

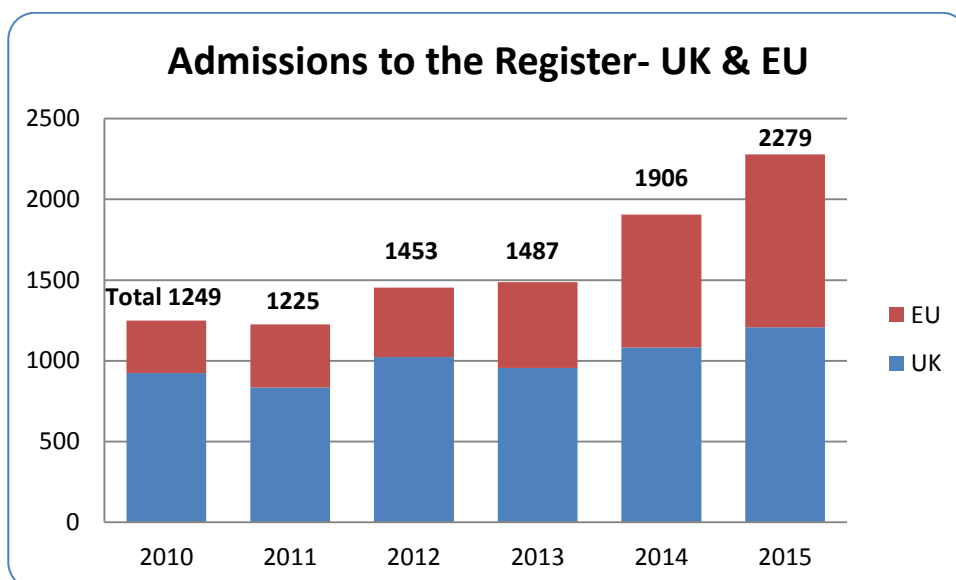
Report on Statistics and Trends

1. Maintain the Quality of the Register

1.1 Admissions

The graph below illustrates that during 2015, there were 2,279 new admissions to the Register, an increase of 20% from 2014.

There have been a higher percentage of applicants applying via the EU route. 53% were made through the UK routes to registration, including those who qualified over 2 years ago. The remaining 47% applications were made through all EU routes¹. By comparison, only 43% applicants arrived via EU route applications, with 57% of the 1906 applications coming via the UK route.



1.2 UK Applications

Despite the increase in the number of applications, 2015 saw the average time taken to process a UK application remain the same at 8 days

96% of UK applications were processed within the 15 day target timescale in 2015, compared with 92% in 2014.

¹ Including those applying through the equivalence route

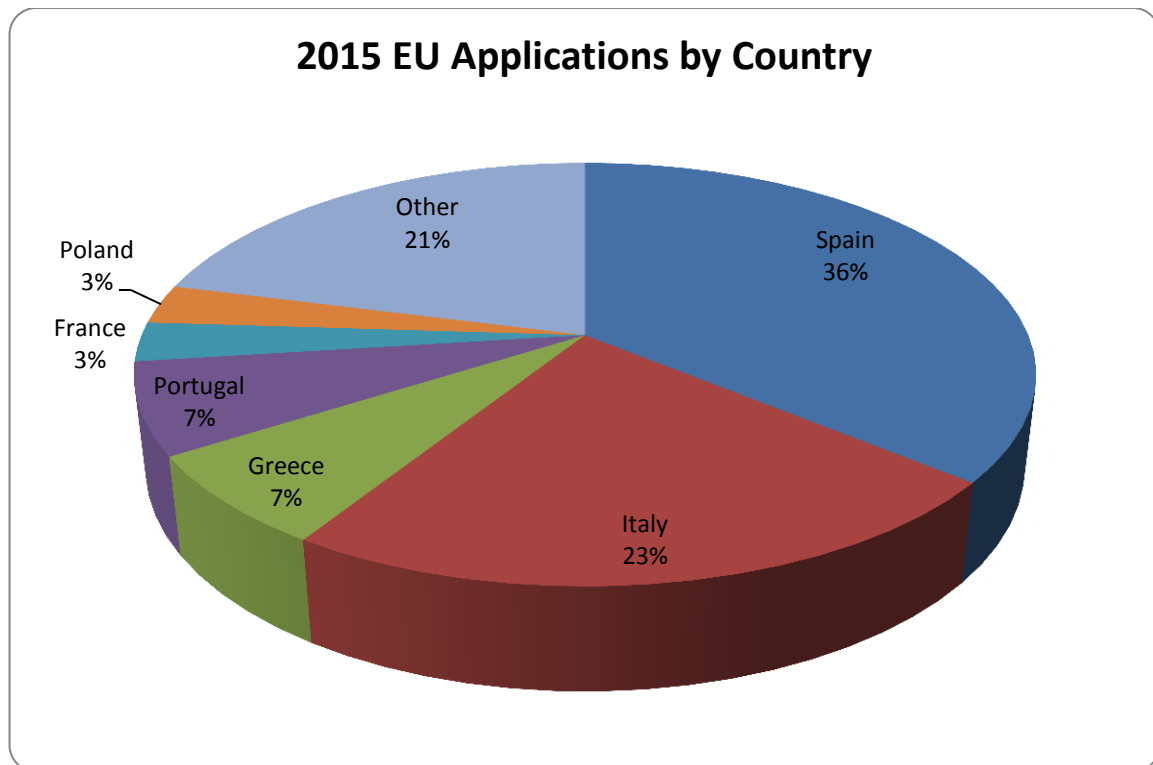
1.3 European Applications

ARB processed 1,012 EU applications through the automatic EU route to registration, compared to 776 in 2014, an increase of 30%. The remaining 60 were processed via all other EU routes.

82% of automatic recognition applications were processed within the 15 day target, the same as in 2014, and on average time taken to process applications was reduced by one day.

