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When will I make Partner?

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If you're interested in tracking your legal career development, then read our latest survey detailing Solicitors' qualification dates versus when they became Partner.

- How long will the path to partnership take you?
- How are you affected by the region in which you work?
- Will your chosen practice area matter?

Read on...

A RESOURCE FOR YOU

Origin Legal produces a range of information to assist lawyers in both the strategic and technical aspects of their careers.

We frequently discuss career paths and the time it takes to be made up to Partner with firms and lawyers alike. The purpose of this Survey (Qualification dates and Practice areas of Partners made up Spring 2016 by region) is to identify any significant trends or differences between the sample groups

in terms of when solicitors are awarded partnership and in what practice areas.

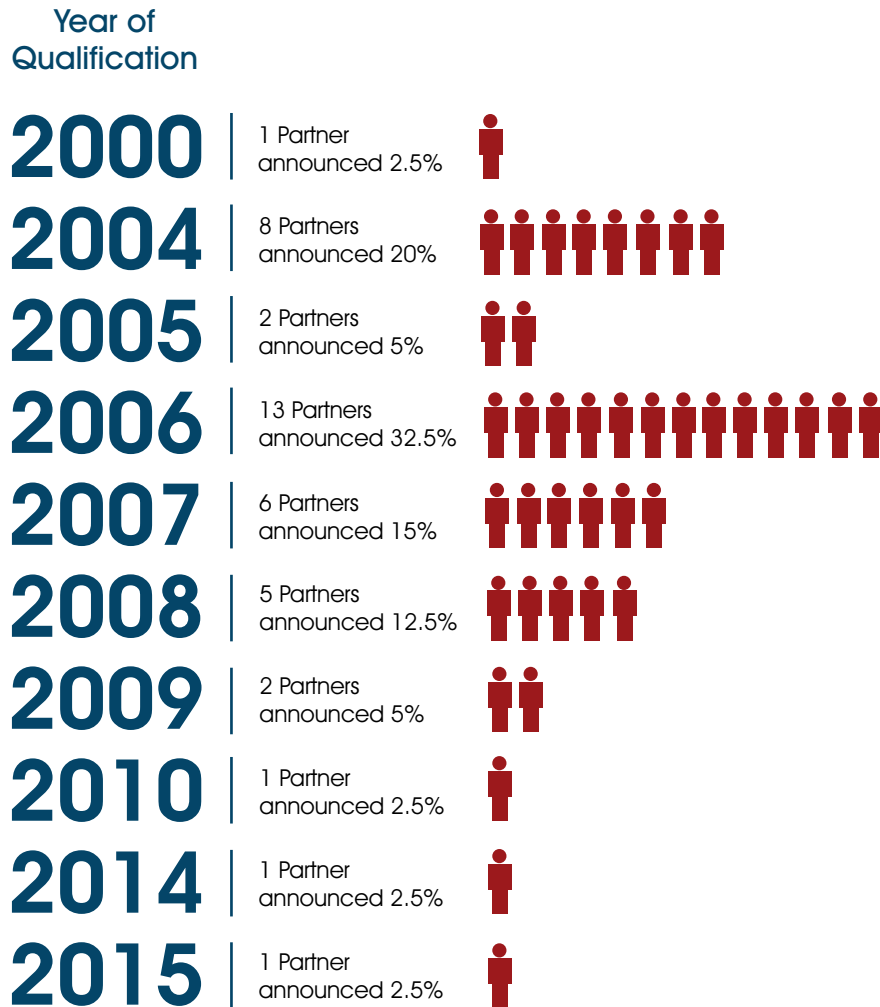
The data collected included qualification dates, practice area and the regions/ sample groups were as below:

- Magic Circle firms
- London Top 20 excluding Magic Circle
- London West End firms
- East and West Midlands



MAGIC CIRCLE

40 Partners were announced in Spring 2016



Notably, out of the 40 Partners announced in Spring 2016, 60% of the Partners were in Corporate Finance/Banking and 32.5% were 2006 qualifiers. Commercial Litigation accounted for 20% of the Partners made up.

97.5% of Partners made up in Magic Circle firms this Spring were less than 12 years' PQE. If you are approaching or have passed that mark and not made Partner, then it probably is not coming. This is far less defined in the West End or in the Midlands.

