

# **Diversity at the Bar 2023**

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

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Research Team on [Research@BarStandardsBoard.org.uk](mailto: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 18,356: Of this number 572 were pupils, 2,045 were KCs, and 15,739 were non-KC barristers.
- This year has seen a relatively large increase in individuals currently undertaking pupillage. The number in the practising or non-practising stage of pupillage as of December 2023 was 572, which is 84 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 217 non-KCs and 29 KCs.) The increase in the number of non-KCs at the Bar is broadly in line with that seen in several previous years since 2015, whereas the increase seen for KCs is a little lower.

## Response Rates

- Response rates continue to increase across all categories except for gender, with a yearly increase in response rate of around 0.7-2 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 disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic and caring responsibility.

Monitoring Category	2023 response rate (%)	2022 response rate (%)
<b>Gender<sup>1</sup></b>	98.0	98.1
<b>Gender Identity<sup>2</sup></b>	51.5	48.4
<b>Sex<sup>3 4 5</sup></b>	37.1	27.9
<b>Ethnicity</b>	95.1	95.1
<b>Disability</b>	64.7	62.7
<b>Age</b>	89.6	88.9
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	60.4	58.3
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	62.1	60.4
<b>Type of school attended from 11-18</b>	62.1	61.1
<b>First generation to attend university</b>	58.1	57.4
<b>Free school meals</b>	33.6	23.7
<b>Occupation of main household earner when aged around 14</b>	17.0	-
<b>Caring responsibilities for children</b>	61.9	60.9
<b>Caring responsibilities for others</b>	60.2	59.0

## Gender

- When excluding non-responses, the proportion of women at the Bar has increased 0.9pp since December 2022. As of December 2023, women constituted 40.6 per cent of the Bar compared to an estimate of 50.2 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of female KCs has increased year on year, from 19.2 per cent to 20.3 per cent (when excluding non-responses). There is still a large disparity between the proportion of the Bar who are female and the proportion of KCs who are female (40.6% vs 20.3%). The difference between the two has narrowed slightly in 2023.
- As of December 2023, 59.4 per cent of pupils were female and 40.6 per cent were male (excluding those that have not provided information on gender). The proportion of pupils who were female is similar to that seen in 2022.

## Ethnicity

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

2. The monitoring question for this is: Is your gender identity the same as the sex with which you were assigned at birth?

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

4. We collect information on sex and gender to ensure that we hold data on the protected characteristic of sex, whilst still collecting data about gender identity. We started collecting information on sex more recently than that of gender and the response rate is far lower as a result. The low response rate means that we do not report on sex any further in this report

5. Sex and gender are different concepts that are often used interchangeably. The UK government refers to sex as being biologically defined, and gender as a social construct that is an internal sense of self, whether an individual sees themselves as a man or a woman, or another gender identity

- The percentage of barristers from minority ethnic backgrounds<sup>6</sup> has increased 0.6pp since December 2022 to 16.9 per cent when excluding non-responses. That compares to an estimate of 16.7 per cent of the working age population in England and Wales as of April-June 2023.
- The percentage of barristers from minority ethnic backgrounds increased year on year (when excluding non-responses) by 0.6pp for non-KCs (from 16.9% to 17.5%); 0.2pp for KCs (from 10.5% to 10.7%); and by 2.2pp for pupils (from 22.7% to 24.9%).
- There is still a disparity between the overall percentage of barristers from minority ethnic backgrounds across the profession (16.9%), and the percentage of KCs (10.7%) from minority ethnic backgrounds (although the disparity is lessening over time overall). This may reflect some previous trends. For example, there was a lower percentage of such barristers entering 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. There was a year-on-year increase in the overall proportion of Asian/Asian British barristers of 0.3pp; Black/Black British barristers of 0.2pp; and a decrease year on year in the overall proportion of Mixed/Multiple ethnic group barristers of 0.1pp; and White barristers of 0.6pp.
- When excluding those that have not provided information, 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 (8.2% vs 7.0%), and the same can be said for those from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds (3.7% vs 1.7%). By contrast, there is a slightly smaller proportion of those from Black/Black British backgrounds (3.5% vs 4.1%), and a greater relative underrepresentation for those from other ethnic groups (1.5% vs 3.9%).
- 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.<sup>7</sup>

## Disability

- As of December 2023, there was a 3.2pp increase in the proportion of pupils with a declared disability compared to December 2022 (from 12.5% to 15.7%).
- There still appears to be an underrepresentation of disabled practitioners at the Bar. Although there is a relatively low response rate of 64.7 per cent, 8.2 per cent of those who provided information on disability status disclosed a disability,

6. “Minority ethnic backgrounds” includes those from Asian/Asian British; Black/Black/British; Mixed/Multiple ethnic; and those of Other minority ethnic backgrounds. Previous ‘Diversity at the Bar’ reports used the acronym ‘BAME’

7. 3.7% of non-KCs are from a Black/Black British background compared to 1.4% of KCs; 2.1% of non-KCs are from a Black/Black British - African background compared to and 0.5% of KCs.

representing a 0.9pp increase on 2022. Despite the increase, this is substantially lower than an estimate of 16.5 per cent for the employed working age UK population with a declared disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

## Age

- Those aged between 25 and 54 make up around 73.6 per cent of the Bar. This is a decrease compared to December 2022 of around 1.8 percentage points (75.4% vs 73.6%), with relatively more of the Bar in the 55-64 and 65+ age range in 2023 (25.4% of the Bar are aged 55+, an increase of 2pp compared to December 2022). This continues a general trend in the age profile of the Bar and compares to 14.8 per cent of the Bar aged 55+ 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 (25.4%) followed by those with no religion (22.4%), although for pupils this is reversed. Excluding non-responses, around 46.1 per cent of the Bar were Christian (compared to around 49.1 per cent of the population of England and Wales, as per the 2021 Census), and around 40.7 per cent of the Bar had no religion (compared to around 40% for England & Wales).

## Sexual Orientation

- Excluding those that have not provided information, 12.6 per cent of pupils, 7.2 per cent of non-KC barristers, and 5.3 per cent of KCs provided their sexual orientation as one of Bisexual, Gay or Lesbian; or another sexual orientation (not including heterosexual).

## Socio-economic background

- The data suggest that a disproportionately high percentage of barristers attended a UK independent school between the ages of 11-18, even when including non-responses. Including non-respondents, 19.4 per cent of the Bar had attended an independent school, compared to approximately 6.5 per cent of school children in England at any age, and 9.8 per cent of UK domiciled young full-time first degree entrants in the UK in 2020/21. 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 2023: 0.5 per cent of the Bar had not attended university; 54.2 per cent had a parent attend university; and 45.8 did not have a parent attend university.

## Caring responsibilities

- When excluding non-responses, 31 per cent of the Bar has 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 9.0pp since 2015, 6.0pp since 2018 and 1.4pp since 2022. 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 around 36 per cent of employed males, and 40 per cent of employed females are a primary carer for one or more children. This would suggest that the proportion of male barristers with primary care of a child is substantially lower than that seen in the broader working age population, and the proportion seen for female barristers is more similar. It is worth noting that as response rates are relatively low for this question, such inferences may not be reliable.
- Of those that provided a Yes/No response to providing care for another person (not including dependent children), around 15.6 per cent provided care for 1 or more hours per week. This is in line with the estimated 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 2023.<sup>8</sup>

This report provides an overview of diversity at the Bar,<sup>9</sup> 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 2022)
Pupil	588	84
Non-King’s Counsel (Non-KC) <sup>10</sup>	15,739	217
King’s Counsel (KC)	2,045	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,356</b>	<b>330</b>

There has been a year-on-year increase of 330 in the number at the Bar as of 1 December 2023. This is higher than the increase seen in 2022 compared to 2021, but in line with that seen in 2021 compared to 2020, and suggests that recruitment and retention has returned to longer term trends following disruption related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The net increase in the number of non-KCs at the Bar is higher than that seen in the last three years, whereas that for KCs is below year on year trends seen since 2016, as shown in Table 2. Overall, in the last 4 years (from 2020-2023) there has been a net addition of 591 non-KC, and 211 KC barristers at the Bar, compared to a net addition of 860 non-KC and 207 KC barristers in the four years from 2015 to 2019).