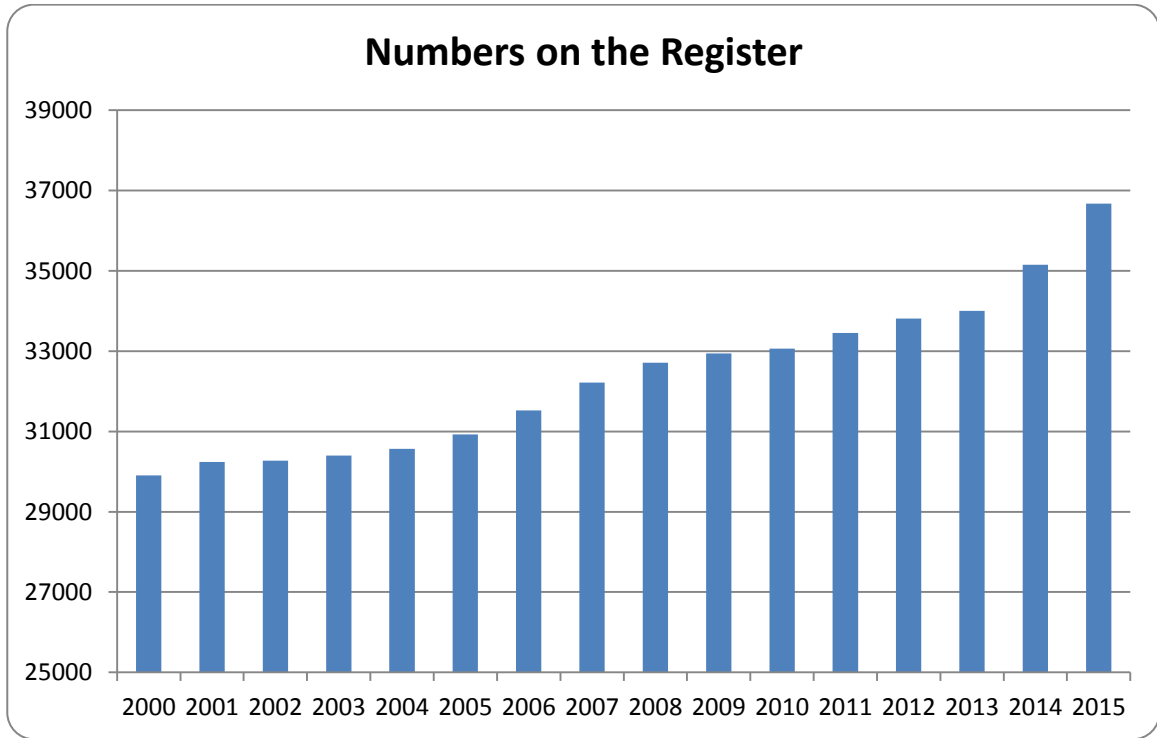
EU applications frequently involve a significant amount of external interaction with other competent authorities, sometimes resulting in long delays while information is sought either from ARB's counterparts in other member states or from applicants themselves.

The graph below illustrates the number of applications from each country during 2015.



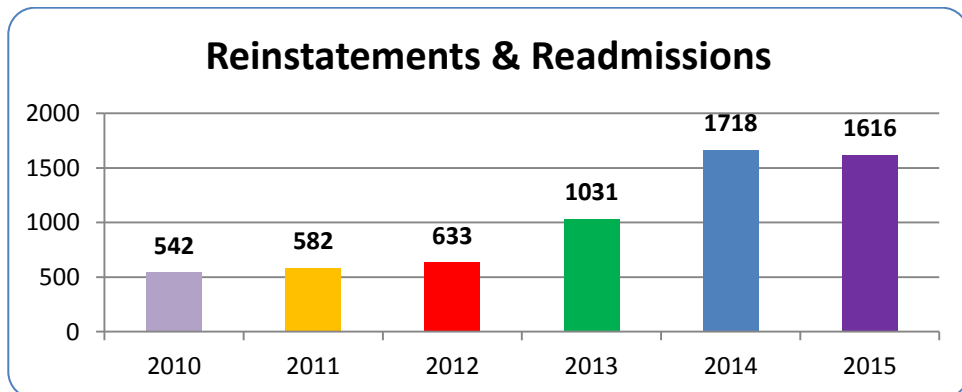
1.4 The Register

At the end of December 2015, there were 36,678 architects on the Register, compared with 35,157 at the end of 2014. This is an overall increase of 4.3%, which is the greatest annual increase this century.



1.5 Re-joining the Register

There were 1616 reinstatements and readmissions to the Register in 2015 (including 57 competency standards applications). This compares with 1718 reinstatements and readmissions to the Register in 2014. The decrease in the number of reinstatements to the Register reflects the lower number removed for non-payment of the 2015 fee.



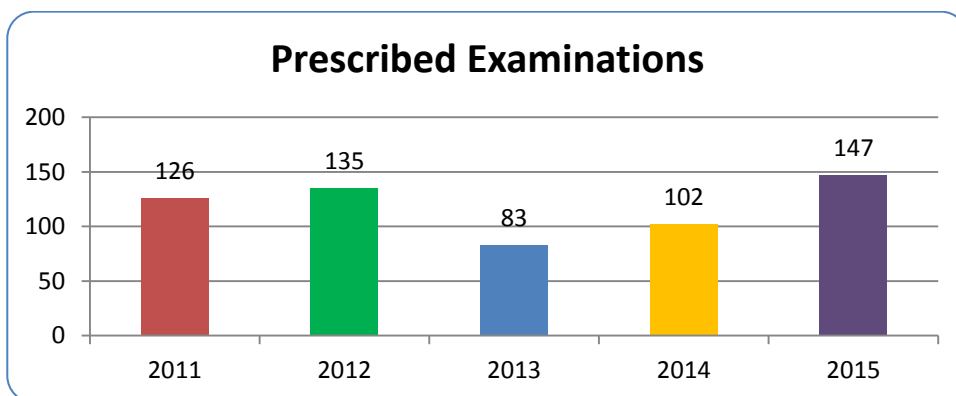
The performance target for processing reinstatements and readmissions (re-joining within 2 years) is 5 working days. 90% of applications met the performance target, up from 51% in 2014, with the average processing time going down from 6 days to 4 days.

Due to ongoing efficiencies through the online and back office systems the prescribed fee for 2015 was reduced from £30 to £20 per application.

1.6 Prescribed Examinations

147 examinations were conducted in 2015. 107 examinations were undertaken at Part 1, and 40 examinations at Part 2. The overall pass rate for 2015 was 52%, compared to 57% in 2014 and 55% in 2013.

There were three appeals - all of which were referred to the Chair of Prescription Committee in line with the requirements of the procedure. The three were disallowed by the Chair, having not met the requirements to be referred to the appeals group.

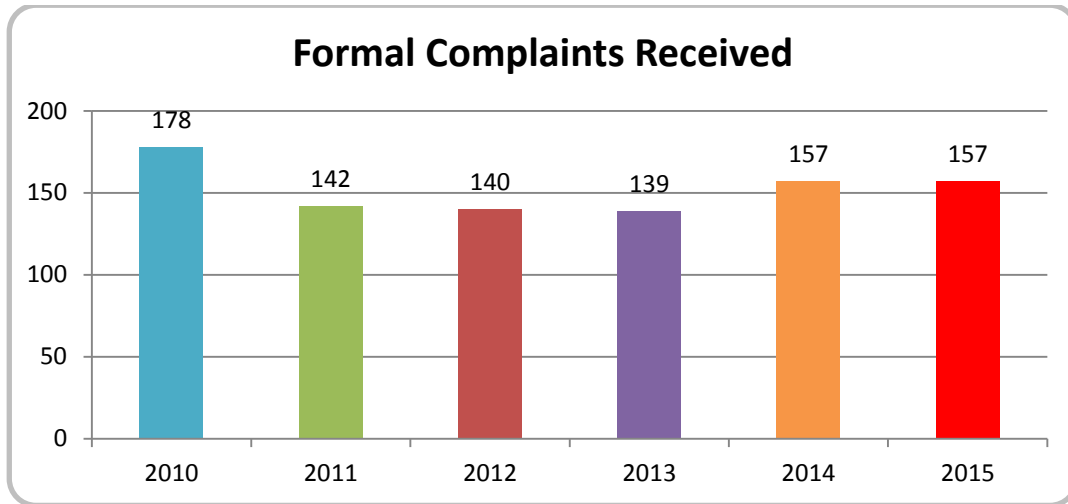


1.7 Online Registration Statistics

ARB’s online application system was introduced in 2012 and provides an online portal for all types of registration applications. Ongoing improvements have been made to the system to increase efficiency and respond to user feedback. 94% of all applications for registration were received online, an annual increase of 9% from 2014.

