

On 15 October 2019, the BSB introduced substantial changes to our regulatory decision-making processes that have affected parts of the enforcement system. We have ceased using the terms “complaint” and “complainants” and no longer operate a “pre-complaints” system. We have also removed the distinction between different types of complaints (‘external’ and ‘internal’). Under the new system, any incoming information, including concerns about the conduct of barristers or those we regulate, is treated as a “report”.

The PCD has been disbanded and the assessment function has transferred to a new centralised team known as the “Contact and Assessment Team” which now falls within our new Regulatory Operations Department. Investigations and disciplinary action are now the responsibility of a new Legal and Enforcement Department, which includes the renamed Investigations and Enforcement Team as well as a new Legal Support Team.

The data included in this reports accounts for 'complaints' up until 15th October and 'reports' until 31st December 2019. The number of "reports" are greater than the number of complaints previously reported as "reports" cover a wider range of issues than matters that were previously classed as complaints e.g. it includes reports made under the reporting obligations.

Barristers subject to complaints/reports

In 2019 the Bar Standard Board received complaints/reports against 576 barristers

The characteristics¹ of these barristers were:

Age		
 From the list of age bands below, please indicate the category that includes your current age in years:		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
16 - 24	1	0.2%
25 - 34	85	14.8%
35 - 44	138	24.0%
45 - 54	138	24.0%
55 - 64	94	16.3%
65 +	23	4.0%
Prefer not to say	4	0.7%
No information	93	16.1%

Gender		
 What is your gender?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
Male	377	65.5%
Female	184	31.9%
Prefer not to say	5	0.9%
No information	10	1.7%

Gender Identity		
 Is your gender identity the same as the sex that you were assigned at birth?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
Yes	196	34.0%
No	1	0.2%
Prefer not to say	6	1.0%
No information	373	64.8%

Disability		
 Do you consider yourself to have a disability according to the definition in the Equality Act?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
Yes	18	3.1%
No	275	47.7%
Prefer not to say	16	2.8%
No information	267	46.4%
 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
Yes, limited a lot	3	0.5%
Yes, limited a little	18	3.1%
No	205	35.6%
Prefer not to say	11	1.9%
No information	339	58.9%

Ethnic Group		
 What is your ethnic group?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
Asian/Asian British		
Bangladeshi	8	1.4%
Chinese	4	0.7%
Indian	10	1.7%
Pakistani	23	4.0%
Any other Asian background	8	1.4%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British		
African	15	2.6%
Caribbean	17	3.0%
Any other black/Caribbean/Black British background	0	0.0%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups		
White and Asian	3	0.5%
White and Black African	2	0.3%
White and Black Caribbean	3	0.5%
White and Chinese	3	0.5%
Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background	8	1.4%
White		
British/English/Welsh/Northern Irish/Scottish	369	64.1%
Irish	12	2.1%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0.0%
Any other White background	23	4.0%
Other ethnic group		
Arab	0	0.0%
Any other ethnic group	6	1.0%
Prefer not to say		
Prefer not to say	9	1.6%
No information		
No information	53	9.2%

Religion or belief		
 What is your religion or belief?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
No religion or belief	69	12.0%
Buddhist	1	0.2%
Christian	129	22.4%
Hindu	1	0.2%
Jewish	10	1.7%
Muslim	22	3.8%
Sikh	3	0.5%
Any other religion	7	1.2%
Prefer not to say	29	5.0%
No information	305	53.0%

Sexual orientation		
“ What is your sexual orientation?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
Bisexual	6	1.0%
Gay man	11	1.9%
Gay woman/lesbian	2	0.3%
Heterosexual/straight	239	41.5%
Other	3	0.5%
Prefer not to say	0	0.0%
No information	315	54.7%

Socio-economic background		
“ If you went to University (to study a BA, BSc course or higher), were you part of the first generation of your family to do so?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
Yes	135	23.4%
No	129	22.4%
Did not attend University	1	0.2%
Prefer not to say	12	2.1%
No Information	299	51.9%
“ Did you mainly attend a state or fee paying school between the ages 11-18?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
UK State School	162	28.1%
UK Independent/Fee-paying School	85	14.8%
Attended school outside the UK	26	4.5%
Prefer not to say	20	3.5%
No Information	283	49.1%

Caring responsibilities		
“ Are you a primary carer for a child or children under 18?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
Yes	70	12.2%
No	208	36.1%
Prefer not to say	8	1.4%
No Information	290	50.3%
“ Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either: — Long-term physical or mental ill-health/disability — Problems related to old age?		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
No	221	38.4%
Yes, 1 - 19 hours a week	43	7.5%
Yes, 20 - 49 hours a week	2	0.3%
Yes, 50 or more hours a week	1	0.2%
Prefer not to say	19	3.3%
No Information	290	50.3%