The number of pupils is the highest seen in any Diversity at the Bar Report – the number may be due to some rebound after a lower number of pupils in 2020. Overall,

8. The BSB published a report detailing longer term trends from 1990-2020 for several monitoring categories this year. The report, ‘Trends in retention and demographics at the Bar – 1990-2020’, can be found on the Research Reports section of our website: <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/news-publications/research-and-statistics/bsb-research-reports.html>

9. 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 2023

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

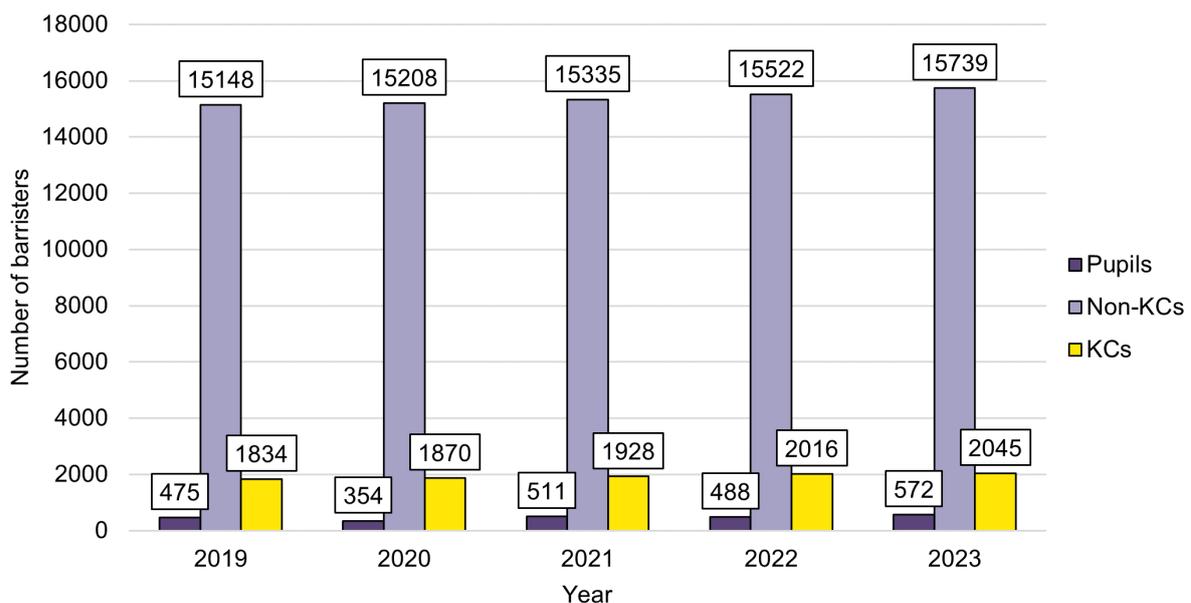
the number of pupils as of December across the last four years (1941 across December 2020 to December 2023) is very similar to that seen in the preceding four years (1939 across December 2016 to December 2019).

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

Seniority	2016 -2015	2017 -2016	2018 -2017	2019 -2018	2020 -2019	2021 -2020	2022 -2023	2023 -2024
<b>Pupils</b>	47	23	5	-24	-121	157	-23	84
<b>Non-KCs</b>	147	269	132	312	60	127	187	217
<b>KCs</b>	47	57	31	72	36	58	88	29
<b>Overall</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>-25</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>330</b>

As of 1 December 2023, there were 16 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: December 2019-December 2023**



There are three sections to this report: protected characteristics<sup>11</sup>, socio-economic background, and caring responsibilities for dependent children and others.

11. 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 practitioners<sup>12</sup> 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 2023.

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.

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 2023 the year on year increases range between 0.7-2.1pp. 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 third year in which we have collected data on sex<sup>13</sup> and whether a barrister qualified for free school meals, and the first 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 40%), and so these categories are not included in this report.

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 had at least one

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

13. 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 referring to the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, generally male or female, something that is assigned at birth. A person's gender identity may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth.

parent attend university; and Gender identity.

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 2022 and 2023 (as a percentage of total barristers) and change in response rates over time**

Category	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2023-2022 pp. diff.	2023-2015 pp. diff.
<b>Gender<sup>14</sup></b>	98.09%	98.0%	-0.1 pp	-2.0 pp
<b>Gender Identity<sup>15</sup></b>	48.4%	51.5%	3.1 pp	51.5 pp
<b>Sex<sup>16 17</sup></b>	27.9%	37.1%	9.2 pp	37.1 pp
<b>Ethnicity</b>	95.1%	95.1%	0.0 pp	3.7 pp
<b>Disability</b>	62.7%	64.7%	2.0 pp	33.7 pp
<b>Age</b>	88.9%	89.6%	0.7 pp	3.2 pp
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	58.3%	60.4%	2.1 pp	32.5 pp
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	60.4%	62.1%	1.8 pp	34.6 pp
<b>Type of school attended from 11-18</b>	61.1%	62.1%	0.9 pp	35.1 pp
<b>Parent(s) attended university</b>	57.4%	58.1%	0.7 pp	31.4 pp
<b>Free school meals</b>	23.7%	33.6%	9.9 pp	33.6 pp
<b>Occupation of main household earner when aged around 14</b>	-	17.0%	17.0 pp	17.0 pp
<b>Caring responsibilities for Children</b>	60.9%	61.9%	1.0 pp	34.4 pp
<b>Caring responsibilities for others</b>	59.0%	60.2%	1.1 pp	33.8 pp

14. 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.

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

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

17. We collect information on sex and gender to ensure that we hold data on the protected characteristic of sex, whilst still collecting data about gender identity. We started collecting information on Sex more recently than that of Gender and the response rate is far lower as a result. The low response rate means that we do not report on Sex any further in this report.