2. Maintaining the Standards of Conduct and Practice of Architects

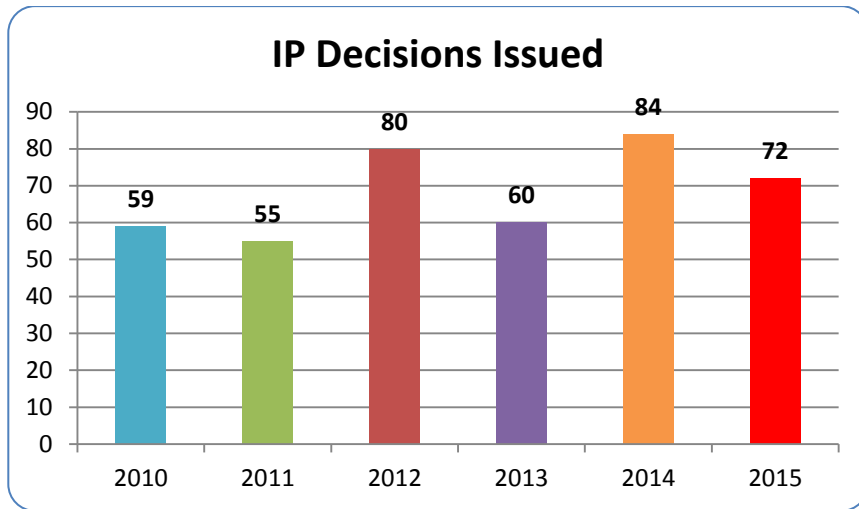
2.1 Complaints and Performance Indicators



It took an average of 9 weeks for the office to either refer a case to the Investigations Panel or to close the case in the office. The target is 16 weeks from the date the complaint is received, which was met in 94% of cases in 2015 (86% in 2014).

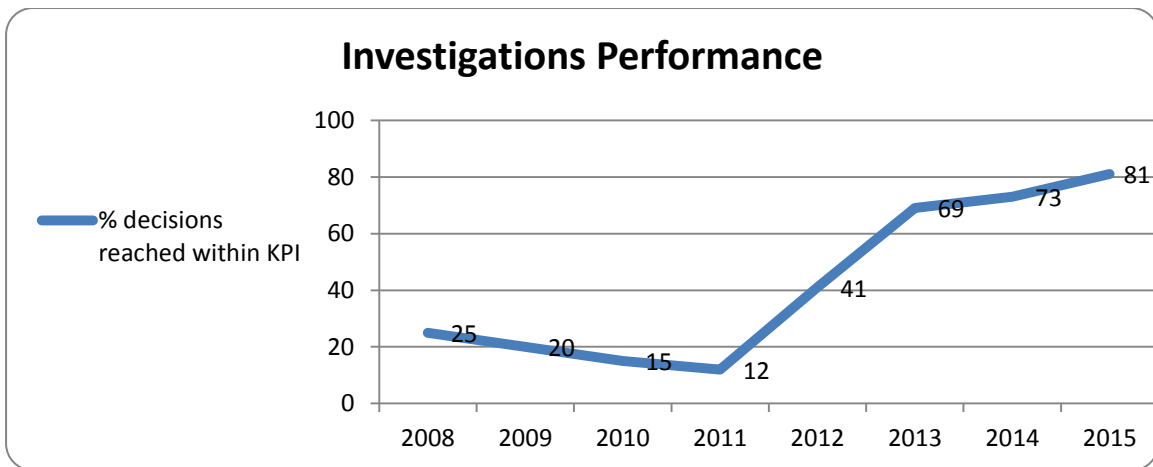
Greater use of triage has been employed in 2015 to ensure that only the more serious complaints, capable of reaching the threshold of seriousness for unacceptable professional conduct or serious professional incompetence, are referred to the Investigations Panels. This means that in excess of 60% of the complaints received by ARB are closed without the need for referral. This method reduces the burden on the Investigations Panels, manages the expectations of the parties involved, and ensures that ARB's resources are directed towards those cases that require further investigation in the public interest.

2.2 Investigations Panel (IP) Decisions and Performance Indicators

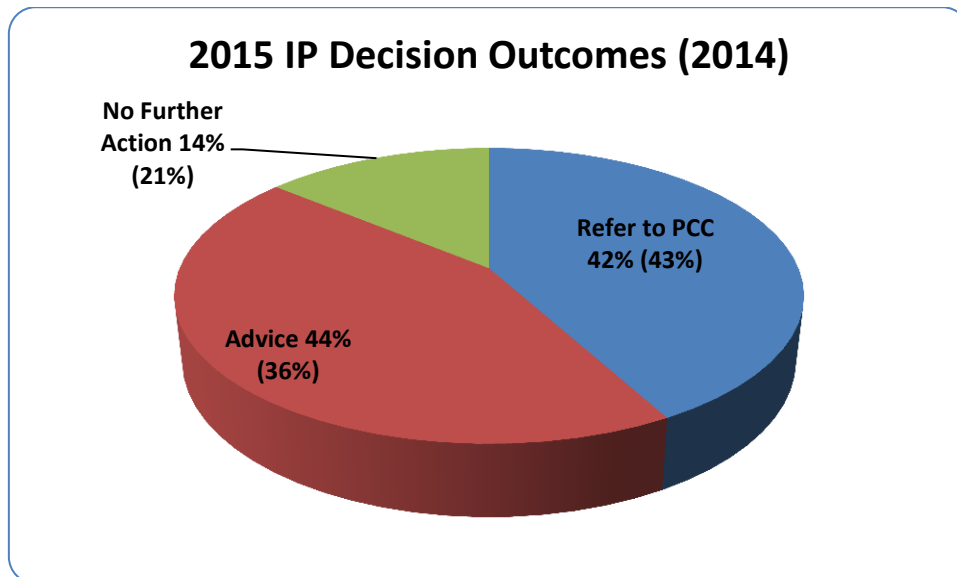


The IP took an average of 11 weeks to reach a decision in 2015, compared to 11.6 weeks in 2014. 81% of decisions were reached within the 12 week target. This is the first year in which the IP has attained its KPI of 80%. There is no ‘stop-the-clock’ provision to ARB investigations, so this stage in the proceedings is always vulnerable to third-party delays.

