	1	6	0	0	0
Other			0	1	1
Asian, Black and mixed	12	11	15	15	15

Table 2

The proportion of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic CILEX members in authorised grades has increased to 11% from 10% in 2023, and 9% in 2021. While White CILEX members in authorised grades has fallen from 90% in 2021, to 87% in both 2025 and 2023. Compared to other regulated communities, the CLC and SRA respectively reporting 87% and 77% White, and 10%³ and 19%⁴ Black, Asian and minority ethnic.

Ethnicity and seniority

Table 3 shows the percentages of Chartered Legal Executives (CLE) of each ethnicity in the specified roles in 2025 and 2021.

For example, in 2025: 90% of CLE identifying as Chartered Legal Executive partners are White (compared to 82% all CILEX members), 5% are Asian (compared to 8% all CILEX members), 2% are Black (compared to 4% all CILEX members), and 1% are mixed ethnicity (compared to 3% all CILEX members).

These declarations should be treated with caution because these roles are self-declared by CILEX members, and the term 'partner' has a range of meanings both within and between firms. It should also be noted that numbers of individuals in the data used to prepare Table 3 are much lower than in overall CILEX membership.

Compared to the 82% of all CILEX members who declared White ethnicity, 90% of White CLE have a Chartered Legal Executive partner role. This is similar to 2021.

15% of CILEX members are Black, Asian and minority ethnic. Notably less, 8%, are Chartered Legal Executive partners. This is an increase of 2% since 2021.

The situation is different when looking at CLE who have declared that they work in a solicitor partner role. The percentage of White CLE with a solicitor partner role in 2025 is 64% compared to 82% in CILEX membership. This is a fall from 85% in 2021, when White CILEX membership was 84%.

³ [LSB Diversity Dashboard](#)

⁴ [SRA diversity in law firms](#)

36% of Black, Asian and minority ethnic CLE have a solicitor partner role, more than double the 15% in CILEX membership and four times more than in 2021.

8% of CILEX members are Asian. Of those individuals:

- just above half (5%) are Chartered Legal Executive partners, which is similar to 2021; and
- a higher percentage are CLE solicitor-partners (14%). This is a significant increase since 2021 (6%). This change might reflect the fall in solicitor assistant ,17% to 14%, and solicitor other, 24% to 21%, in the same period.

4% of CILEX members are Black. Of those individuals:

- the percentage that are Chartered Legal Executive-partners is half (2%) a seventh in 2021; and
- more than four times the percentage of Black CILEX members are solicitor partners, 18%. In 2021, this was only just under half, 3%. This change might reflect the fall in solicitor assistant from 8% to 3%.

The data suggests that Black, Asian and minority ethnic CILEX members identifying as CLE are not progressing their careers in the same way as White CLE and suggests that Black, Asian and minority ethnic CILEX members identifying as solicitors have progressed further. The number (as opposed to percentage) of CLE with Chartered Legal Executive partner role is much higher across all ethnicities, than the number of CLE with solicitor partner role. This is especially the case for Black, Asian and ethnic minority CLE.

Role declared by member	2025	2021	2025	2021	2025	2021	2025	2021	2025	2021
	White %		Asian %		Black %		Mixed		Black, Asian Mixed %	
CLE (Partner)	90	92	5	4	2	1	1	1	8	6
CLE (Other)	88	90	5	4	3	2	2	2	10	8
Solicitor (Partner)	64	85	14	6	18	3	5	0	36	9
Solicitor (Assistant)	75	67	14	17	3	8	5	4	22	29
Solicitor (Other)	57	58	21	24	16	13	0	2	38	40
Solicitor combined (partner/assistant/other)	66	68	17	17	11	9	3	3	30	28
Ethnicity of CILEX membership	82	84	8	7	4	7	3	2	15%	15%

Table 3



Age

The age profile of CILEX members continues to get older. It can be seen in Chart 1 that the trend identified in 2019, of a reduction in CILEX members in the youngest age group, 16 – 24 years, has continued.