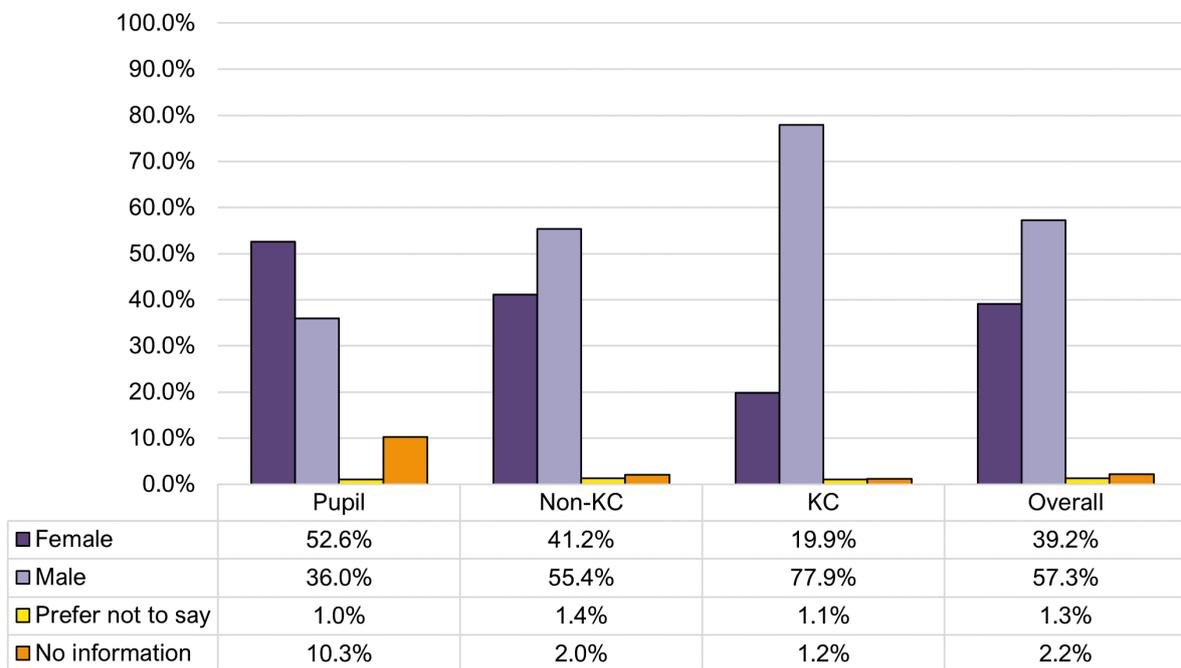
# 4. Protected Characteristics

## 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,<sup>18</sup> the overall percentage of women at the Bar increased by 0.9pp from December 2022 to December 2023 to 40.6 per cent: This compares to an estimate of 50.2 per cent of the UK working age (16-64) population being female as of Q2 2023.<sup>19</sup>
- 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, when including current pupils, the number of female non-KCs and KCs has increased by 1,218 since 2015 (from 5,667 to 6,885). The number of male non-KCs and KC has increased by 66 over the same period (from 10,248 to

18. In Diversity at the Bar Reports up to and including 2021, 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.

19. 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

10,314).<sup>20</sup> The discrepancy is likely to be due largely to greater numbers of male barristers retiring: As of December 2023, when excluding non-responses, around 73 per cent of those aged 55+ at the Bar were male.

- Excluding non-responses, the proportion of female pupils was largely unchanged compared to December 2022, and stood at 59.4 per cent (it was 59.9% in 2022). This is higher than the proportion of pupils who were male, which stood at 40.6 per cent. This is the second highest proportion of pupils who are female seen in any Diversity at the Bar Report, and only slightly below the peak seen in 2022.
- Except for 2020 (where the proportions involved were even), the proportion of pupils who were female has been higher than that seen for males in every Diversity at the Bar Report.
- When excluding non-responses, the proportion of non-KCs who are female has increased by around 0.7pp since 2022 and stands at 42.5 per cent.
- Excluding non-responses, the proportion of KCs who are female increased from 19.2 per cent in 2022 to 20.3 per cent in 2023, a 1.1pp increase. This is the same percentage point increase as that seen from 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022. The number of female KCs increased by 26 from 2022 to 2023 compared to an increase of 34 from 2021 to 2022. The number of male KCs decreased by 1 from 2022 to 2023.
- It is still noteworthy that the overall proportion of female KCs is low (20.3% excluding non-responses) in comparison to the percentage of female barristers at the Bar (40.6%). However, the difference between the two has narrowed over time (in 2015, 36% of the Bar were female compared to 13% of KCs). Excluding non-responses, 51.5 per cent of the net addition of KCs since 2015 have been female, compared to 47.2 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 4.6 percentage points overall since the 2015 Diversity at the Bar Report (when excluding non-responses). The increase overall has been 4.4pp for female non-KC barristers, and 7.3pp for female KC barristers.

**Table 4. Gender at the Bar (numbers)**

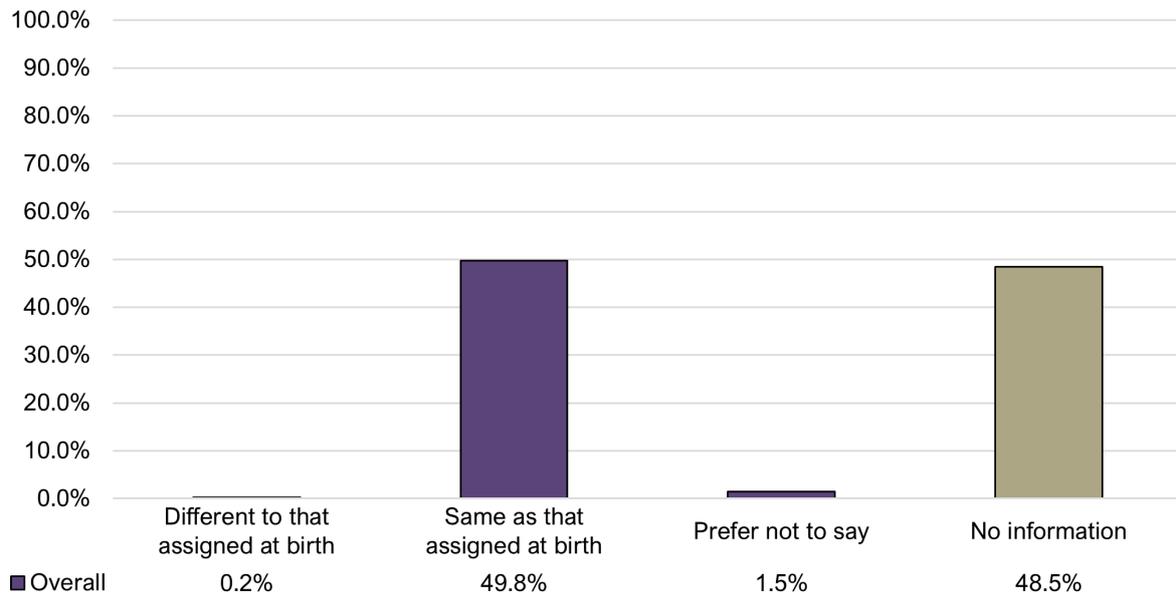
	Pupils	Non-KC	KC	Total
<b>Female</b>	301	6,479	406	7,186
<b>Male</b>	206	8,721	1,593	10,520
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	6	213	22	241
<b>No information</b>	59	322	24	405
<b>Total</b>	572	15,735	2,045	18,352

20. Non-responses have increased slightly however, so these figures are likely to be slightly different if everyone were to provide information on gender.

## 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?”.

**Chart 3: Gender Identity at the Bar (%)**



- Around 49 per cent of practitioners had not provided a response on gender identity on MyBar.
- When including non-respondents, around 0.2 per cent of practitioners had a different gender identity to the one they were registered with at birth

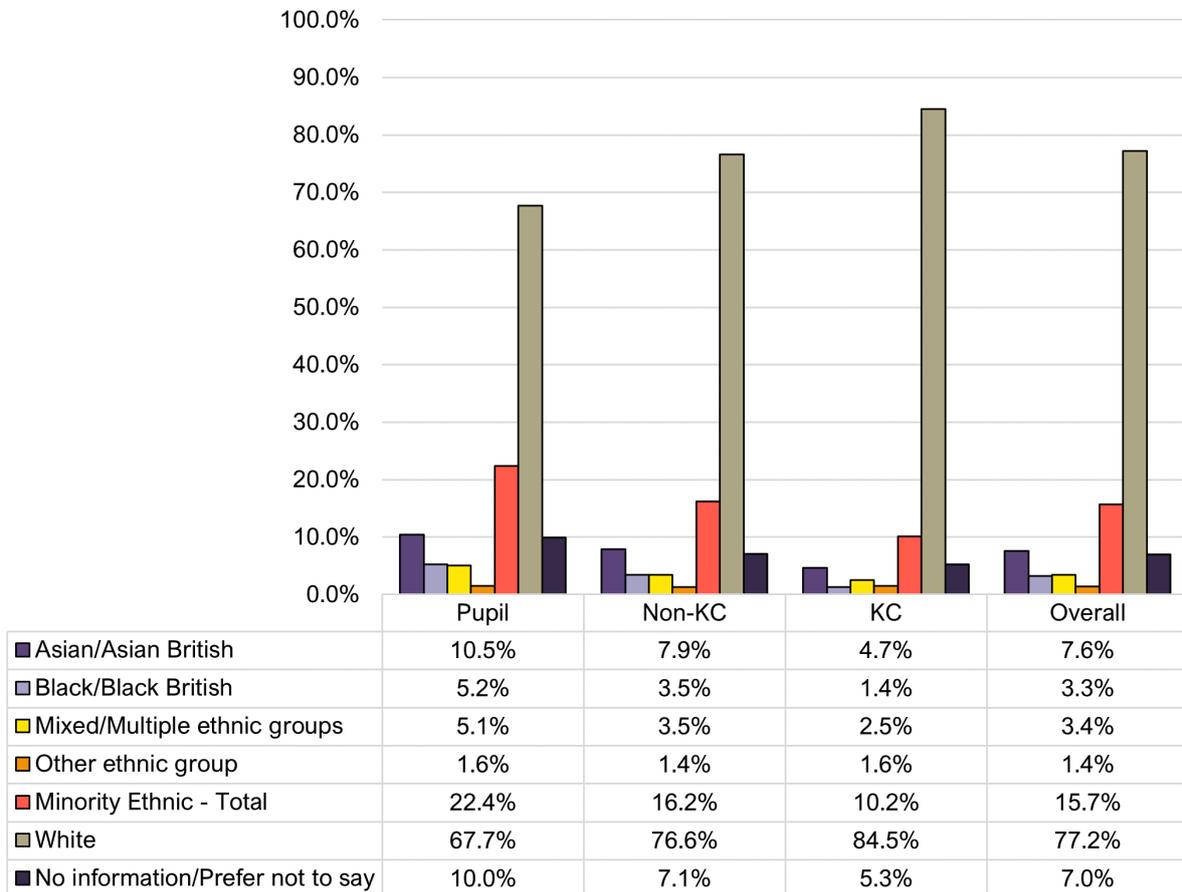
**Table 5. Gender Identity at the Bar (numbers)**