The performance of the Investigations Panels has improved dramatically since the Board decided to resource them using specifically appointed members.



All areas of ARB’s disciplinary processes are to be reviewed in 2016, to ensure that the systems and procedures in place are proportionate and fit for purpose.



There were no judicial reviews of the Investigations Panels' decisions and three applications for a Third Party Review (further information can be found at Section 4 of this report). One decision to refer an architect to the PCC subsequently resulted in a finding of no case to answer at the hearing.

Five decisions to refer an architect to the PCC were referred back to the Investigations Panel by ARB's solicitor for reconsideration (there were seven in 2014). This referral occurs where there are new evidential matters or points of law that the solicitor believes the Investigations Panel should reconsider. Of those five cases, one raised an additional allegation of dishonesty which the IP subsequently referred to the PCC; one raised new evidence which was referred to the PCC, and three were subsequently changed to decisions of No Further Action or Advice.

2.3 Inquirers

Inquirers were appointed on three occasions in 2015 to produce reports for the Investigations Panel. All three of those cases resulted in the IP referring the architect to the PCC.

2.4 ARB Solicitors

ARB engages four firms of solicitors to prepare and present cases to the Professional Conduct Committee. The solicitor has 12 weeks in which to prepare a report to the PCC. On average it took 11 weeks to prepare a report, and 71% of cases met the 12 week target (compared with 88% in 2014). While this area of work remains vulnerable to the co-operation of third parties in providing witness statements, the performance of all of ARB's legal providers remains subject to constant review.

2.5 Third Party Review

Third Party Review considers certain Board/ Committee/ Panel procedures that do not have a statutory appeal to the courts. Third Party Review does not revisit the original decision, but looks at whether the process was properly and correctly followed. There are two independent Third Party Reviewers.

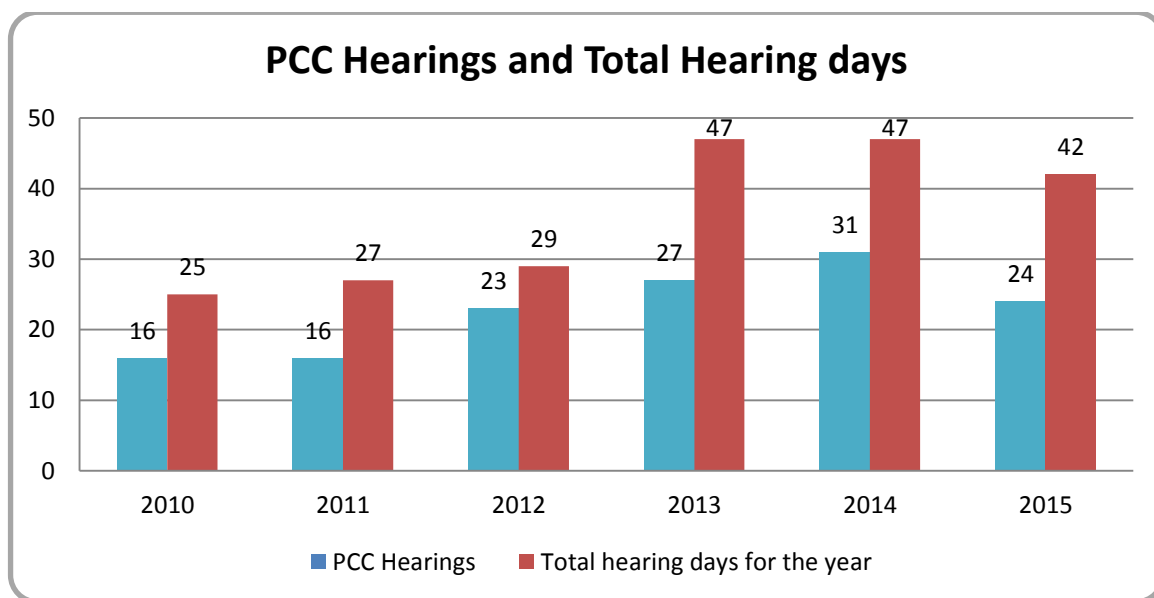
There were only two Third Party Reviews undertaken in 2015, down from five reviews in 2014 and seven in 2013. There was one further application for a Review which was refused on the grounds that it failed to identify any flaws in the procedure by which the decision was reached, which is a requirement of acceptance.

While both reviews concluded that the Investigations Panel decisions had been properly made, in one of the reviews avoidable delays were identified, and advice on future best practice when dealing with multiple respondents was offered, and accepted.

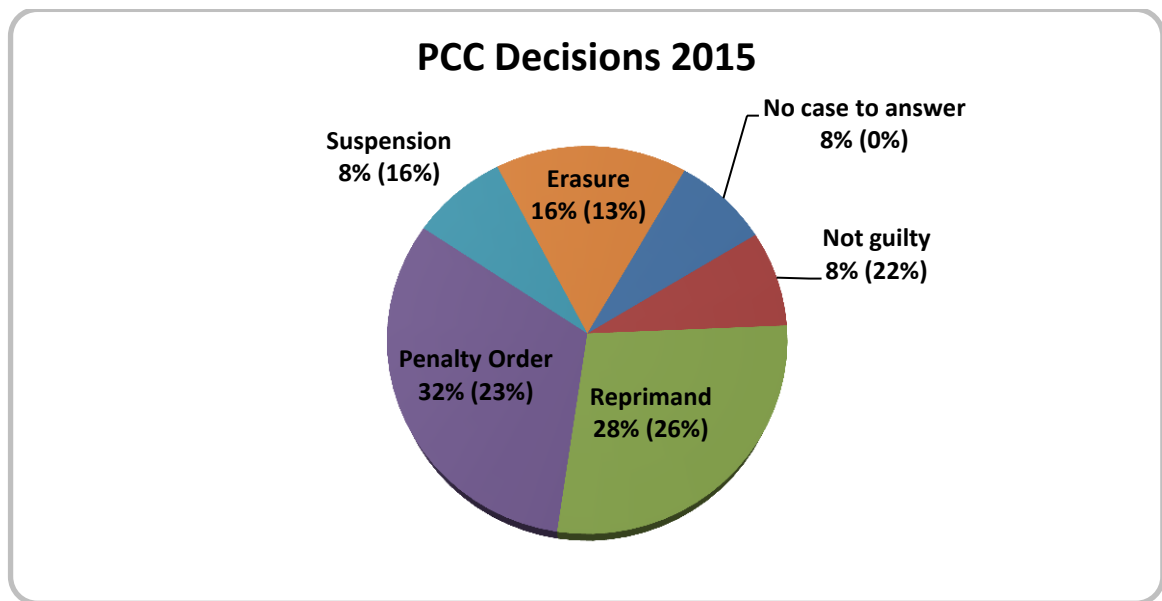
The Third Party Reviewers will submit an annual report to the Investigations Oversight Committee, which will have the opportunity to interrogate their individual reports in greater detail than the Board has time to. The Investigations Oversight Committee will then include the relevant information in its annual report to the Board in July 2016.