The age group with the highest number of CILEX members in 2021 was 25-34 years, 30%. This has now fallen to 24%. In 2025, as in 2023, the highest percentage of CILEX members are in the age band 35-44 years, 29%, compared to 27% in 2021.

The percentage of CILEX members in the age group 55-64 has increased to 16% from 10% in 2017.

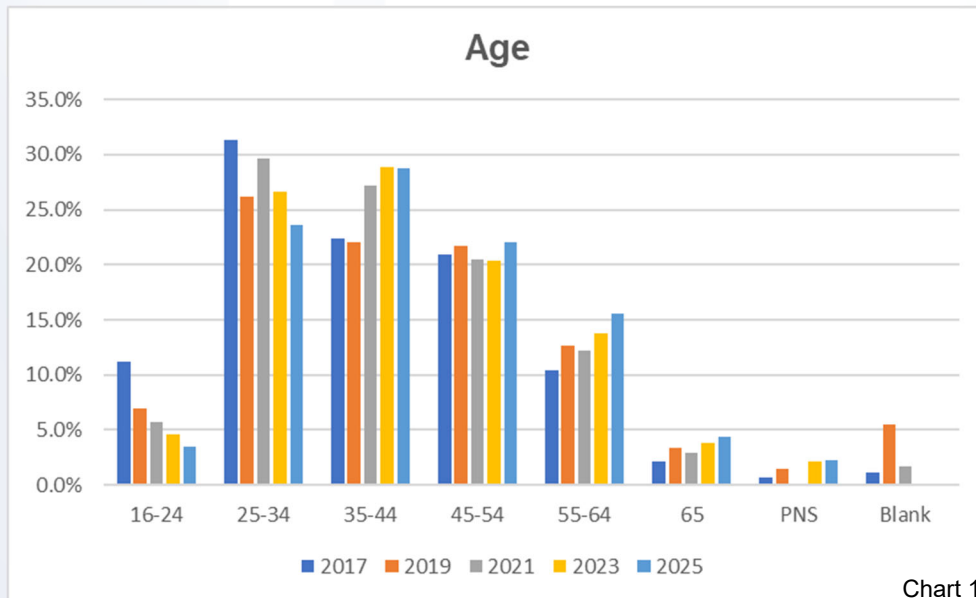


Chart 1

Disability

The data in Chart 2 shows the percentage of CILEX members declaring a disability has increased to 7% from 4% in 2021 when diversity data was first collected through CILEX membership records.

Over the same period, PNS responses have decreased to 4% from 5% in 2021, suggesting increased CILEX member confidence in declaring a disability.

The 7% of CILEX members declaring a disability compares with 18%⁵ in the adult population of England and Wales. This suggests people with a disability are underrepresented within CILEX membership and/or, a continuing reluctance amongst CILEX members to declare a disability.