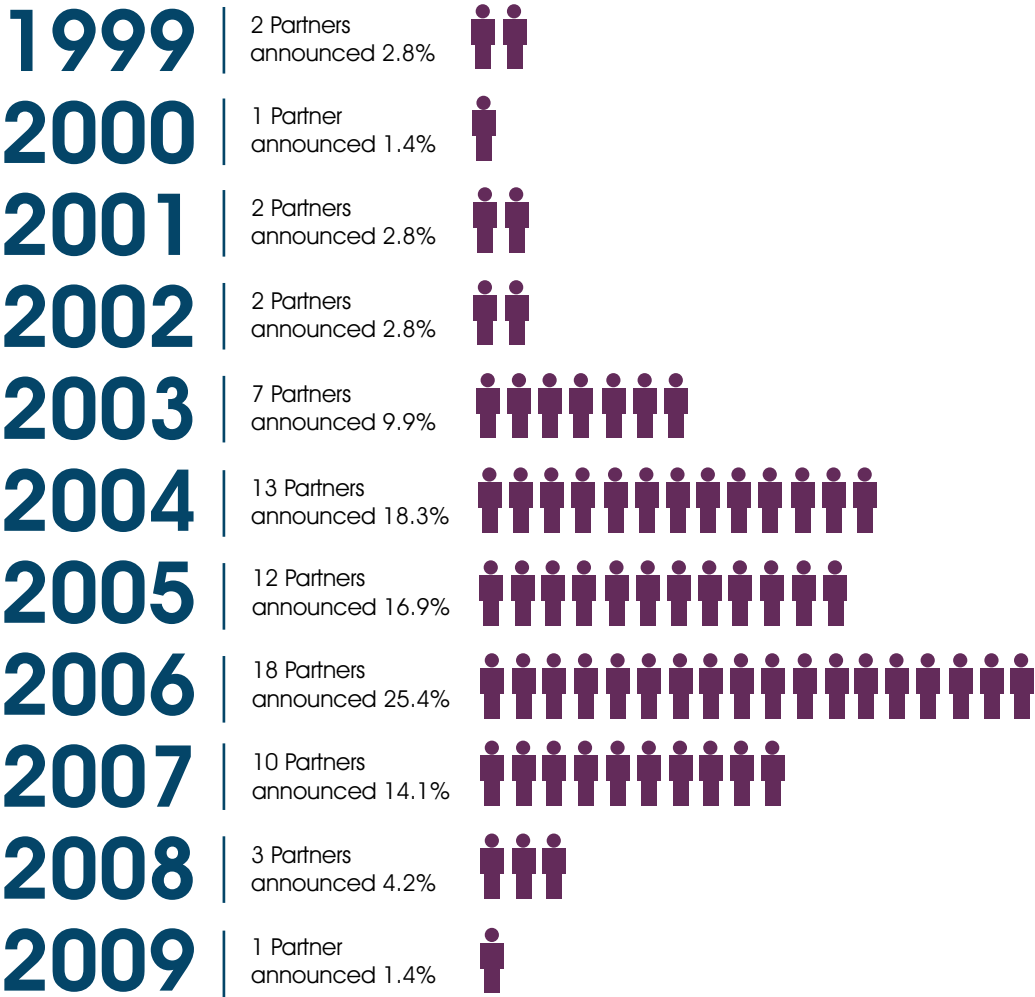
60% of lawyers making Partner at Magic Circle firms did not do so until they reached at least 10 years' PQE...if you are 8 years and it is not on the agenda, then it is time to start asking questions.

Associates and Assistants, if you want to make Partner in the Magic Circle, evidence suggests that Corporate Finance/Banking is the way to go. If you favour other practice areas, maybe you should be looking elsewhere?

