



Gender Pay Report 2024

We are pleased to report that our gender pay gap has narrowed from 36% to 32% in 2024.

The annual pay gap report allows us to take note of the progress in our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy and reflect on some of the actions we have taken and those we have planned in 2025.

Most notable in this regard has been our focus on supporting returning parents through our **enhanced maternity leave provision**. This now includes increased maternity pay and the introduction of a mentoring scheme to help navigate the transition back into the workplace following this period of leave.

Investing in qualifications and offering alternative routes to qualify remains a key part to our long-term EDI strategy. This approach helps us attract and develop talent from diverse backgrounds while working to widen access to the legal profession. In September 2024, we enrolled our first cohort of Solicitor Apprentices, all of whom progressed onto this next step in their careers having first joined the firm via paralegal or business administration apprenticeships. This year we will continue to develop our career pathways by implementing career structures and salary bands for non-qualified fee earners.

We also continue to invest in the **career pathway for our legal support staff** (introduced in 2023) and were pleased to see the promotion of 7 legal support staff during 2024. This pathway continues to provide improved career and salary prospects for our support staff, the majority of whom are women. We also introduced an **enhanced bonus scheme** this year in recognition of their valuable contribution.

We remain committed to providing **transparency and fairness in pay and bonus decisions**. In addition to the legal support bonus scheme, we recently announced enhancements to our fee earner and group services' bonus schemes. In doing so we provided greater clarity on the criteria and how these schemes work. We have shared information about how our pay framework operates with our 0-3 year PQE population, giving increased transparency and confidence in how we invest in our junior fee earners as they manage the early stages of their careers with us.

We have an exciting learning framework planned for rollout in 2025 to further support career development across all roles and additional employee benefits that reflect our ongoing efforts to support working parents and promote a healthy work-life balance.

Deborah Brumwell

HR Director

A reminder about what the gender pay gap is

The legal reporting requirements

- Gender pay gap reporting includes six measures with the 'average pay gap' being the one most widely reported.
- The average pay gap is expressed using two calculations - the median and the mean.
- The mean (average of salaries) can be quite skewed as a few very high or very low paid members of staff can affect this number.
- The median (the middle of the distribution) tends to be reported on more widely as it is a truer expression of the experience of the typical man and woman.
- The quartile measure divides the employee population into four. It is expressed as a percentage of gender in each quartile and is used to see if men and women are paid equally in each quartile.
- The average bonus gap is calculated using mean and median.
- The final measure looks at the proportion of women to men receiving a bonus.

The results

This is the eighth year that we have reported on our gender pay gap and the results for 2024 are detailed [HERE](#). The gender pay gap is based on the snapshot date of 5th April 2024.

Our gender pay gap has reduced with a median of 32%. The mean remained relatively static (28.9%) in April 2024. Please note the salary used in these calculations does not include the proportion of your salary that you sacrifice (e.g. childcare vouchers/pension/electric vehicles etc.) which can skew this statutory measure.

The median hourly pay for females increased by 14% compared to 5% for males. The introduction of the legal support career pathways and our pay framework has realised increases in junior fee earner and support staff salaries, where the highest proportion of staff are female. This is a pleasing result as a key focus for the firm has been creating a clear pay framework for Heads of Teams to ensure consistency in pay decisions across teams.

This year our median bonus gap is 9.61% compared to -5.3% in 2023. This is mostly attributed to the way we paid the mid-year one-off bonus in the last two years. In November 2023, we paid one week's additional pay to all staff capped at £1000 compared to the fixed amount that was distributed in the previous year, with a higher amount paid to lower earners in response to the energy cap crisis. The previous arrangement generally favoured support staff, which are predominantly women, and the change in approach is therefore reflected in this year's bonus gap figures.

Recruitment

- 'Direct' (non-agency) recruitment continues to result in more balanced male/female hiring (73% female, 10% of which are senior hires). We have invested in and built out our own internal recruitment team as we believe they are best able to authentically convey our values and reach out to a wider demographic than can often be achieved with indirect/agency hiring.
- Similarly, we have worked with our recruitment leads in fee earning teams to develop a clear proposition, giving greater clarity to candidates about the team and the culture of the firm.
- We have developed our senior hiring policy for partners, ensuring we create a fair, rigorous and unbiased process on new partner hires.
- We have also worked with Heads of Teams to have a more geographically based approach to seat rotations ensuring that we are representative of the local demographic, allowing for greater flexibility for trainees with parental responsibilities.

Promotions

- The introduction of the Promotion Consideration Group, providing support and mentorship on the journey to partner, provides a more inclusive gateway to equity progression. We are realising the positive effects of this in the number of Salaried and C Partner promotions in 2024. The split of female to male across all levels of partners is a relatively even 50/50 split.
- The new appraisal process launched in 2024 introduced dedicated career planning conversations. Alongside the revised objective setting and competency frameworks, these career conversations will give greater transparency on the promotion criteria and the steps required to achieve career goals.
- We continue to remain focused on our proposition development for junior lawyers, delivering a further 2 events in the second year of our 0-3 year PQE mentoring programme. Building on the success of these events, we developed the programme by offering 'mentor matching' for those requiring 121 mentoring from this group. Our mentoring programmes have expanded to encompass, Fast Track and those on the Partnership Pathway where individuals are matched with mentors to support their development.
- Our investment in routes to qualification continues to provide flexibility for individuals to pursue career progression and promotion in a way that suits them. In September 2024 we enrolled our first cohort of Solicitor Apprentices and continue to provide support to those pursuing the new Cilex CPQ and Licensed Conveyancer qualifications via apprenticeships.

