

SBA The Solicitors' Charity publishes data on its beneficiaries for the first time



Last month SBA The Solicitors' Charity published its first overview of the **personal and professional characteristics of some of the people it supported during 2016**. The report looked at a sample group of 167 individual solicitors, former solicitors and their family members:

- 59% were already in receipt of SBA funding, usually as part of an annually assessed award. However, 41% were approaching SBA for help for the first time, a substantial increase in the numbers seeking help for personal financial hardship and support with career transition.
- The majority of these new applicants (97%) were all current or former solicitors and their average age was 49. The average age for all SBA beneficiaries was 56, with a gender split of 52% female: 48% male. The youngest SBA beneficiary was 29, the eldest, 101.
- 17% identified as black, Asian and minority ethnic. Figures split fairly evenly between Asian lawyers (8%) and African, African-Caribbean & Black British lawyers (7%), with 'Other' at 2%.
- 19% of beneficiaries lived in London and a further 15% in the South East. Figures contrast with the Law Society's Annual Statistics Report (2015), which shows practising solicitors in London and the South East as 40.2% and 9.6% respectively. Regions outside London and the South East were strongly represented for SBA, particularly the South West (17%), North West (14%) and Eastern (10%).
- 69% had health issues, the single most prevalent of which was poor mental health. There was also a noticeable incidence in the number of people dealing with a sudden diagnosis of cancer (12%).
- 52% of the solicitor beneficiaries were either sole practitioners or had worked for small firms. 20% were from larger or City firms. SBA's most senior solicitor beneficiary was admitted in 1948. The most recent applied to SBA for help within five months of their admission ceremony.
- At the start of 2016, criminal and personal injury practitioners were in a clear majority when SBA asked about former practice area. By the end of 2016, the dominance of these groups had been reduced by an increase in requests from colleagues working in property, civil litigation, family and housing law.

"While it's critically important to maintain the absolute confidentiality of everyone who approaches SBA The Solicitors' Charity, it's also clear that we hold a unique set of data about the people who need our help," explains Tim Martin, SBA's Chief Executive. "Over time, we will be able to monitor and measure any changes in trends and this will enable SBA to continue to meet existing needs as well as identify emerging issues."

To find out more, visit www.sba.org.uk or telephone in confidence on 020 8675 6440.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

- SBA The Solicitors' Charity has been working at the heart of the legal profession for nearly 160 years, working to ensure that no solicitor is unsupported in times of need or crisis.
- Every year SBA helps hundreds of solicitors and dependants of all ages who are in serious financial need as a result of illness, accident, redundancy or other adversity.
- SBA provides grants and interest-free loans (secured), support with career transition and access to bespoke advice on personal debt and welfare benefits.

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