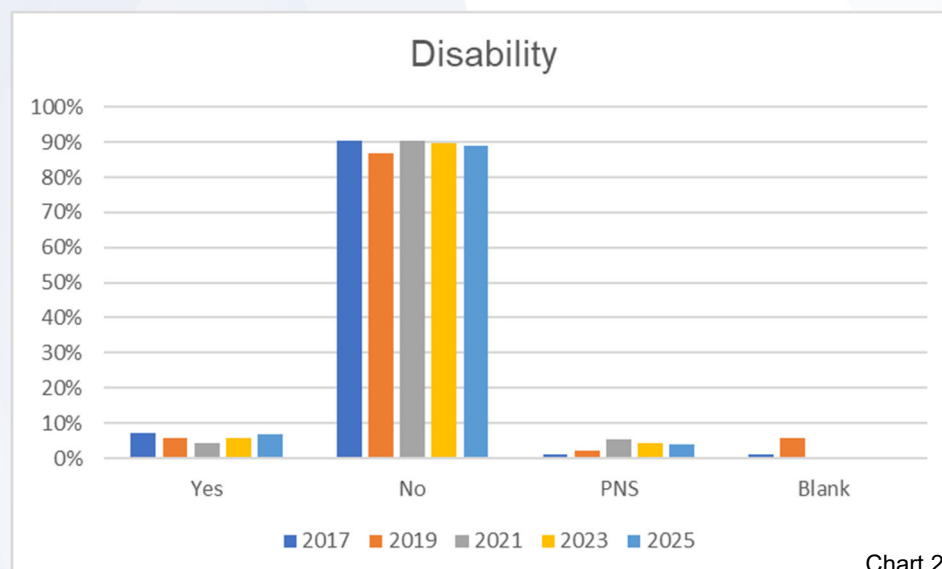


Chart 2

⁵ Diversity Dashboard - The Legal Services Board

Of CLE, about half declared a disability, 3%, compared to the full CILEX member declaration rate of 7%. This is lower than similar regulated communities, CLC and SRA both 6%⁶. PNS for CLE, 2%, was lower than for CILEX membership as a whole, 4%. This may suggest that CILEX members with a disability either choose not to, or find it too challenging to attain full qualification. Alternatively, this data could suggest that the CILEX route provides the opportunity for those with a disability to have a career in law at paralegal level.

Sexual orientation

Table 4 shows the figures for sexual orientation. We made a slight change to the response options from 2023 (gay/lesbian replacing two separate response options and the addition of the response option “I don’t know”).

There is a 1% increase in CILEX members declaring heterosexual since 2023 and while there may not be a direct link, there is an decrease of 1% in PNS responses.

The data for gay/lesbian, bisexual and other is consistent with the UK population.

Sexual Orientation	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025	UK population
Heterosexual	92%	86%	88%	87%	89%	
Gay Man	2%	1%	1%			
Gay Woman	1%	1%	1%			
Gay/lesbian				2%	2%	2%
Bisexual	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
PNS	2%	4%	8%	9%	8%	
Blank	1%	6%	0%	0%	0%	
I don't know				0%	0%	
Not heterosexual	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%	

Table 4

Religion and Belief

The distribution of religions within CILEX membership is reported in Table 5, alongside the figures for the population of England and Wales (E & W).

The highest proportion of CILEX members are Christian, 42%. This is the same as in 2023 and similar to the 41% in E & W. No belief/atheist is the next highest, 41%, higher than in E&W, 36%. There has been a slow increase in this category since 2017, 37%.

CILEX members identifying as Muslim, 4%, has remained constant since 2021 and compares to the population, 6%.

Religion and belief is one of the characteristics where there has been a decrease in PNS from to 8% from 10% in 2021 suggesting that CILEX members are becoming more confident in disclosing this information.

⁶ [Diversity Dashboard - The Legal Services Board](#)

Religion and belief	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025	Population E & W
Christian	50%	45%	43%	42%	42%	41%
No belief / atheist	37%	36%	39%	40%	41%	36%
Muslim	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	6%
Sikh	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Hindu	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Jewish	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Buddhist	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
PNS	4%	6%	10%	8%	8%	
Blank	3%	7%	0%	0%	0%	
Other	-	-	2%	2%	2%	2%

Table 5

Marital status

Marital status response options were increased in 2023 following feedback from CILEX members. A "cohabiting" category was introduced and 16% of CILEX members reported against this, a decrease of 1% since 2023.

CILEX members identifying as single decreased by 16% to 21% in 2025 from 37% in 2021 (Table 6). It is probable that some people who previously identified as single, identified as cohabiting. There may also be some correlation with the increase in married members to 49%, from 47% in 2023. CILEX members declaring that they are married is substantially higher than the other categories and may reflect the higher proportion of CILEX members in the older age categories.