Gender Identity same as that registered at birth	Pupils	Non-KC	KC	Overall
No	0	38	5	43
Yes	119	7,920	1,102	9,141
Prefer not to say	2	249	19	270
No information	451	7,532	919	8,902
<b>Total</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>15,739</b>	<b>2,045</b>	<b>18,356</b>

## 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 2023 was 15.7 per cent. This figure has increased by 0.6pp compared to December 2022, and around 1.1pp compared to December 2021. This is in line with the average yearly percentage point increase of 0.5pp since the first Diversity at the Bar Report in 2015.
- When excluding those that have not provided information or have preferred not to disclose information, around 16.9 per cent of the Bar is from a minority ethnic background. This compares to around 16.7 per cent of the 16-64 working age population in England and Wales as of Q2 2023.<sup>21</sup>
- The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background showed an increase of 2.2pp compared to December 2022 - from 22.7% to 24.9% when excluding non-responses (and from 20.9% to 22.4% when including non-responses). Excluding non-responses, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in

21. Calculated from ONS dataset - A09: Labour market status by ethnic group – figures for Apr-Jun 2023

December 2023 figure is higher than the equivalent figure seen for 2015-2019 as well as that seen for 2022.

- The percentage of non-KC barristers from a minority ethnic background has increased by 0.6pp from 16.9% to 17.5% excluding non-responses (and from 15.7% to 16.2% when including non-responses).
- The percentage of KCs from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased by 0.2pp year on year from 10.5 per cent to 10.7 per cent when excluding non-responses (and from 10% to 10.2% when including non-responses). This also equates to an increase of 2.6pp compared to five years ago, and 4.3pp compared to the first Diversity at the Bar Report in December 2015.
- Since December 2015 there has been a net addition of 106 KCs from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to a net addition of 258 KCs from White ethnic backgrounds. Of those for whom we have data, around 29 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 could also reflect a greater proportion of KCs being appointed from minority ethnic backgrounds by the King's Counsel Selection Panel.
- There is still a lower proportion of KCs from minority ethnic backgrounds than the proportion of non-KCs from such backgrounds, although the ratio between the two 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 (the same as that seen in December 2022).

When disaggregating data by ethnic group, and when excluding those that have not provided information on ethnicity, we can see different patterns of representation for different ethnic groups:

### **Asian/Asian British**

- Around 8.2 per cent of the Bar, 11.3 per cent of pupils, 8.5 per cent of non-KCs, and 5.0 per cent of KCs are from an Asian/Asian British background. This compares to around 7.0 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of Asian/Asian British barristers at the Bar has increased by around 1.6pp since 2015 and by 0.3pp compared to December 2022.
- Of the 8.5% of non-KCs and 5.0% 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;
  - 0.6% of non-KCs and 0.3% of KCs are from an Asian/Asian British - Chinese background;
  - 3.6% of non-KCs and 2.7% of KCs are from an Asian/Asian British - Indian background;

- 2.2% of non-KCs and 1.0% 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, 6.2 per cent of pupils, 3.7 per cent of non-KCs, and 1.4 per cent of KCs are from a Black/Black British background. This compares to around 4.1 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 by 0.2pp compared to December 2022.
- Of the 3.7% of non-KCs and 1.4% 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;
  - 1.4% of non-KCs and 0.9% 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 3.7 per cent of the Bar, 5.6 per cent of pupils, 3.8 per cent of non-KCs, and 2.7 per cent of KCs are from a Mixed/Multiple ethnic background. This compares to around 1.7 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of Mixed/Multiple ethnic group barristers at the Bar has increased by around 1.2pp since 2015 and decreased by 0.1pp compared to December 2022.
- Of the 3.8% of non-KCs and 2.7% of KCs from Mixed/Multiple ethnic group backgrounds;
  - 1.3% 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;
  - 0.5% 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, 1.7 per cent of pupils, 1.5 per cent of non-KCs, and 1.7 per cent of KCs indicated that they were from another ethnic background. This compares to around 3.9 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of barristers in this group has increased by 0.3pp since 2015, and

by the same amount since December 2022.

## White

- Around 83.1 per cent of the Bar, 75.1 per cent of pupils, 82.5 per cent of non-KCs, and 89.3 per cent of KCs are from a White background. This compares to around 83.2 per cent of the UK working age population.
- The proportion of barristers from a White background has decreased by around 3.8pp since 2015 and by 0.6pp compared to December 2022.
- Of the 82.5% of non-KCs and 89.3% of KCs are from White ethnic groups overall;
  - 74.6% of non-KCs and 82.4% of KCs are from White British backgrounds;
  - 2.6% of non-KCs and 2.2% of KCs are from White Irish backgrounds; and
  - 5.3% of non-KCs and 4.6% of KCs are from any other White background.