2.6 Professional Conduct Committee

In 2015 the PCC held 24 hearings, a 23% decrease on the number of cases heard in 2014.



At one of the hearings, the PCC heard a case concerning two architects from the same practice. In this particular case the PCC reached different decisions for each respondent so effectively reached 25 decisions although there were only 24 hearings. Of the 25 decisions, 21 architects were found guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or serious professional incompetence. The PCC determined that there was no case to answer in two cases, and two architects were found not guilty.



There were no heard statutory appeals or Judicial Reviews against any decision of the PCC in 2015.

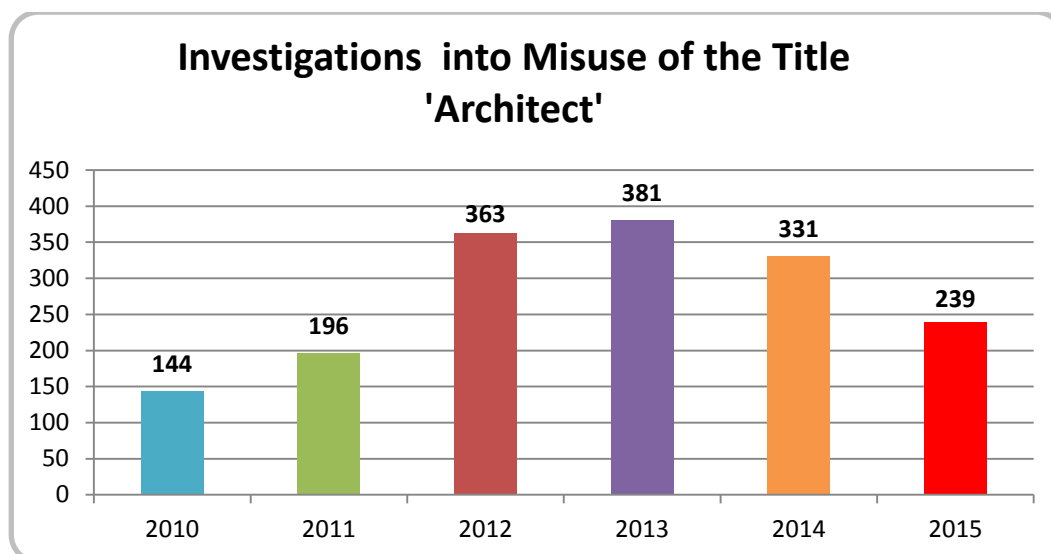
In 2015, the average cost of a Professional Conduct Committee hearing (which includes the preparation of the legal case and advocacy, cost of venue hire, and PCC member and witness/expert attendance) was approximately £16,100; a reduction on last year's £18,100 and a 20% reduction on the 2013 figure of £20,000.

The saving is partly due to the successful introduction of Consent Orders. In 2015, two cases were disposed of via this method. Further details on this can be found in the paper contained at agenda item 18 for this Board meeting.

The Chair of the PCC will be submitting his own report in person on the work of the Committee at the May Board meeting.

3. Assisting the Public to make Informed Choices

3.1 Regulation of title and performance indicators



The target for either referring a case to ARB's Solicitor or to closing it is 16 weeks. 90% of cases met this target in 2015, the same as in 2014. Work in this area is now almost exclusively internet based, and investigations have become more complicated with the proliferation of social media, online directories and other websites in which misuse of title can occur. Staff will be reviewing ARB's approach to investigations in 2016, as it is likely to be an ever increasing trend.

There were nine prosecutions completed in 2015, compared to two in 2014. All defendants were successfully convicted of breaching Section 20 Architects Act 1997. The average fine imposed by the Magistrates' Courts for prosecutions was £2,200, with an average of a further £1,920 being awarded to ARB in costs.

Of the misuse of title investigations concluded in 2015, 24% of complaints originated from members of the public. The remainder originated from architects, professional bodies, or ARB initiating its own investigations.

3.2 Use of the Register (www.architects-register.org.uk)

There has been a steady increase in the number of annual visitors to the online Register, with visits rising by 15% to almost 275,000.

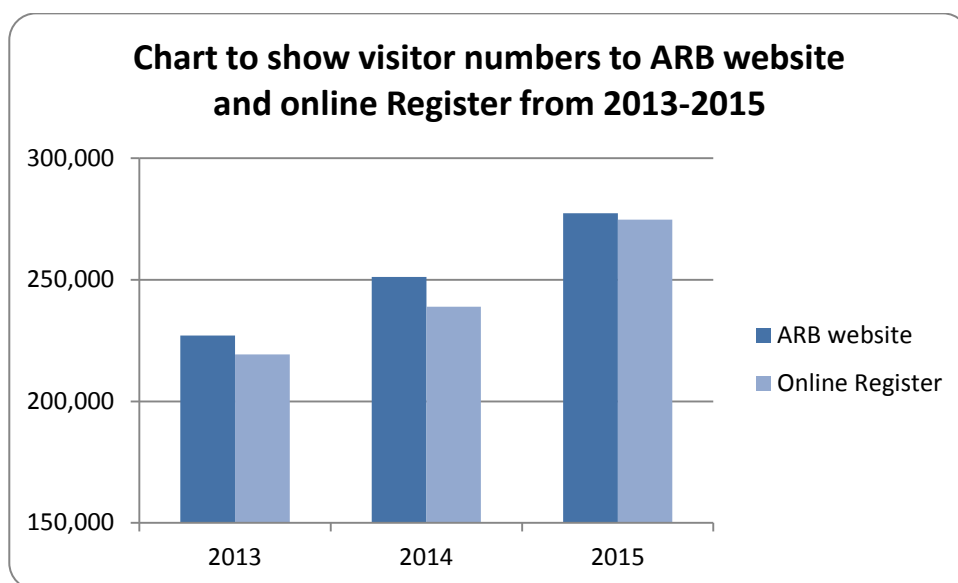
There were 382,849 individual searches of the online Register, a 12% increase from 2014. This means that the number of searches totalled over 1,000 a day. Additionally, the month to month data showed that the search traffic was steadier across 2015, with fewer peaks and troughs than previous years. The increase in searches reflects the importance of the Register as a valuable tool in providing the public with information regarding whether an individual is registered.

4. Communications

4.1 ARB website (www.arb.org.uk)

There was a 10% increase in visits to the main ARB website, up from 251,137 in 2014 to 277,387 in 2015.

The chart below shows the annual number of visits to the website and online Register between 2013 and 2015. During the last three years we have undertaken improvement work on our website and deployed resources to support the organisation with its awareness raising objectives. It is likely that these factors have impacted on the steady increase in visitors over the last three years.