PNS has continued to fall, having halved to 5% from 10% in 2021. While marital status is a protected characteristic, it has been less frequently asked in diversity questionnaires, so the reduction in PNS may partially reflect the increasing familiarity with this question. Additionally, the introduction of the cohabiting/in a relationship category may have contributed to the reduction in the PNS response.

Marital status	2019	2021	2023	2025
Single	32%	37%	23%	21%
Married	47%	45%	47%	49%
Civil	0%	1%	0%	0%
Separated	2%	1%	1%	1%
Divorced	7%	5%	5%	5%
Widowed	1%	1%	1%	1%
PNS	5%	10%	6%	5%
Blank	6%	0%	0%	0%
Cohabiting / In a relationship			17%	16%
Other			0%	0%

Table 6

Socio-economic background

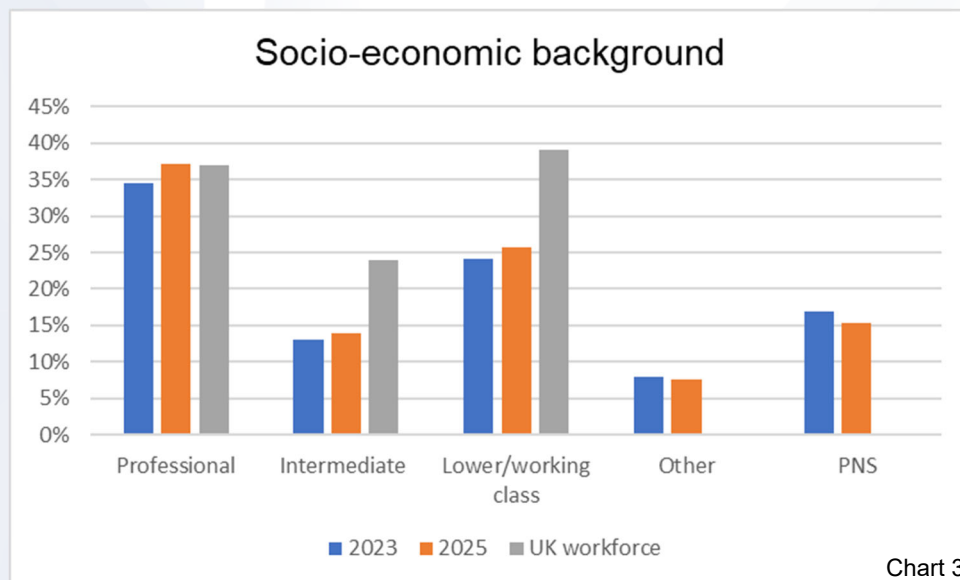
In 2023, we introduced a new question asking about the occupation of the main household earner when a CILEX member was aged 14. This question, along with the two questions about the type of school attended and eligibility for free school meals, are indicators of socio-economic background⁷ (SEB).

Encouragingly, substantive responses to the occupation of main household earner have increased this year by 5% to 77% (72% in 2023). While PNS has decreased to 15% (17% in 2023) and other to 0.3% (3.6% in 2023). The response rate should be kept in mind when comparing the CILEX membership data with the 2021 UK national benchmark for the 16+ workforce shown in Chart 3.

The largest proportion of CILEX members, 37%, come from a professional background which is an increase from 35% in 2023. It is the same percentage as the general UK population and substantially lower than solicitors, 57%⁸.

The percentage of CILEX members from an intermediate background (clerical, intermediate occupations and small business owners) increased to 14% from 13% in 2023. This compares to UK population, 24%), and solicitors, 13%.

Of CILEX members, 26% came from working class backgrounds – an increase from 24% in 2023. This compares with 39% of the UK population and 18% of solicitors.



Type of school attended between the ages of 11 and 16

The type of school attended measure shows extreme economic and cultural advantage⁹. Joint Social Mobility Commission and Sutton Trust research¹⁰, shows private school attendees are overrepresented in many of the UK's top jobs.

