

Gender Pay Report 2023



We are reporting that our gender pay gap has not widened (36%) since 2022. We remain committed to focussing on this and more broadly our wider EDI strategy. We believe we have made good progress on our EDI strategy this year with the changes to our maternity leave provision as well as the launch of the solicitor apprenticeship scheme.

We continue to develop our recruitment systems and processes to position ourselves in the market as an employer that values authenticity, and invests in our people regardless of level and role. The most notable successes are the introduction of Eploy, blind screening for support staff and recruitment leads in fee earning teams.

We continue to invest in our support staff and embrace alternative routes, and sponsoring qualifications (CILEX/CPQ, CLC, SQE) that make careers in our sector more accessible for people from diverse backgrounds.

We are providing more transparency on pay and recently gave greater clarity to our 0-3 year PQE group about how our pay decisions are made. In addition we announced the new bonus scheme in 2023 which is based on clear and transparent criteria and will ensure we have a fair and consistent approach to distribution of bonus.

We have an exciting range of initiatives planned for 2024 including mentoring for staff returning from maternity leave and a training programme specific to the needs of our support staff.

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 seventh year that we have reported on our gender pay gap and the results for 2023 are detailed [HERE](#). The gender pay gap is based on the snapshot date of 5th April 2023.

Our gender pay gap has remained relatively static with a median of 36%. There has been a moderate rise in the mean (2%) in April 2023, attributable to a greater number of women participating in salary sacrifice. The salary used in these calculations does not include the proportion of your salary that you sacrifice to childcare vouchers/pension/electric vehicles etc.

In April 2023 we introduced the Senior Legal Support role creating a more defined career pathway for those in legal support roles. 47 women were promoted as part of this process. Although this has improved the career and salary prospects of our support staff, the majority of our support staff are women, and this factor continues to skew this statutory measure.

This year for the first time our median bonus gap (-5.3%) indicates that men have received a lower amount of bonus than women. In October 2022 all staff received an energy bonus in recognition of the rising energy prices with a higher sum being paid to those who are lower earners. This will have had an impact on the bonus gap this year as those in the lower quartiles are mostly women.

Progress against our own measures

Recruitment

In 2023, our own recruitment team continued to develop more diverse ways of finding talent including the launch of the LinkedIn Life page and secretarial blind screening. We also introduced Eploy and the role of recruitment leads in fee earning teams which has enabled us to build a wider pool of candidates to recruit from.

'Direct' (non-agency) recruitment continues to result in more balanced male/female hiring at 69% female. We have also worked to develop a list of preferred agency suppliers, training them on our proposition, and EDI strategy, and this is having a positive effect on the number of females hired via an agency. We have also introduced a senior hiring policy for partners ensuring we create a fair, rigorous and unbiased process on new partner hires.

Promotions

We continue to see the impact of the introduction of the Promotion Consideration Group with increased rigour and support to salaried partner and fast track candidates. All of our salaried partner promotions in 2023 were women, 5 out of the 7 promotions to Legal Director were also female. We are seeing a strong ratio of females to males 16:1 being promoted to Associate. We continue to remain focused on our proposition development for these junior lawyers with the introduction of our mentoring programme and HCR covenant.

Continuing to invest in multiple routes to qualification provides flexibility for individuals to pursue career progression and promotion in a way that suits them. Promotions to Associate and Senior Associate in April 2023 had the biggest mix of alternative qualifications to date with 4 individuals holding Cilex, Cost lawyer, Trade Mark Attorney or HR qualifications and a further 4 having cross qualified via Cilex.

We continue to see increased female progression into the equity with 42% of our equity partners at every level comprising of females in April 2023.

Part time/Flexible working

We promoted 8 part-time employees in the relevant reporting year (October 2022 and April 2023) and continue to enhance our support package for parents returning to work from parental leave. We remain committed to our Smart Working approach as it continues to provide working parents with flexibility to balance their home life with their career.

Next Steps

Recruitment

We will be working with Heads of Teams to have a more geographically based approach to seat rotations ensuring that we are representative of the local demographic. This will allow for greater flexibility for trainees with parental responsibilities.