Where does the web traffic come from?

ARB does not pay for any listing or online advertisements.

Google - Google continues to refer the majority of traffic to the website. Google referrals to ARB's main website in 2015 were 191,783 (up 14% on 2014) and to the online Register were 146,301 (up 12% on 2014).

Direct visitors – Direct visitor numbers are up substantially with 45,828 visitors coming to the main website directly (up 7% on 2014) and 25,959 coming directly to the online Register.

Bing and Yahoo –Bing and Yahoo are also major referrers, resulting in 13,226 and 8,374 visits to the online Register in 2015, up 41% across both search engines respectively. Visits to the main website from Bing and Yahoo were 9,385 and 2,548 in 2015, up 16% and 6% respectively.

The growth of mobile devices

Over recent years, we have noticed an increase in the numbers visiting our websites from mobile devices, from 28,368 (12.5% of all visitors) in 2013 to 54,867 (20% of all visitors) in 2015. Additionally, in 2015 Google started prioritising search results which feature mobile compatible websites. In response to this shift towards such devices, we made the retention fee payment facility mobile friendly but substantial changes are required to achieve this functionality across both the website and the online Register. Consequently, the Board has made financial provisions to undertake work in this area in 2016.

ARB logo

We continue to work to encourage architects to link to their page on the online Register and use the logo to highlight their registered status. There were over 2,700 visits to the logo download webpage in 2015, down moderately on 2014. Not only does the use of the logo signify to potential clients that the architect is a genuine one registered by ARB, but it is an excellent way of naturally enhancing ARB's standing on search engines.

4.2 Social Media

We continue to use social media to reach out directly to stakeholders. While our audiences grew steadily during 2015, we continued to adopt a conservative approach to social media, using it predominantly to signpost our audiences to our website. We recognise there is scope to adopt a more engaging approach to social media and we will review this in 2016.

The below table shows social media audience numbers as at the end of 2015 and the percentage increase this represents on the 2014 numbers.

	As at end 2015	As at end 2014	% annual increase
Twitter followers	1315	1022	29%
LinkedIn followers	1815	935	94%
Facebook likes	611	359	70%
Google+ followers	88	36	Commenced this channel in 2014

Focus group

We conducted a staff focus group to gather internal insights about our digital strategy. The views expressed by staff reinforced the points which came out of the 2014 stakeholder focus group, which concluded that whilst the content contained on the website was of a high standard, the design of the website and the terminology used hampered navigation of the site. These findings will feed into improvement work on the website in 2016.

YouTube

We launched five online videos in 2015. Three provided exam candidates with advice and guidance on the application process; one advised architects on how to avoid complaints, and another informed consumers about the online Register. All five have proved popular and these new videos alone clocked up a combined total of over 3000 views in 2015.

Online videos are an increasingly popular method of accessing advice information, and so ARB will continue to employ this media in future.

YouTube	Total views	Time watched (in hours)	Equivalent working days
2013	3658	200	29
2014	4965	253	36
2015	9728	406	58

4.3 Exhibitions

ARB exhibited at two major exhibitions aimed at consumers planning domestic construction projects. These were Grand Designs Live and the National Homebuilding and Renovating Show, both of which were held at the NEC in Birmingham. The combined total of visitor numbers for both events was over 80,000.

Consumers considering or in the process of undertaking self-build or home improvement projects are one of our major target audiences and these exhibitions provide us with an opportunity to meet directly with this important stakeholder group. At each show we speak to hundreds of visitors. We advise them on a range of subjects including how to check an architect is registered and what questions a consumer should ask at an initial meeting. We are also visited by clients who have had problems and advise them on next steps. Our speaking slot at the NEC Homebuilding and Renovating Show in 2015 was well received and we have accepted another invitation to speak at this show in April 2016.

4.4 Publications

We redesigned our eBulletins to encourage readers to view more content. We also introduced tracking information about which articles were the most popular. Key objectives from this project were to encourage architects to update their contact details and to inform architects about the Code of Conduct.

The redesign included highlighting the architects' contact details at the top of the eBulletin, which encouraged readers to update if inaccurate.

The average eBulletin circulation increased to 29,117, up 28% on the 2014 figures. Along with the redesign, this increase has been impacted on by ARB’s efforts to ensure that architects keep their contact details updated, and by the use of a new mail server.

The ‘Dear Architect’ column was launched, informing architects about their obligations under the Code of Conduct and other practice related matters. This section of the eBulletin has proved popular, and been one of the most read articles with 1270 page views. Also popular have been the articles relating to misuse of title, and the articles on prescription.

The *Meeting your Architect* form, which guides consumers through a series of questions they should ask an architect at an initial meeting with an architect, continued to be popular with the public. It was downloaded 615 times and, in addition to this, it was a popular hand-out at the exhibitions we attended, with over 1,300 hard copies distributed to consumers.

Annual Report

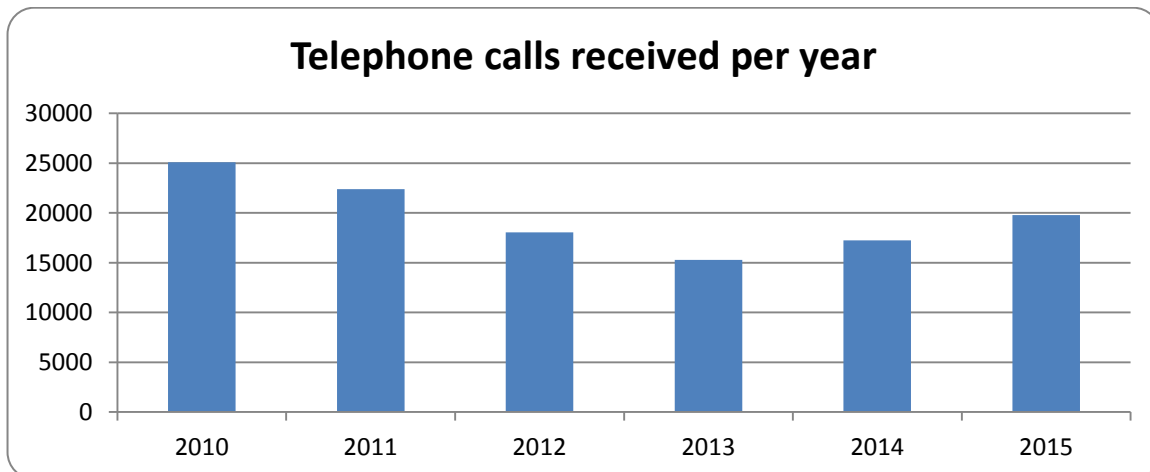
The 2014 Annual Report was published and well received; with 4,413 visits to the 2014 Report microsite in 2015, compared to 1941 in the previous year. The report is an excellent way of connecting with other audiences outside of the profession, and explaining the work we do.