LONDON TOP 20 EXCLUDING MAGIC CIRCLE

71 Partners were announced in Spring 2016

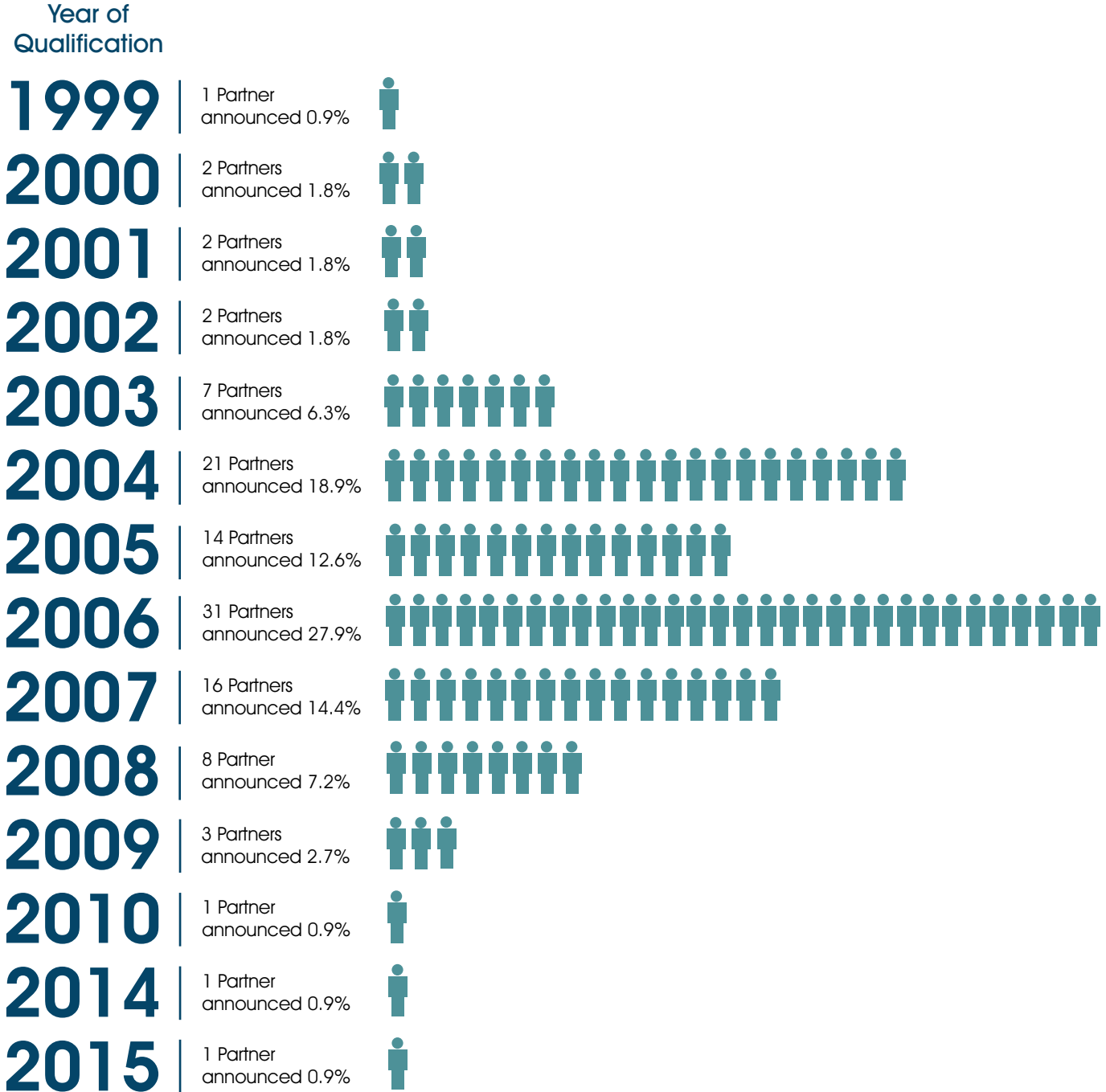
Year of Qualification



Notably, out of the 71 Partners announced in 2016, 39% are in Corporate Finance/Banking, 18% in Litigation and 15.5% in Real Estate. 75% of new Partners in London top 20 non-Magic Circle were between 9 and 12 years' PQE, odds of making Partner after that level drop dramatically.

LONDON COMBINED TOP 20

111 Partners announced in London's top 20 firms in 2016



The combined figures confirm that 2006 Qualifiers were the biggest year group made up to Partner.