In the UK, 7% of the population attend an independent/fee-paying school. Of CILEX members, 6% attended an independent/fee-paying school and this figure has remained constant since 2017 (Table 7).

This compares across the legal sector with CLC, 9%; SRA 21% and BSB highest, 31%¹¹.

The data continues to suggest that CILEX offers an opportunity for people from less affluent backgrounds to pursue a legal career.

⁷ [Social Mobility Commission: Measuring socio-economic background](#)

⁸ [SRA Diversity in law firms' workforce 2023](#)

⁹ [Social Mobility Commission](#)

¹⁰ [Elitist Britain 2019](#)

¹¹ [Diversity Dashboard - The Legal Services Board](#)

School attended	Between ages 11 - 18			Between ages 11-16		Between ages 11-17		
	2017	2019	2021	2021	2023	2023	2025	2025
State - non-selective	67%	64%	73%		64%		65%	
State - selective	15%	14%	12%		13%		13%	
Fee-paying	6%	6%	-					
Fee-paying - bursary	-	-	2%	Combined 2021 6%	1%	Combined 2023 6%	1%	Combined 2025 6%
Fee-paying - no bursary	-	-	5%		5%		5%	
School o/s UK	6%	6%	5%		4%		5%	
PNS	1%	3%	-		12%		10%	
Blank	4%	6%	0%		0%		0%	
Other	-	-	3%		0%		0%	
I don't know					1%		1%	

Table 7

Focusing on CILEX members in the Chartered Legal Executive (CLE) grade of CILEX membership, the data in Table 8 shows the schools attended and the roles CLE indicated they are working in. While we are confident that the grade of CILEX membership is correct, when looking at the data for role some caution required as this is selected by each CILEX member, so the quality of the data may not be as reliable.

Of CLE working as a Chartered Legal Executive partner (Table 7), a similar percentage attended a particular school type when compared with the percentage of all CILEX membership (Table 6), as follows:

- 66% attended a state non-selective school, compared with CILEX membership 65%
- 14% attended state selective school, compared with CILEX membership 13%
- 6% attended fee paying with no bursar, compared with CILEX membership 5%
- 1% attended fee paying with bursary, compared with CILEX membership 1%.

As in 2023, the data suggests that CLE who attended state schools have been able to progress to partnership.

The percentage of CLEs working as a solicitor partner who went to state school has fallen to 55% from 62% in 2023.

Role that Chartered Legal Executive is working in -	2023	2025	2023	2025	2023	2025	2023	2025
	State school		State school - selective		Fee / Independent		Fee / Independent - Bursary	
CLE - Partner	64%	66%	14%	14%	6%	6%	2%	1%
CLE - Other	68%	70%	13%	13%	5%	5%	1%	1%
Solicitor - Partner	62%	55%	12%	9%	6%	9%	0%	0%
Solicitor - Assistant	62%	63%	8%	11%	12%	8%	1%	3%
Solicitor - Other	48%	49%	16%	7%	9%	12%	0%	0%

Table 8



Table 9 shows CLE working as a solicitor who were educated outside the UK: solicitor partner 9%, solicitor assistant 6% and solicitor other 13%. This compares with 5% of all CILEX members who were educated outside the UK. While we do not have information on who these individuals are and compared to the whole data set the data relates to a small number of individuals, this might indicate that these individuals have used the CILEX route to qualify as solicitors.

Role that Chartered Legal Executive is working in -	2023	2025
	Outside UK	
CLE - Partner	1%	2%
CLE - Other	2%	3%
Solicitor - Partner	6%	9%
Solicitor - Assistant	8%	6%
Solicitor - Other	13%	13%

Table 9

Free school meals

Before 2023, we asked if a person had been eligible for free school meals. In 2023 this question was revised in line with best practice and from 2023 onwards we have asked “If you finished school after 1980, were you eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point during your school years?”