Registration Route Finder Tool

The Registration Route Finder Tool, which helps registrants identify which access route applies to them, was launched in October 2014. It continues to perform well with 5,217 uses in 2015 and is a further example of harnessing technology to encourage efficiency and keep human resources to a minimum.

4.5 Telephone Calls

19,787 telephone calls were received in 2015, compared with 17,234 in 2014. People wishing to use ARB’s services are encouraged to use the online resources provided on the website; however these steps taken need to be balanced against such factors the higher profile of ARB, the growth in the Register and the impact of the Periodic Review.



4.6 Online Chat Facility

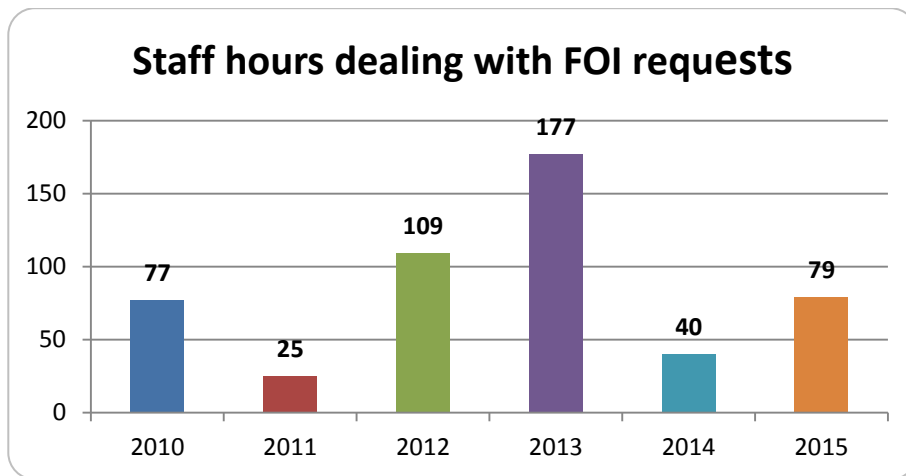
In 2012 an online facility was introduced as an alternative option for those wishing to contact ARB. In 2015 there were 982 queries, compared to 918 in 2014.

4.7 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) / Data Protection Act (DPA)

ARB received 42 requests for information under FOIA and DPA, compared to 22 in 2015.

ARB is legally required to respond to all FOIA requests within 20 working days (or 40 working days in relation to subject access requests under DPA). All but one request were responded to within the statutory timescale, and there were no complaints to the Information Commissioner. ARB's procedures for dealing with requests under FOIA and DPA were audited in 2015, with substantial assurance received.

79 staff hours were spent on dealing with 42 requests for information, most of which were from companies using the legislation to seek commercial information from ARB. The government is currently considering what steps can be taken to deal with FOIA being used in this way. A third of the requests were from one individual.



5. Human Resources

5.1 Working time lost through sickness absence during 2015

Average number of days lost through sickness absence per employee:
(Source: CIPD Absence Management: Annual Survey Report 2015)

Private sector	5.8
Public sector	8.7
Not for profit	7.8
All organisations	7.4

ARB

Including long term sickness	3.4%
Short term sickness only	1.3%

The figure for ARB (excluding long term sickness) is lower than the national average across all sectors. Low sickness absence can be an indicator of how effectively an organisation manages its people^[1].

5.2 Recruitment, retention and turnover

Median labour turnover rates by industry sector (Source: CIPD Labour Market Outlook 2015)

	All Leavers
Private sector	8 %
Public sector	10%
Not for profit	5 %
All organisations	8 %
ARB	10% (excluding fixed term contracts)

The figure for ARB staff turnover is higher than the national average across all sectors; however with such a low number of staff, any departures and recruitment will have a significant statistical impact.

Average number of staff during the year – 20

^[1] Faculty of Public Health
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6. Equality & Diversity Statistics

6.1 Information held

ARB started collecting Equality & Diversity information about those on the Register in 2012, with those entering (or re-entering) the Register are asked to provide details. In 2015 a survey was undertaken of all those on the Register² for whom no information was held, resulting in excess of 5,000 responses. This is a long-term project, and presently information is held on about 13,000 architects (some 35% of the Register).

ARB has a published target to hold information on 42% of the Register by the end of 2016, and further work will be required to interpret the data and consider how it might shape policies.

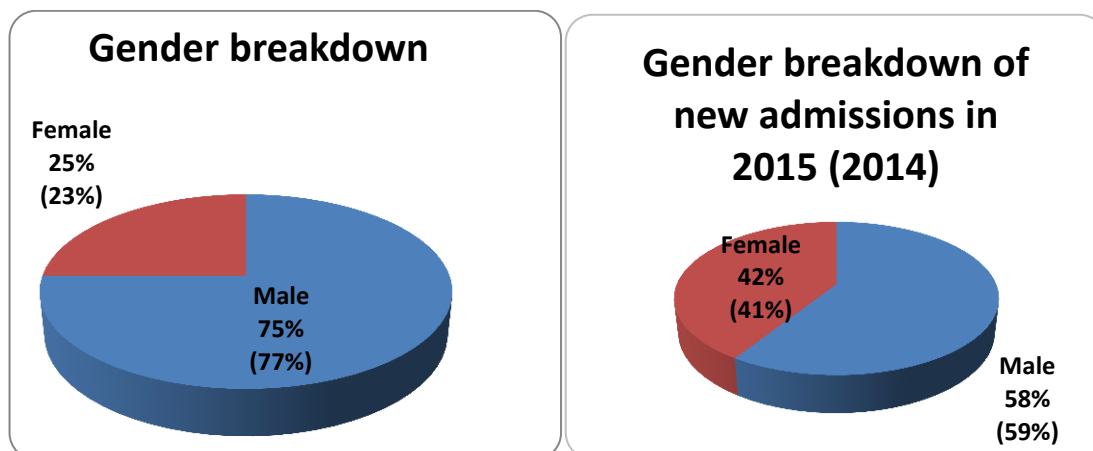
There is also an audit being currently undertaken of data arising from the last five years of professional standards complaints. The results of this audit will be reported to the Investigations Oversight Committee in detail, and subsequently fed back to the Board with analysis.

The Equality & Diversity information of prescribed exam candidates is also being collected and will be fed back to the Prescription Committee. It may be used to decide whether and policies and procedures have an impact in relation to specific characteristics.

6.2 Gender

ARB holds gender information about the entire Register.