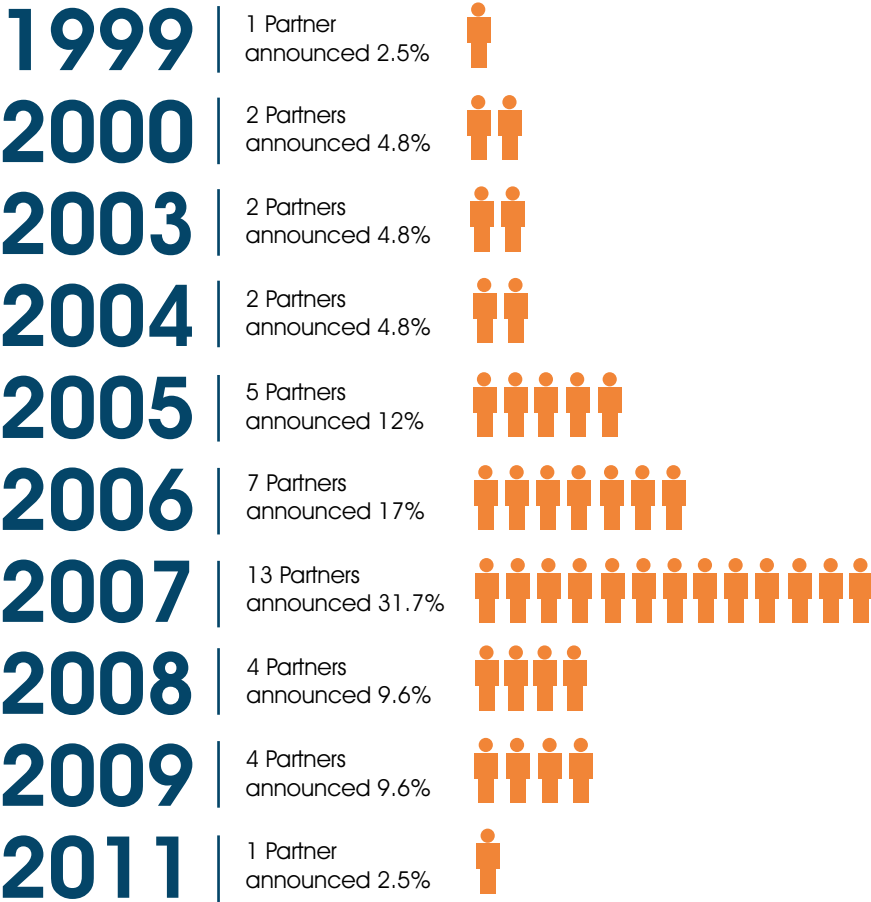
80.1% of new Partners in London top 20 were between 9 and 13 years' PQE, odds of making Partner after that drops with only 6.3% of new Partners 14+ years' PQE.

Interestingly, 40 Partners were made up in the Magic Circle firms and 71 in the remaining 15 firms that make up London's top 20.