As shown in Table 10, 15% of CILEX members received FSM. This figure has remained similar since data started to be collected via CILEX members records in 2021, and the decrease since 2017, 18%, may reflect the change in the way data has been collected.

FSM is a measure of extreme economic disadvantage. It is difficult to directly compare membership figures and national eligibility because individual CILEX members will have been at school during different years. However, to provide some context, nationally, eligibility for FSM has been increasing. In 2019, eligibility and claimed FSM was 15%¹². In January 2022, it was 22.5% and January 2025, 25.7%¹³.

The percentage of CILEX members that did not receive FSM, 57%, has reduced since 2021, 69%. This in part may be explained by the PNS increase to 9% from 6% in 2021; and the 8% declaration in the new “not applicable” category.

Receipt of Free school meals	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025
Yes	18%	17%	15%	14%	15%
No	71%	67%	69%	55%	57%
Don't know	7%	7%	10%	11%	11%
PNS	1%	3%	6%	11%	9%
Blank	4%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Not applicable (finished school before 1980 or went to school overseas)				9%	8%

Table 10

¹² [Department for Education: Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2019](#)

¹³ [Government Education Statistics Academic year 2024/25](#)



Of all CILEX members, 15% received FSM. Table 11 shows that of individuals in the Chartered Legal Executive grade, the percentage:

- working as a Chartered Legal Executive-partner who received FSM was lower, 13%. While this might suggest it could be more difficult for individuals from a lower SEB to progress to partner, this differs to the data in 2023 and 2021, when there was not this difference; and
- working in the role of Solicitor-partner, who received FSM was higher, 27%. This differs to the data in 2023 when the percentage was the same as in CILEX membership, but in 2021 it was also higher.

The data suggests that the CILEX route has enabled people from less affluent backgrounds to progress their careers.

Role	2023	2025	2023	2025
	FSM - yes		FSM - no	
CLE (Partner)	14%	13%	56%	59%
CLE (Other)	14%	14%	57%	59%
Solicitor (Partner)	14%	27%	52%	46%
Solicitor (Assistant)	16%	11%	55%	57%
Solicitor (Other)	16%	25%	49%	38%
All CILEX membership	14%	15%	55%	57%

Table 11

Income Support

CILEX members in receipt of Income Support at some point during their school years has increased to 15% since 2021, 13%, but remains lower than in earlier years (Table 12). Those responding “no” has decreased consistently year on year. There has been a reduction of almost 3% in ‘don’t know’, whilst there has been an increase in PNS of 3%.

It is difficult to compare with the UK population because universal credit has gradually been replacing Income Support. The Percentage of households receiving benefits in the United Kingdom in 2023/24, not specifically Income Support, was 52%¹⁴.

Receipt of Income Support	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025
Yes	16%	16%	13%	14%	15%
No	69%	65%	64%	62%	63%
Don't know	10%	11%	16%	13%	13%
PNS	1%	3%	6%	10%	9%
Blank	4%	6%	0%	0%	0%

Table 12

¹⁴ [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2022-to-2023)

Parent attending university

The question asks if either parent attended university and gained a degree (e.g. BA/BSc or equivalent) by the time a CILEX member was 18. We introduced this question in 2023, having previously asked if a CILEX member was within the first generation to attend university. Responses are in Table 13.

Parents attend university and gained a degree	2023	2025
Yes, one or both of my parents attended university	18%	30%
No, neither of my parents attended university	64%	63%
I don't know	2%	1%
Prefer not to say	12%	5%
(Blank)	4%	0%

Table 13

CILEX members were also asked if they have a degree (Table 14). There has been a small increase in CILEX members with a degree, 41%, compared with 39% in 2023. Of those CILEX members, 63% stated that their parents had not attended university, compared with 64% in 2023.