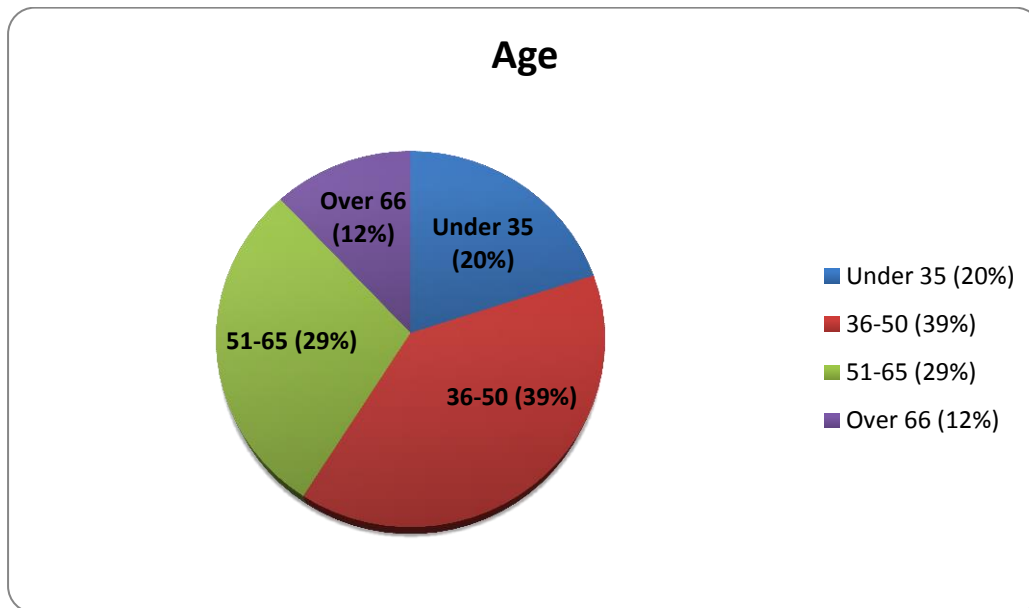
Of the 36,678 on the Register at the end of December 2015, 75% were male and 25% female. In 2014 it was 77% male and 23% female. The percentage of female architects continues to grow slowly through new admissions to the Register; five years ago the percentage split was 81%/19%.



² For whom an email address is held
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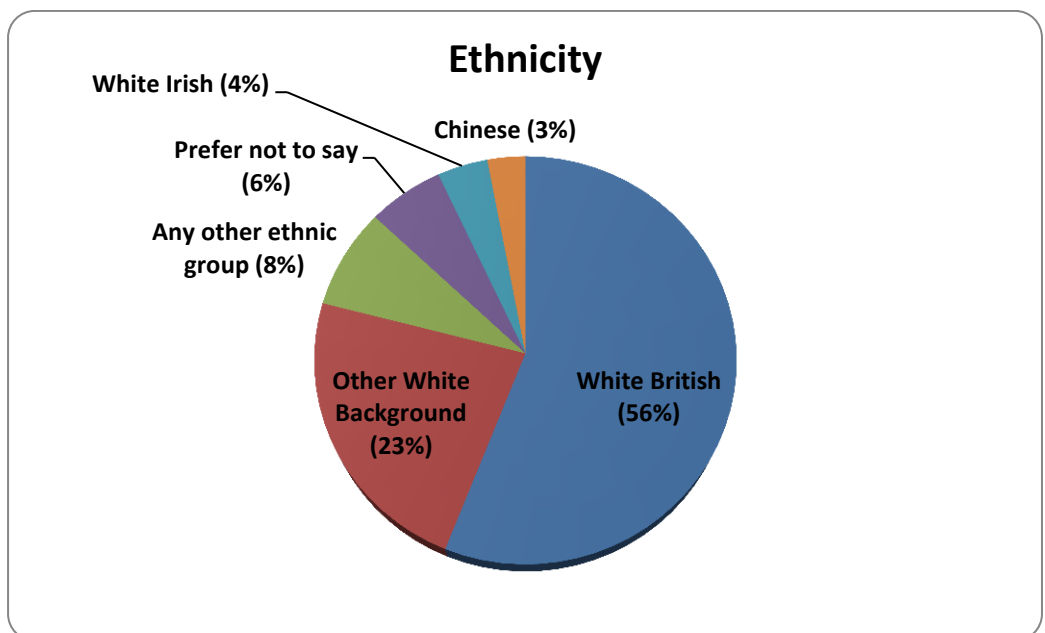
6.3 Age

ARB holds age information for all architects on the Register.



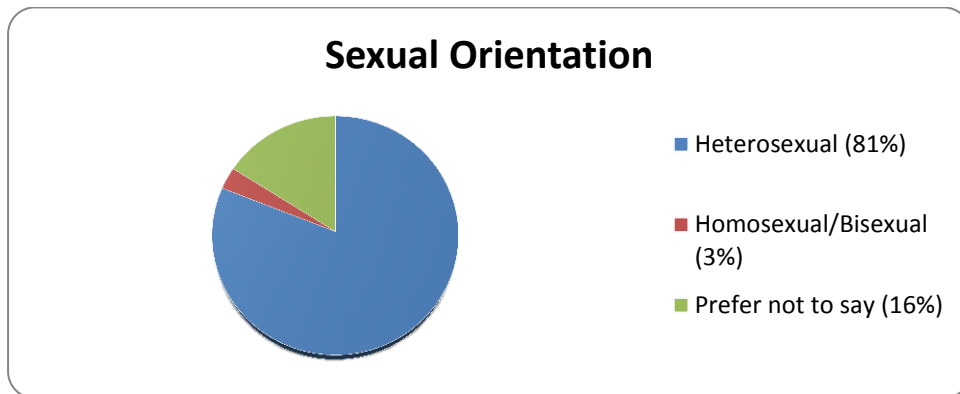
6.3 Ethnic Background

The ethnicity of architects on the Register is as shown below.

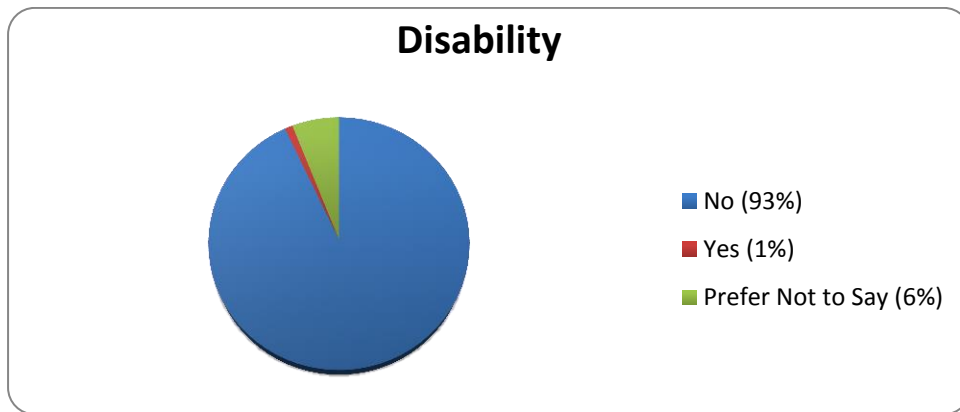


³ White British includes White English, White Welsh, White Scottish
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6.4 Sexual Orientation



6.5 Disability



6.6 Religion