WEST END

41 Partners were announced in West End firms in 2016

Year of Qualification

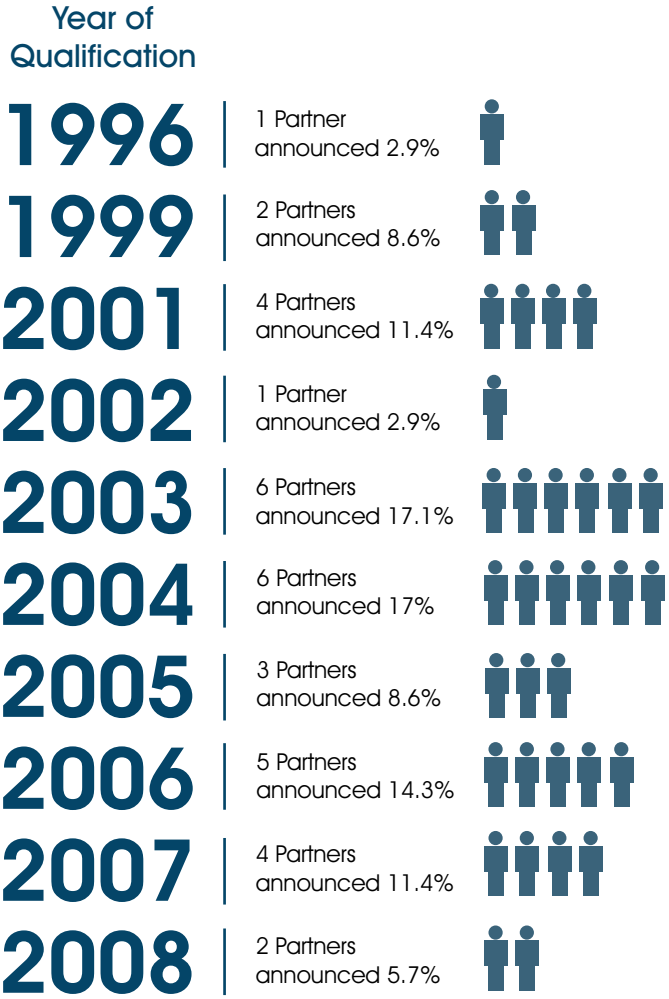


Amongst the West End firms almost 24% were in the Corporate Finance/Banking sector but the balance was distributed fairly evenly over Commercial Property/Planning, Commercial Litigation, Commercial and Private Client/Matrimonial reflecting the nature of West End firms.

Although there is a slightly broader range of qualifying dates, almost 80% of Partners made up in 2016 in London's West End firms were between 7 and 11 years' PQE.

MIDLANDS (EAST AND WEST COMBINED)

35 Partners were announced in the Midlands across 19 firms

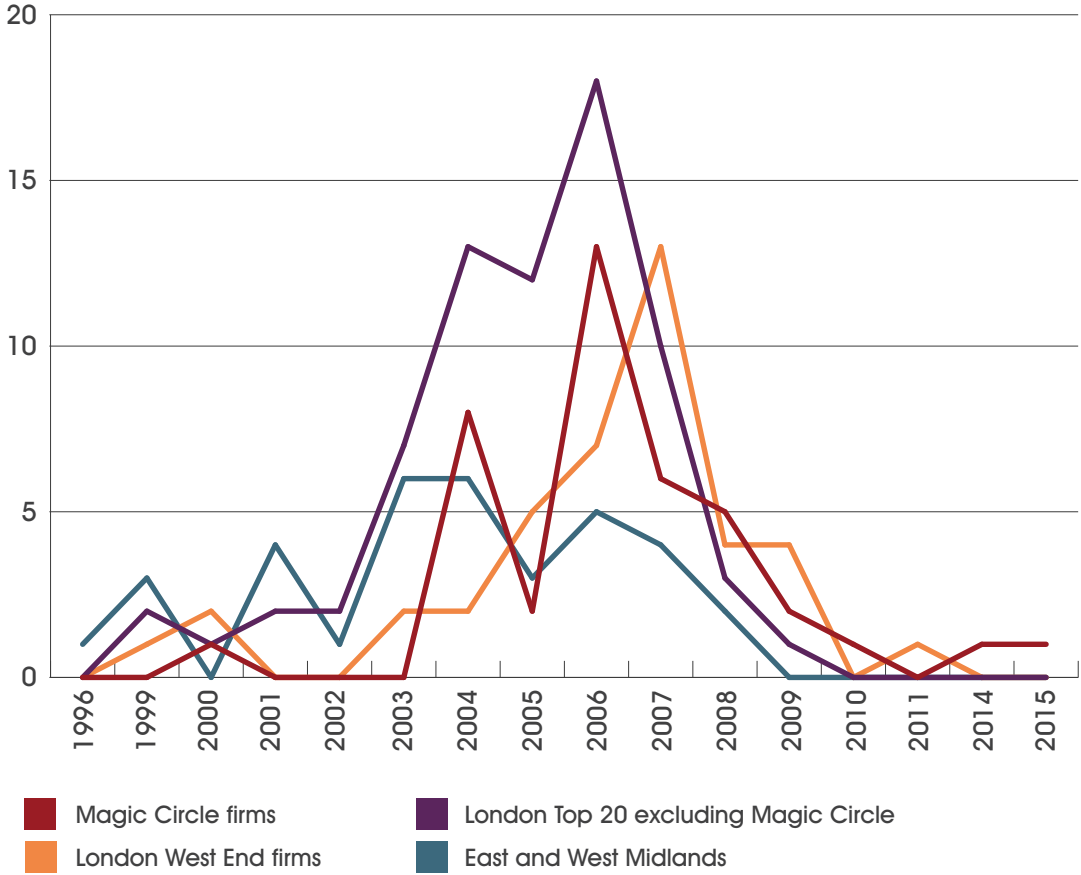


There is a much broader range of qualifying dates in Partners made up in 2016 in the Midlands ranging from 1996 to 2008, with Partners being at least 8 years' PQE.