**Table 6: Ethnicity at the Bar (numbers)**

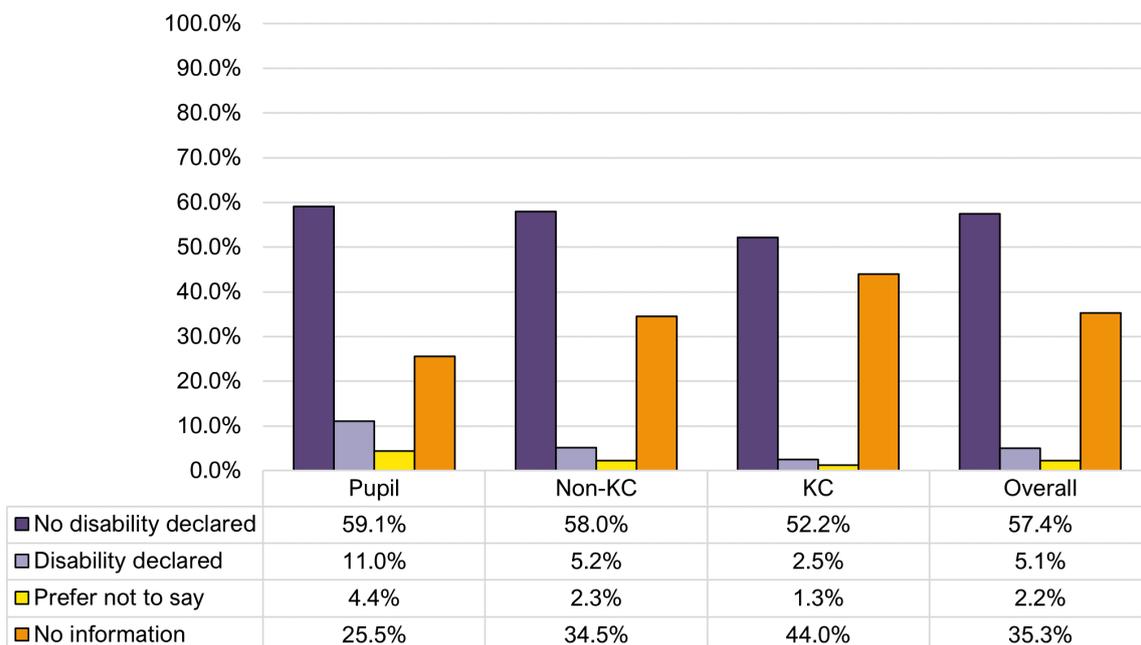
	Pupils	Non-KC	KC	Total
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,242</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>1,398</b>
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	3	116	5	124
Asian/Asian British - Chinese	12	88	5	105
Asian/Asian British - Indian	20	524	53	597
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	19	326	20	365
Any other Asian background	6	188	13	207
<b>Black/Black British</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>604</b>
Black/Black British - African	15	303	9	327
Black/Black British - Caribbean	13	208	17	238
Any other Black background	2	35	2	39
<b>Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>632</b>
White and Asian	10	191	20	221
White and Black African	5	58	4	67
White and Black Caribbean	5	80	6	91
White and Chinese	2	22	5	29
Any other mixed/multiple background	7	200	17	224
<b>White</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>12,062</b>	<b>1,729</b>	<b>14,178</b>
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	362	10,910	1,597	12,869
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	3	0	3
White - Irish	4	374	43	421
Any other White background	21	775	89	885
<b>Other ethnic group</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>257</b>
Arab	5	24	1	30

	Pupils	Non-KC	KC	Total
Any other ethnic group	4	192	31	227
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>382</b>
<b>No information</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>905</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>15,739</b>	<b>2,045</b>	<b>18,356</b>

## 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, 5.1 per cent of the Bar; 11.0 per cent of pupils; 5.2 per cent of non-KC barristers; and 2.5 per cent of KCs had declared a disability as of December 2023. The overall year on year percentage point increase for those declaring a disability is 0.7pp (4.4% to 5.1%). The increase may be linked to an increase in response rates.
- When excluding those that had not provided information, 8.2 per cent of the Bar; 8.2 per cent of non-KC barristers; 15.7 per cent of pupils; and 4.6 per cent of KCs had declared a disability as of December 2023. The proportion of pupils declaring a disability was 3.2pp higher than in December 2022; while the respective figures for non-KCs showed a year-on-year increase of 0.7pp), and an increase of 0.6pp seen for KCs. In comparison to these figures, it is estimated that around 16.5 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 Q2 2023<sup>22</sup>, and so

22. Calculated for Jul-Sep 2022 from Office for National Statistics datasets: A08: Labour market status of disa-

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 just over 60 per cent, and this is a trend that has remained present alongside an increase in response rates.

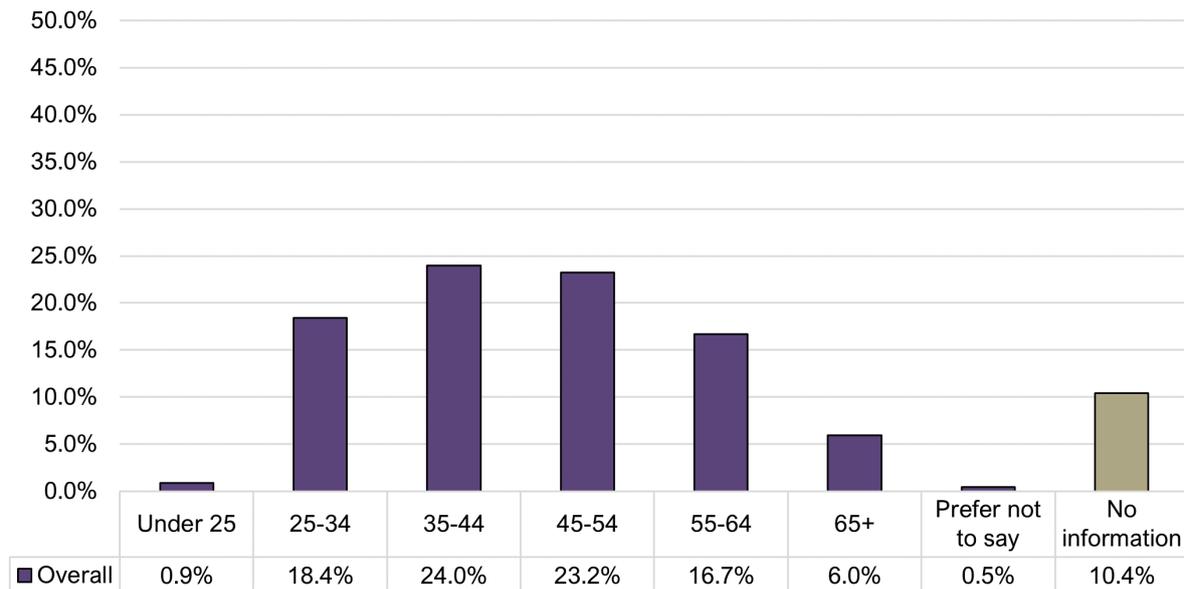
**Table 7. Disability at the Bar (numbers)**

	Pupils	Non-KC	KC	Total
No disability declared	338	9,133	1,068	10,539
Disability declared	63	818	51	932
Prefer not to say	25	356	26	407
No information	146	5,432	900	6,478
<b>Total</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>15,739</b>	<b>2,045</b>	<b>18,356</b>

## 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 73.6 per cent of the Bar. This is a decrease compared to December 2022 of around 1.8 percentage points (75.4% vs 73.6%), with relatively more of the Bar in the 55-64 and 65+ age ranges in 2023.
- 25.4 per cent of those who have provided information on age are aged 55+. This

bled people using Equality Act Levels (People).

carries on a general trend in the age profile of the Bar and compares to figures of 23.4 per cent in 2022 (a 2pp increase); and 14.8 per cent in the first Diversity at the Bar Report in 2015. 4,164 of those that had declared their age were in this group in December 2023, 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 age range groups are those aged from 35-44 (26.9% of all barristers) and those aged from 45-54 (26.0% of all barristers).
- The proportion of those at the Bar aged under 25 stood at 1.0 per cent as of December 2023, when excluding non-responses. Around two thirds of those in this age range are pupils. 18.6 per cent of pupils were aged under 25, 69.6 per cent were aged 25-34 as of December 2023, and around 11.8 per cent were aged 35+.
- The proportion of KCs aged 55+ also appears to be continuing to increase year on year. Excluding non-responses 52.2 per cent of KCs in 2023 were aged 55+, compared to around 48.2 per cent in 2022. It is worth noting that around 20 per cent of data on age is missing for KCs however.