Attending university gives a nuanced form of cultural advantage as organisational cultures favour people who have attended university. If parents have not attended university, there is a potential lack of support to navigate university and entry into the graduate workforce. For the 63% of CILEX members who have a degree, this is not necessarily the same advantage as coming from a background where parents have attended university.

The CILEX route to legal qualification does not require a university degree, but individuals can join CILEX with a degree. Of the whole CILEX membership, 50% do not have a degree (Table 14), while 41% do. This compares with the UK population where 42% of those aged 21-64 have a degree¹⁵.

Gained an undergraduate university degree	2023	2025
Yes	39%	41%
No	48%	50%
PNS	10%	9%
Blank	4%	0%

Table 14

The source of funding for university education is shown in Table 15. Of those that attended university, the way this was funded since 2017 has consistently been, from highest: loan 28%, grant 6% and family support 5%.

University funding	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025
Student or other loan	35%	24%	27%	60%	28%
Family financial support	16%	11%	6%	11%	5%
Local Authority or other grant	18%	10%	7%	13%	6%
Personal income or savings	13%	9%	4%	7%	4%
Scholarship or other bursary	4%	3%	1%	2%	1%
Other	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%
N/A	8%	37%	46%	1%	38%
PNS	2%	3%	7%	5%	6%
Blank			0%		8%

Table 15

¹⁵ [Graduates in the UK labour market - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Caring responsibilities

Carers are not a protected group under the Equality Act. However, being a carer can lead to progression barriers and discrimination.

Table 16 shows the responses for CILEX members with childcare responsibilities, and Table 17 shows the responses for CILEX members with responsibilities for caring for family members, friends, or others.

The percentages of CILEX members with childcare responsibilities has continued to rise since 2017 and by 3% since 2021 to 36%. PNS has remained the same.

Childcare responsibilities	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025
Yes	28%	31%	33%	35%	36%
No	64%	61%	62%	60%	60%
PNS	1%	2%	4%	4%	4%
Blank	8%	7%	0%	0%	0%

Table 16

CILEX members with other caring responsibilities has remained similar, with a reduction in PNS to 7% (Table 17).

Caring responsibilities	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025
Yes – less than 19 hours pw	14%	13%	14%	14%	14%
Yes - 20-49 hours pw	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Yes – more than 50 hours pw	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
No	74%	74%	75%	76%	76%
PNS	2%	3%	8%	8%	7%
Blank	8%	7%	0%	0%	0%

Table 17

Conclusion

This is the third diversity report since we started to collect data through the CILEX member database. There are now substantial data sets, which, coupled with the decrease in PNS responses referred to below, provide increased confidence in emerging trends.

It is encouraging that, on the whole, PNS responses continue to reduce. Most notably in response to the questions on religion and marital status, and occupation of main household earner at age 14 introduced in 2023. This suggests that CRL and CILEX campaigns to encourage CILEX members to provide accurate data are delivering results. It also indicates regulated CILEX members are becoming increasingly confident to provide data and are supportive of diversity work. CILEX members will continue to be encouraged to supply complete data sets, particularly for under reported categories.

We have continued with our aim of better understanding about our regulated CILEX members' ability to progress their career given reported barriers in the Beyond Buzzwords¹⁶ research and CILEX Regulation Case Study¹⁷ and CILEX Member Insights Survey¹⁸. We are carrying out separate work to build a better approach to understanding progression and plan to add this into our 2027 report.

The theme which emerged in 2019 of the apparent ambition of Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals to progress through CILEX membership to qualify as solicitors has continued and may be an interesting topic for further enquiry.

The data indicates that the CILEX qualifications are an important route for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds to attain a legal career. As we commented in 2023, given the marked lower percentage of males within CILEX membership to feed into resilience of the profession as a whole, this might be an area of focus for CILEX's recruitment strategy.

¹⁶ [Beyond Buzzwords](#); ¹⁷ [Beyond Buzzwords – CILEX Regulation Case Study](#)

¹⁸ [CILEX Member Insights Survey](#)