Promotion/Progression

Following the success of the 0-3 PQE mentoring events, we will hold these again this year ensuring we use the time to support our solicitors with useful personal development on the day as well as the opportunity to have 121 mentoring following the event.

We are working with our CILEX lawyers to enable them to progress their qualifications with the introduction of CPQ in 2023 and we will be sponsoring both internal and external future trainees on their SQE qualifications.

We will be reducing the waiting time for paralegals to start their training contract. From September 2024 they will only have to wait 1 year from successful completion of the assessment centre. We will also welcome the first cohort of solicitor apprentices in 2024 and will provide support to ensure their future success.

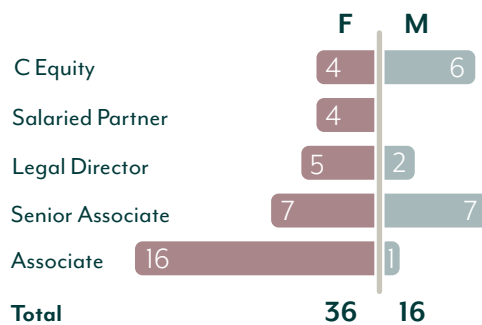
Flexible working

In October 2023 we announced a number of changes to our family friendly policies. As part of the second phase of enhancements we have committed to introducing a 'Maternity Mentoring' scheme for those returning to work after a period of maternity or adoption leave. This programme will provide guidance when returning from maternity or adoption leave to support staff transitioning back into work smoothly. It will give women an outlet for discussion and to ask questions they might not feel comfortable sharing with their line manager.

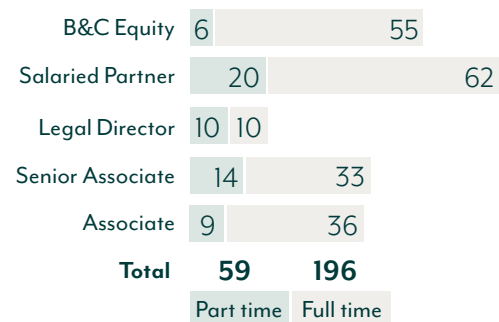
Recruitment

Number of Hires		
	Partners	Other
F	2	115
M	3	50

Career Progression



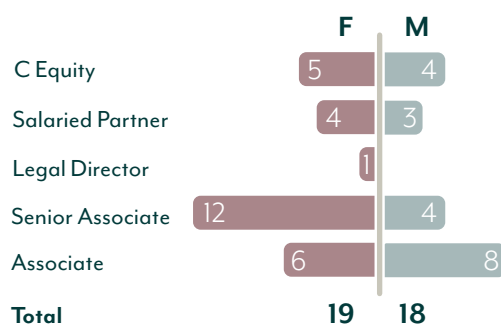
Part time working



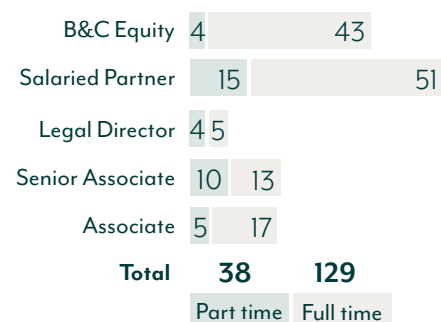
Recruitment

Number of Hires		
	Partners	Other
F	8	136
M	6	53

Career Progression



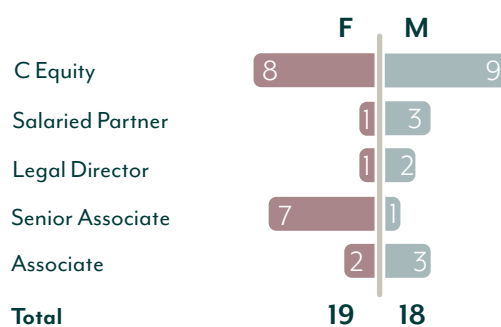
Part time working



Recruitment

Number of Hires		
	Partners	Other
F	6	48
M	12	12

Career Progression



Part time working