Notably, 37% Partners are in Commercial including regulatory, 31.5% in Commercial Property and Planning, 22.8% in Commercial Litigation and only 2.8% in Corporate.

YEARS TO PARTNER...

Summary of the data by years' PQE for all 4 groups



SOLICITORS V PARTNERS

Summary of the percentage of solicitors made up to Partner in 2016

	No of solicitors	No of Partners	No of Partners made up in 2016	% of solicitors made up to Partners in 2016
Magic Circle	4093	855	40	0.98
London Top 20 excl Magic Circle	5932	2179	71	1.20
London West End	2561	1002	41	1.60
East and West Midlands	1954	470	35	1.79

The survey shows that statistically it was more difficult to make Partner in 2016 in the Magic Circle, followed by the Top 20 London firms, with West End firms giving a better chance in London. A solicitor in the Midlands in 2016 was twice as likely to make Partner than a Magic Circle solicitor. The statistic positioning of the firms reflect the Partners earning potential.

The total number of Partners compared to the number of Solicitors at a firm shows the highest number of Partners in London West End firms with 28% of the firms Solicitors made up to Partner. These figures, however, need to be seen in the wider context including the number of NQ, 1-4 years' PQE and Associates for each firm.

This survey is reviewing Partners made up in 2016 and Origin Legal intends to produce an annual survey which will enable future year on year comparisons. For further resources please refer to our website www.originlegal.co.uk.

INTERPRETING THE DATA – A SUMMARY

The large majority of Partners made up across the firms surveyed were less than 12 years' PQE. If 2016 is representative, your odds of making Partner after that drop dramatically. The figures show that 74% of Partners made up in 2016 in the Top 20 City firms were between nine and 12 years' PQE. In the West End, 80% of new Partners were between seven and 11 years' PQE. Only in the Midlands, does this trend soften, but even there 76% of Partners made up in 2016 qualified in or after 2003.

Whilst it is no surprise that Partnership promotions are clustered around these levels, the figures do represent a stark warning for anyone approaching ten years' qualified, who is seeking – but not close to – Partnership. With a typical lead in of two years, we would suggest seven to eight years' PQE as the time to start the conversation.

The limited time frame makes it important that you are positioned in the right place to maximise your chances. Consider your practice area - with 60% of new Partners in the Magic Circle being Corporate/Finance lawyers and a further 20% Commercial Litigators for example, odds may not be in your favour if you are sat in a different team.

Partnership, if achieved with the right firm, remains the best route to playing a key role in the running of your firm and earning handsomely at the same time. In most firms now, you will need to demonstrate the business case for why you should be made up – longevity is no longer a guarantee. This takes time to build so if you are a mid-level Associate, whilst Partnership may seem a distant prospect, now is the time to start thinking about it. Are you leading deals, building your internal profile, making good contacts with your future client base? With the right long-term planning you can maximise your chances of making the cut.



ABOUT THE SURVEY

Origin Legal's resource team selected a representative sample of solicitors who were made up to Partner and announced in Spring 2016. The data collected focused on qualification dates and practice areas. The survey analysed sample groups of London and Midlands based Partners and Solicitors. The data excludes Partners announced who arrived as Partners from other Law firms. The regions / sample groups were:

- Magic Circle firms – 5 firms
- London Top 20 excluding Magic Circle – 15 firms
- London West End – 15 firms
- East and West Midlands – 19 firms

FURTHER RESOURCES

Origin Legal produces a range of information to assist lawyers in both the strategic and technical aspects of making a career move.

We hope you find this document useful please do contact us on +44 (0)1206 233500 if you would like to discuss any of the information in more detail.

For further resources please refer to our website www.originlegal.co.uk.

CONTACT

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- Private Practice
- International
- Paralegal and Support Services
- Legal HR
- In House



The Studio, Lodge Park
Lodge Lane
Langham Colchester
Essex CO4 5NE

Tel: 01206 233500
Fax: 01206 233501
Email: enquiries@originlegal.co.uk
www.originlegal.co.uk