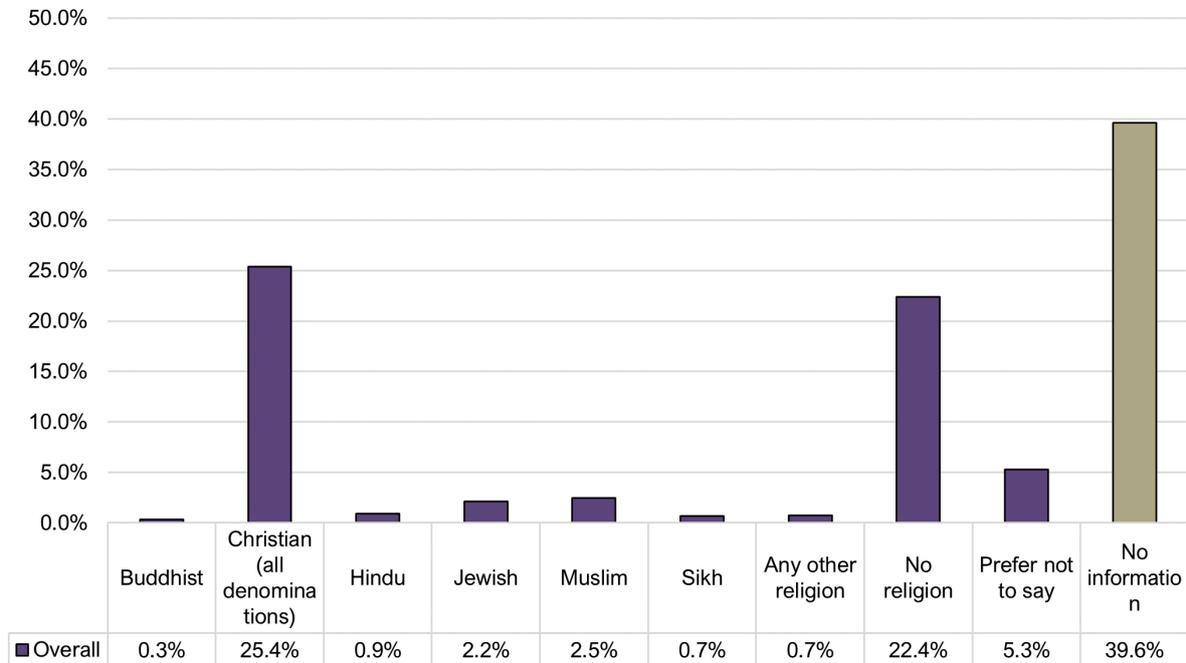
**Table 8. Age at the Bar (numbers)**

	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Non-KC</b>	<b>KC</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Under 25</b>	106	56	0	162
<b>25-34</b>	397	2,984	0	3,381
<b>35-44</b>	54	4,254	89	4,397
<b>45-54</b>	11	3,562	688	4,261
<b>55-64</b>	2	2,470	597	3,069
<b>65+</b>	0	843	252	1,095
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	0	72	11	83
<b>No information</b>	2	1,498	408	1,908
<b>Total</b>	572	15,739	2,045	18,356

## 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 40 per cent of the Bar has not provided information on religion or belief through MyBar. The response rate for this question is up by around 2.1 percentage points year on year.
- Including those that have not provided information, the largest group at the Bar is Christians (25.4%) followed by those with no religion (22.4%), although for pupils this trend 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 46.1 per cent of the Bar compared to around 49.1 per cent of the population of England and Wales (as per the 2021 Census)<sup>23</sup> – Other comparative figures are (No religion: 40.7% of the Bar compared to around 40% for England & Wales, Muslim: 4.5% of the Bar compared to 6.9% for England & Wales, Jewish: 3.9% of the Bar compared to 0.5% for England & Wales, Hindu: 1.7% of the Bar compared to 1.8% for England & Wales, Sikh: 1.3% of the Bar compared to 0.9% for England & Wales, and Buddhist: 0.6% of the Bar compared to 0.5% for England & Wales).

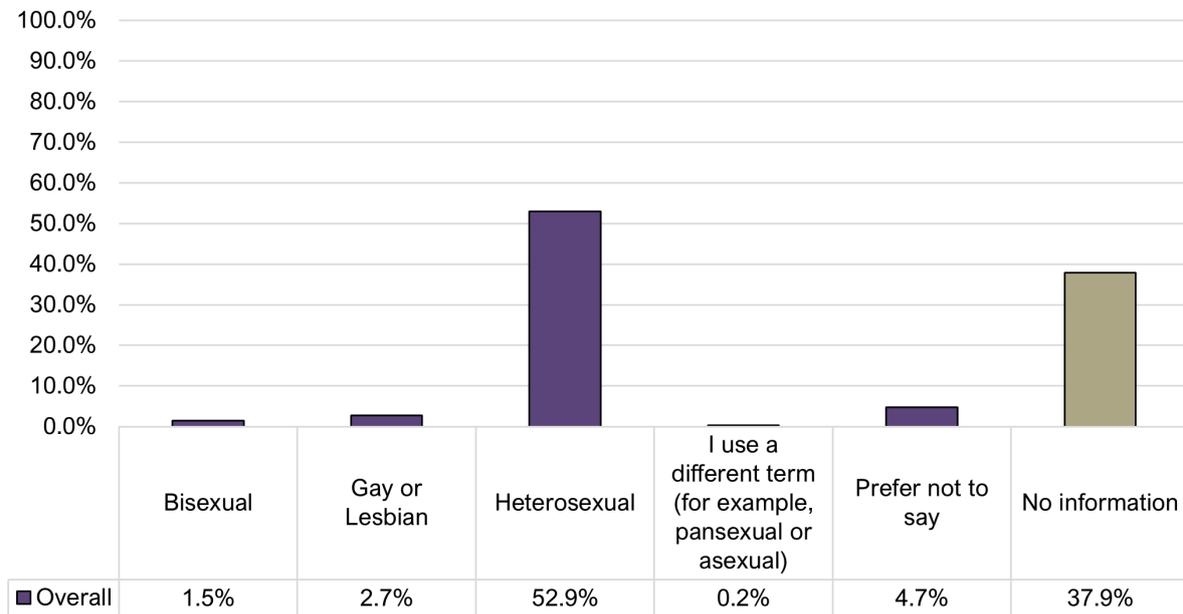
23. Data calculated from Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021 – Figure 1 data, excluding non-responses

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

	Pupils	Non-KC	KC	Total
<b>Buddhist</b>	1	57	2	60
<b>Christian (all denominations)</b>	96	4,093	474	4,663
<b>Hindu</b>	7	149	14	170
<b>Jewish</b>	7	293	95	395
<b>Muslim</b>	19	416	15	450
<b>Sikh</b>	0	113	14	127
<b>Another religion</b>	5	118	10	133
<b>No religion</b>	159	3,560	390	4,109
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	41	846	85	972
<b>No information</b>	237	6,094	946	7,277
<b>Total</b>	572	15,739	2,045	18,356

## 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 1.8pp in comparison to December 2022. This is in line with the increase seen from 2021-2022.
- Excluding those that have not provided information,<sup>24</sup> 12.6 per cent of pupils, 7.2

24. Only 48.3% of pupils and 52.5% of KCs compared to 58.3% of non-KCs provided an answer (excluding prefer not to say). The lower response for pupils and KCs limits the reliability of these figures.

per cent of non-KCs, and 5.3 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 identifying as one of Bisexual, Gay or Lesbian or another sexual orientation as of 2022 when excluding non-responses.<sup>25</sup>

**Table 10. Sexual Orientation of the Bar (numbers)**

	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Non-KC</b>	<b>KC</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Bisexual</b>	24	238	8	270
<b>Gay or Lesbian</b>	12	436	50	498
<b>Heterosexual</b>	237	8,468	1,014	9,719
<b>I use a different term (for example, pansexual)</b>	3	40	2	45
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	34	769	66	869
<b>No information</b>	262	5,788	905	6,955
<b>Total</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>15,739</b>	<b>2,045</b>	<b>18,356</b>