Part time/Flexible working

- We remain committed to our Smart Working approach as it continues to provide our staff with flexibility to balance their home life with their career. In April 2024, 15% of those promoted were part-time working employees.
- We have also enhanced our support package for parents returning to work from parental leave, including an additional payment and mentoring to support with their transition back to work.



Next Steps

Recruitment

- We will continue to invest in our direct recruitment plans with a dedicated headhunting resource in the recruitment team for senior hiring. We will ensure that candidates have clarity on our offering and extend our online presence on relevant platforms to increase our engagement with GenZ and Millennials.
- We will also focus on schools' outreach, engaging with a variety of schools and colleges to promote careers in the legal sector.

Promotion/Progression

- We continue to develop our routes to qualification, aligning the promotion criteria for Cilex qualified lawyers progressing to Associate.
- We are providing additional support for those pursuing the SQE professional qualifications via study leave and funding.
- We will deliver our new learning framework which will help equip individuals with the competencies and skills required to be successful in their current and future roles.
- Since 2023 we have offered international secondment opportunities in Dublin, Madrid and Australia. These secondments offer a unique learning experience as a lawyer working in a foreign jurisdiction and exposure to different cultures. In 2025, we are offering a new opportunity in Toronto.
- We will implement career structures and salary bands for non-qualified fee earners, setting out the criteria and standards of performance required for each level.

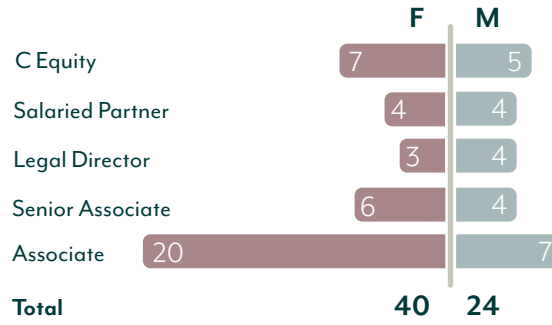
Flexible working

- We recently announced new benefits for 2025 as part of our ongoing efforts to promote a healthy work-life balance and support our staff and working parents both professionally and personally. These benefits include enhancements to our family leave provision and increased holiday entitlement.
- We will work with our recruitment leads to be authentic about what we say to our new recruits about what to expect, including around flexible working.

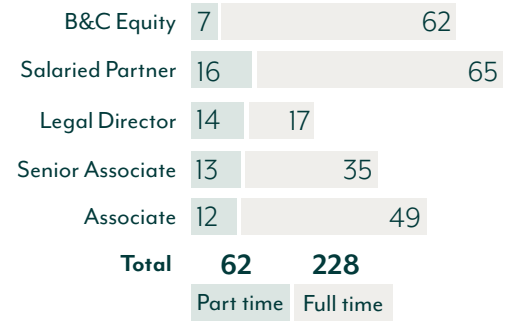
Recruitment

Number of Hires		
	Partners	Other
F	5	113
M	7	35

Career Progression



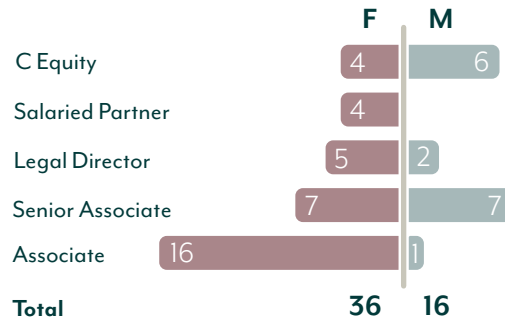
Part time working



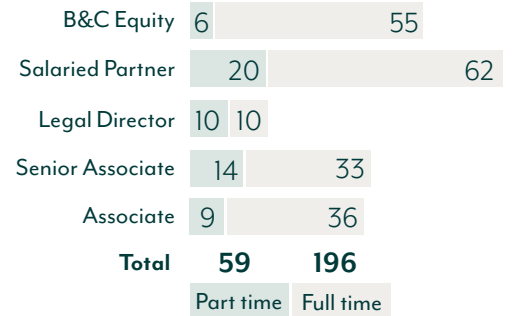
Recruitment

Number of Hires		
	Partners	Other
F	2	115
M	3	50

Career Progression



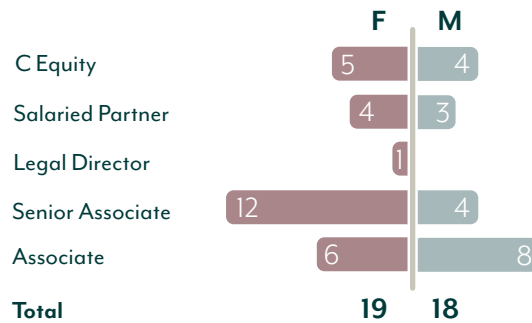
Part time working



Recruitment

Number of Hires		
	Partners	Other
F	8	136
M	6	53

Career Progression



Part time working

