



Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)

Contents

Our approach to DEI	01
Our DEI journey	02
Gender	04
Disabilities and conditions	06
LGBTQ+	07
Race and ethnicity	08
Social mobility	11
Working families and carers	14
Measuring our Impact	15
Awards, accreditations and pledges	16

Our approach to DEI

At Browne Jacobson, our goal is to build a law firm that reflects the society we serve. We're committed to building a diverse and inclusive culture where everyone's voice and individual experience is welcomed. Our diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) journey has driven a meaningful cultural shift – educating our workforce, shaping the firm's demographics and creating a clear differentiator from our competitors, which in turn has offered broader opportunities for success. Our efforts have been recognised externally and have formed the basis of much collaborative work with clients.

Our people make us who we are. We remain committed to creating a culture where everyone feels their voice is heard and their contribution is valued, where we celebrate our different identities and backgrounds and where we provide the tools for everyone to reach their potential and thrive. DEI is at the heart of who we are and is driven by our senior leadership team, our DEI networks (Employee Resource Groups) and external stakeholders; it is embedded in our values (fair and inclusive), and fostered across our firm through policy, processes, education, advocacy and allyship. When we launched our DEI strategy in 2021, we set out to translate our values into measurable outcomes and to expand our remit as a law firm at the forefront of society's biggest issues.

We recognised the work ahead and took a proactive approach to creating an environment where people can be authentic in the workplace.

Real progress requires discipline and accountability. That's why we treat DEI with the same rigour as any other business priority – setting clear goals, sharing them publicly, measuring impact through data, and holding ourselves to account. Led by our dedicated DEI SteerCo, made up of senior leaders across our DEI networks, our approach brings together voices from across the firm to shape initiatives that drive change and deliver tangible outcomes. Through these efforts, we're building a law firm that truly reflects the society we serve.

We believe that lasting change will only be realised when senior level jobs are accessible to all and when opportunities to develop and progress are transparent, fair, and open to everyone, regardless of background. We have set diversity targets of a minimum of 50% female (43% as of May 2025) and 12% UK ethnic minority partners (8% as of May 2025) by 2026.

Our approach to DEI and achieving our diversity targets takes an intersectional approach which includes:

- Building greater gender representation and equity.
- Fostering racial and ethnic inclusion.
- Supporting working families and those with caring responsibilities.

- Championing people with disabilities and long-term conditions.
- Fostering LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- Unlocking the power of social mobility.

We are dedicated to advancing DEI and social mobility within the firm and across our profession. We place a strong emphasis on wellbeing and the uniqueness of each individual, creating an environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

To support our ambitions, we have made further investment in expanding our DEI, social mobility and employee engagement teams, who are solely focused on advancing our plans to enhance inclusion, promote social mobility, and improve employee engagement across the firm and the wider legal profession.

At a time when the evolving legal and cultural landscape has led many companies to reassess their DEI strategies, our core objective is unchanged: we remain committed to fostering an inclusive, diverse and equitable workplace that drives innovation, improves decision-making, and enhances our engagement with clients.



Caroline Green
Senior Partner & DEI
Strategy SteerCo Co-chair



Bridget Tatham
Partner & DEI Strategy
SteerCo Co-chair



Oliver Holmes
Head of Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion

Our DEI journey

2016/
2017

- Removed minimum A-level grade requirements for training contracts.
- Introduced gender pay gap reporting.

2020

- Introduced ethnicity pay gap reporting.

2021

- Dedicated DEI team established.
- Launched our FAIRE (Fairer Access Into Real Experience) annual virtual event to 7,000+ students.
- Launched DEI leadership learning programme for all partners and legal directors.
- Introduced disability pay gap reporting.

2022

- Launched our REACH (Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) mentoring programme pilot.
- Introduced social mobility pay gap reporting.

2023

- Established a dedicated social mobility team.
- Disability Confident Employer accredited (Level 2).
- Launched DEI KTP with University of Nottingham and Innovate UK.

2024

- Firm wide roll out of mandatory Conscious Inclusion and Anti-racism training.
- Disability Confident Leader (Level 3) accredited.
- Ranked top employer in Social Mobility Employer Index.
- Expanded DEI team to build an employee engagement function.

2025

- Equalised our parental leave policies
- Launched our DEI strategy 2025 – 2028.
- Launched our “Social Mobility incubator” series.



Gender

The legal profession still has work to do on gender equality, with women representing just 37% of partners across UK law firms (SRA, November 2024) despite the fact that 62% of solicitors are women. We're driving meaningful progress within our firm by focusing on creating lasting change through fostering understanding and engagement at every level.

43%

of our partners are female.

We are proud signatories to the Law Society's Women in Law Pledge and are committed to supporting the progression of women into senior roles in the profession, focusing on retention and promotion opportunities.

As of May 2025, 43% of our partners were female – a figure that exceeds industry averages – but we are striving for sustainable gender balance that better reflects the UK demographic. To close the gender pay gap and achieve our target of at least 50% female representation in partner roles by 2026, we are implementing a range of initiatives to recruit, retain and progress women at all levels, including:

- **Anonymised job applications** to remove names and genders in recruitment, helping to avoid unconscious bias in our processes.
 - Ensuring our recruitment and promotion panels are **gender-balanced**, with all interviewers having completed training on conscious inclusion to better understand how bias can potentially impact an interview outcome.
 - Conducting **regular equal pay audits** to ensure like-for-like roles are paid equally.
 - Continuing to monitor and publish our **gender pay gap report**, using data to understand and address any pay gaps, while focusing on engaging, progressing and retaining women.
 - Enhancing our **wellbeing strategy** to support challenges around menstruation and menopause.
 - Continuing to advance our **family-friendly leave policies** to support working parents, offering benefits that go above regulatory requirements.
- We also recognise that improving gender outcomes requires a nuanced and intersectional approach. True gender equity extends beyond focusing solely on women, acknowledging that individuals of all genders, including men, non-binary, and transgender people face unique challenges and barriers. In line with this understanding, our Gender network actively organises a range of events, such as webinars for International Men's Day and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. These events aim to explore the concept of gender from multiple perspectives, fostering a more inclusive approach.