25. 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

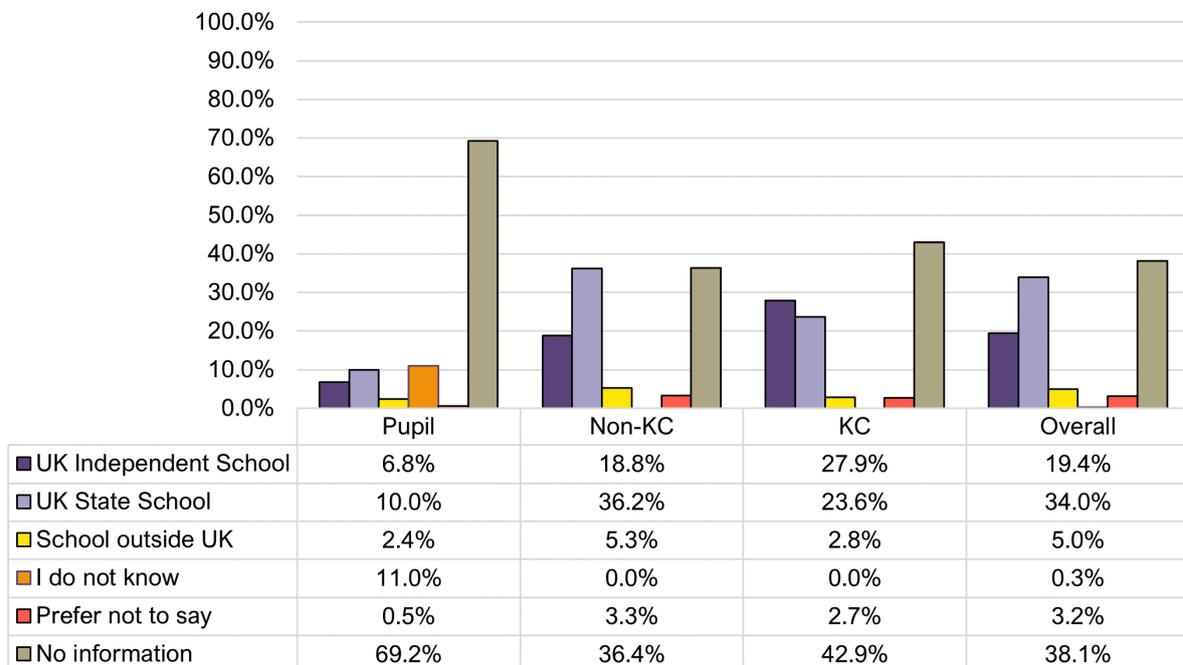
Socio-economic background is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, a representative socio-economic profile may be one indicator of a more meritocratic profession.

Unfortunately, accurately measuring socio-economic background can be challenging, and there is no universal proxy for gathering such data. The BSB has four monitoring questions for socio-economic background, of which two have sufficient response rates to be used in this report.<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup>

## 5.1. Type of School Attended

Chart 9 shows a summary of the type of school mainly attended between the ages of 11-16 for practitioners at the Bar.

**Chart 9: Type of school attended (%)**



26. The two questions not reported on here due to a low response rate are on whether a barrister qualified for free school meals, and the occupation of the main household earner when the barrister was aged around 14.

27. 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 2023, 19.4 per cent of the Bar (including non-respondents) attended an independent school for the most of the period between 11-16, compared to approximately 6.5 per cent of school children in England at any age,<sup>28</sup> and 9.8 per cent of UK domiciled young full-time first degree entrants in the UK in 2020/21 attending a non-state school prior to university.<sup>29</sup>
- Of those that provided information on school attended, 33.3 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: 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.<sup>30</sup> 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 just 0.9pp year on year.

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

	Pupils	Non-KC	KC	Total
<b>UK Independent School</b>	39	2,958	571	3,568
<b>UK State School</b>	57	3,970	357	4,384
<b>School outside UK</b>	14	838	57	909
<b>I don't know</b>	62	1,767	127	1,956
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	3	521	56	580
<b>No information</b>	397	5,685	877	6,959
<b>Total</b>	572	15,739	2,045	18,356

28. Independent Schools Council: Research. <https://www.isc.co.uk/research/> (accessed 12 December 2023). 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.

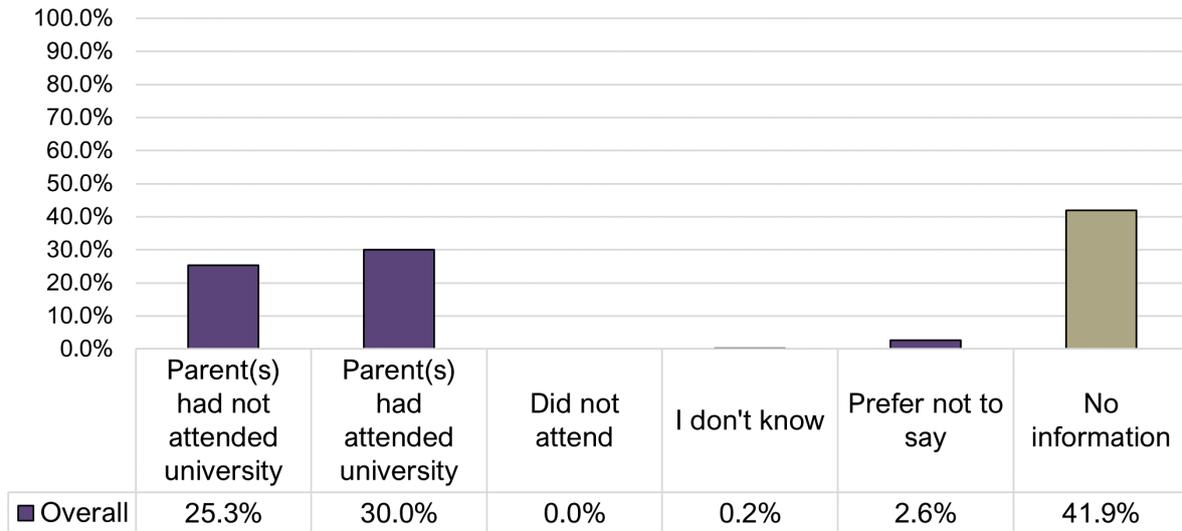
29. Higher Education Statistics Authority: Widening participation summary: UK Performance Indicators. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/performance-indicators/widening-participation-summary> (accessed 12 December 2023)

30. 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.

## 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: Did either of your parents attend university and gain a degree (e.g. BA/BSc or equivalent) 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 0.7pp this year (to 58.1%).
- When excluding non-responses and those who prefer not to say, as of December 2023: 54.2 per cent of barristers had parent(s) who attended university; and 45.8 per cent did not have parent(s) who attended university.

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

	Pupils	Non-KC	KC	Total
<b>No, neither of my parents attended university</b>	56	4,122	463	4,641
<b>Yes, one or both of my parents attended university</b>	70	4,786	646	5,502
<b>I don't know</b>		40	3	43
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	1	442	38	481
<b>No information</b>	445	6,349	895	7,689
<b>Total</b>	572	15,739	2,045	18,356

