

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.

Complainants/Reporters

In 2019 the Bar Standard Board received complaints/reports about barristers from 566 complainants/reporters.


The characteristics¹ of these complainants/reporters were:


Age		
 From the list of age bands below, please indicate the category that includes your current age in years:		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
16 - 24	2	0.4%
25 - 34	18	3.2%
35 - 44	15	2.7%
45 - 54	35	6.2%
55 - 64	20	3.5%
65 +	12	2.1%
Prefer not to say	1	0.2%
No information	463	81.8%

Gender		
 What is your gender?		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
Male	80	14.1%
Female	38	6.7%
Prefer not to say	2	0.4%
No information	446	78.8%

Gender Identity		
<p>“ Is your gender identity the same as the sex that you were assigned at birth?</p>		
Response	Barristers	Percentage of total
Yes	29	5.1%
No	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	4	0.7%
No information	533	94.2%

Disability		
<p>“ Do you consider yourself to have a disability according to the definition in the Equality Act?</p>		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
Yes	21	3.7%
No	62	11.0%
Prefer not to say	9	1.6%
No information	474	83.7%
<p>“ 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?</p>		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
Yes, limited a lot	11	1.9%
Yes, limited a little	9	1.6%
No	47	8.3%
Prefer not to say	10	1.8%
No information	489	86.4%

Ethnic Group		
 What is your ethnic group?		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
Asian/Asian British		
Bangladeshi	4	0.7%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Indian	2	0.4%
Pakistani	4	0.7%
Any other Asian background	2	0.4%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British		
African	3	0.5%
Caribbean	2	0.4%
Any other black/Caribbean/Black British background	1	0.2%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups		
White and Asian	1	0.2%
White and Black African	0	0.0%
White and Black Caribbean	1	0.2%
White and Chinese	0	0.0%
Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background	1	0.2%
White		
British/English/Welsh/Northern Irish/Scottish	79	14.0%
Irish	2	0.4%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0.0%
Any other White background	6	1.1%
Other ethnic group		
Arab	1	0.2%
Any other ethnic group	5	0.9%
Prefer not to say		
Prefer not to say	5	0.9%
No information		
No information	447	79.0%

Religion or belief		
 What is your religion or belief?		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
No religion or belief	35	6.2%
Buddhist	0	0.0%
Christian	35	6.2%
Hindu	0	0.0%
Jewish	4	0.7%
Muslim	2	0.4%
Sikh	1	0.2%
Any other religion	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	5	0.9%
No information	484	85.5%

Sexual orientation		
<p>“ What is your sexual orientation?</p>		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
Bisexual	6	1.1%
Gay man	3	0.5%
Gay woman/lesbian	0	0.0%
Heterosexual/straight	70	12.4%
Other	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	6	1.1%
No information	481	85.0%

Socio-economic background		
<p>“ 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?</p>		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
Yes	41	7.2%
No	27	4.8%
Did not attend University	7	1.2%
Prefer not to say	7	1.2%
No Information	484	85.5%
<p>“ Did you mainly attend a state or fee paying school between the ages 11-18?</p>		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
UK State School	48	8.5%
UK Independent/Fee-paying School	21	3.7%
Attended school outside the UK	7	1.2%
Prefer not to say	10	1.8%
No Information	480	84.8%

Caring responsibilities		
<p>“ Are you a primary carer for a child or children under 18?</p>		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
Yes	20	3.5%
No	57	10.1%
Prefer not to say	7	1.2%
No Information	482	85.2%
<p>“ 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?</p>		
Response	Complainants	Percentage of total
No	64	11.3%
Yes, 1 - 19 hours a week	5	0.9%
Yes, 20 - 49 hours a week	2	0.4%
Yes, 50 or more hours a week	3	0.5%
Prefer not to say	9	1.6%
No Information	483	85.3%