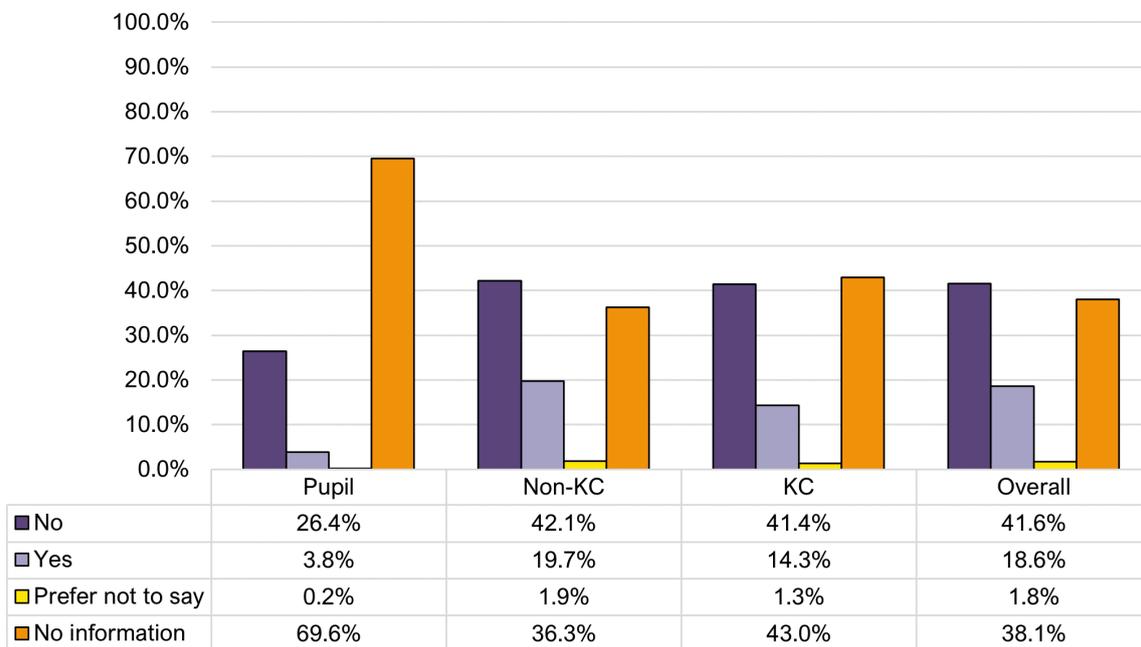
# 6. Caring Responsibilities

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 1.0pp year on year to 61.9 per cent.
- When excluding non-responses, 30.9 per cent of the Bar; 12.7 per cent of pupils; 31.9 per cent of non-KCs; and 25.7 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 9.0pp since 2015, 6.0pp since 2018 and 1.4pp since 2022.
- When further breaking these figures down by gender, it appears that the increase in the proportion of barristers with primary caring responsibilities for one or more children appears to be driven by both an increase in female representation and an increase in male barristers with caring responsibilities. 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 2018 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 2023	Percentage point change compared to December 2018
<b>Pupils</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>9 pp</b>
Female	12%	5 pp
Male	12%	12 pp
<b>Non-KCs</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>6 pp</b>
Female	41%	4 pp
Male	24%	7 pp
<b>KCs</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>6 pp</b>
Female	56%	1 pp
Male	15%	2 pp
<b>Overall</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>6 pp</b>
Female	41%	4 pp
Male	23%	6 pp

- 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 2023 compared to 2018, or that there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of the Bar who had primary care of a child even when controlling for gender.
- 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 Statistics<sup>31</sup> suggest that around 36 per cent of employed males, and 41 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 care of 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 this question, such inferences may not be

31. 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

reliable.

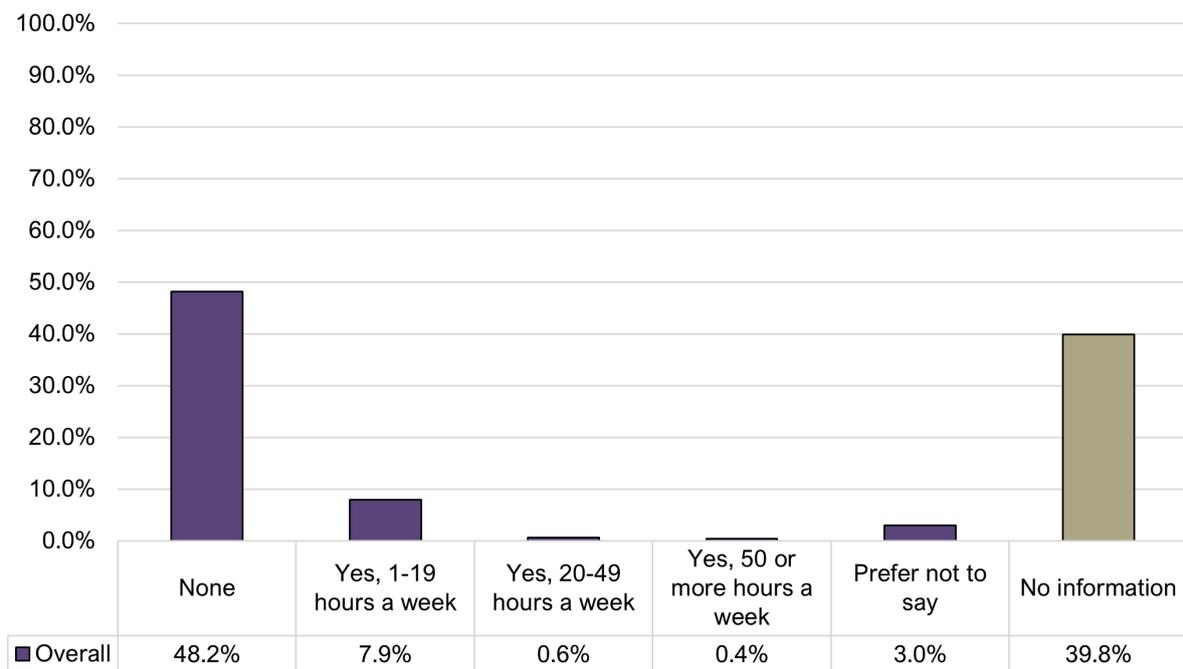
**Table 14. Caring Responsibilities for Children for those at the Bar (numbers)**

	Pupils	Non-KC	KC	Total
Not a primary carer for one or more children	151	6,631	846	7,628
Is a primary carer for one or more children	22	3,105	293	3,420
Prefer not to say	1	295	27	323
No information	398	5,708	879	6,985
<b>Total</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>15,739</b>	<b>2,045</b>	<b>18,356</b>

## 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 1.1pp year on year to 60.2 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 2023. 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.<sup>32</sup> 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 (and a potential increase in the number of those at the Bar caring for an older member of their family).
- 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 is higher for KCs than for pupils and non-KCs; 15.2 per cent of pupils, 15.1 per cent of non-KCs, and 20.5 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
<b>None</b>	145	7,850	857	8,852
<b>Yes, 1-19 hours a week</b>	23	1,225	205	1,453
<b>Yes, 20-49 hours a week</b>	2	98	11	111
<b>Yes, 50 or more hours a week</b>	1	68	5	74
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	2	506	46	554
<b>No information</b>	399	5,992	921	7,312
<b>Total</b>	572	15,739	2,045	18,356

32. See Carers UK (2019) Juggling work and care

# 7. Conclusions

## Key year on year changes

Compared with 2022, there has been a relatively large increase in the overall number of barristers, particularly in the number of pupils. Increases seen for non-KC barristers are in line with those seen in several years since the Diversity at the Bar Report was started in 2015 and suggest that recruitment into the Bar has largely returned to longer term trends following the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase in the number of KCs was slightly lower than that seen for all 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 are increases in the proportion of barristers who are female, the proportion of KCs who are female (and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of barristers and KCs who are male); the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds; the proportion of pupils with a declared disability, and the proportion of the Bar aged 55 and over (and a decrease in the proportion of practitioners aged 25-54); and the proportion of the Bar with primary care of one or more children (across both male and female barristers).

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

## Response rates

Response rates continue to improve, albeit at a slower rate than that seen in years prior to 2022 for most monitoring categories. There were increases of around 0.7-2.1pp seen in eight of the 11 categories monitored in this report: In previous years an increase of around 3-4pp or more has been more commonly seen. We will continue to encourage those at the Bar 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 second greatest proportion (behind 2020) 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, amongst those from a minority ethnic background there are some notable differences. There is a slightly greater proportion of Asian/Asian British practitioners at the Bar compared to the UK working age population (8.2% vs 7.0%), and also a higher proportion of those from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds (3.7% vs 1.7%). By contrast, there is a slightly smaller

proportion of those at the Bar from Black/Black British backgrounds compared to the UK working age population, (3.6% vs 4.1%), and a greater relative underrepresentation for those from Other ethnic groups (1.5% vs 3.9%).

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.

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 65 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) appears to 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, and to have done so quite substantially over the last five years, although drawing inferences based on the level of response seen for this may be unreliable

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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](mailto: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)