“Gender equity within the legal sector is fundamentally integral to the very fabric of justice itself, and ensures that our advice has the most impact possible. When the legal profession mirrors the diversity of the society it serves, it enhances the legitimacy of the legal system, enriches perspectives, and strengthens the rule of law for everyone.”

Anja Beriro, Partner & Gender and Working Families Sponsor



Disabilities and conditions

Our DEI strategy champions accessibility for those with visible and non-visible disabilities, neurodiversity and long-term health conditions.

We value the unique contributions of all our people and aspire to build a culture where everyone's individual strengths, abilities and contributions are valued and celebrated.

In 2024, we were proud to be accredited Disability Confident Level 3 (Leader) in recognition of our continued commitment to improving accessibility and fostering a disability-friendly workplace.

We've introduced several measures to support disability inclusion, including:

- **Inclusive hiring practices:** Ensuring our job advertisements are accessible, making sure tailored adjustments are available for interviews and assessments, and providing targeted DEI training for hiring teams.
- **Onboarding:** Providing new joiners with clear information about available support for disabilities and conditions, while equipping managers with the tools to discuss and implement reasonable adjustments and assistive technology.
- **Accessibility:** Expanding assistive technology solutions, improving workplace adjustments, and collaborating with our Disability and conditions network to ensure that training, processes and systems are accessible.
- **Sign language training:** Providing British Sign Language (BSL) training for front-of-house and events teams, and introducing BSL coffee mornings across our offices for those who want to learn.
- **Flexible working policies:** Supporting flexible schedules, remote working, and modified job duties tailored to individual needs.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborating with the Business Disability Forum to stay aligned with best practices and drive continual improvement.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Continuing to publish voluntarily our disability pay gap to work towards narrowing any disability pay and employment gaps.

By working closely with our Disability and conditions network, we're committed to representing individuals throughout our firm consistently. This collaboration helps us to refine our policies and processes, placing a strong emphasis on accessibility.



LGBTQ+

We believe everyone should feel confident and free to come to work authentically, and we are committed to fostering a culture that supports and celebrates this.

Our Pride network plays an important role in creating an inclusive and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ employees and allies in the firm. They raise awareness of LGBTQ+ issues, rights, and experiences within the workplace, helping to educate the firm on the importance of respecting all sexual orientations and gender identities. We observe key events such as LGBTQ+ History Month, Pride Month, Lesbian Visibility Week and Transgender Day of Visibility.

The network has also played an important role in collaboration with our People team to advise on and help implement policies that ensure equality and protection for LGBTQ+ employees. This has included policies on non-discrimination, health benefits, and gender-neutral facilities.

We are building stronger inclusion by:

- Avoiding the use of gender-specific language in our **job descriptions and employment advertising** – we are also extending this to our promotional content and processes to foster a more inclusive approach across all communications.
- Making **pronoun badges** available to those who choose to wear one.
- Ensuring our **email signatures** have the voluntary option for individuals to include their pronouns.
- Highlighting **LGBTQ+ role models** across the firm through storytelling and internal campaigns that inspire awareness and visibility.
- Promoting **intersectionality** by ensuring our initiatives support under-represented sections of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Having a **transitioning at work policy** that better supports transgender colleagues and creates a more inclusive environment.
- Recognising the **diversity of families** in all our family policies to ensure equality across all family structures.



Beyond the workplace, we engage with the wider community through volunteering, partnerships with LGBTQ+ organisations, and participation in events like Pride.

As a founding partner of the East Midlands LGBTQ+ alliance network, we are working with local businesses, organisations, and community groups to create meaningful change beyond our own firm.

Race and ethnicity

Despite there being a steady increase in the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic lawyers in law firms (14% in 2015 to 19% in 2023), there are still huge disparities. Only 3% of lawyers are Black and just 15% of Partners come from minority ethnic backgrounds (SRA 2024 data).

As proud signatories of the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter, we are committed to implementing strategic plans that attract, retain, and develop our people in an equitable way.

Our REACH (Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) network plays an important role in fostering increased understanding and allyship, while helping its members feel included and supported by the wider business. The community have created a space to share experiences, challenges and achievements and have been invaluable in offering actionable feedback that helps us evaluate, measure and shape key policies, processes and initiatives.

Currently, 8% (May 2025) of our partners have shared they are from a minority ethnic background. We have set an initial target to have 12% minority ethnic representation in our leadership by 2026.

We're taking action by:

- Committing to our **leadership target ambitions**, using them to support decisions on how we should focus our efforts to achieve the biggest impact.
- Addressing the underrepresentation of Black lawyers in the profession by **delivering meaningful initiatives** such as the REACH mentoring programme, to help diversify the legal sector and remove barriers to entry.



- Delivering **mandatory anti-racism training** that addresses topics such as microaggressions and allyship, and raises awareness of privilege.
- Continuing to **publish data**, including our ethnicity pay gap report, to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Delivering on our **Race at Work Charter commitments**.
- Continuing to **collaborate with external organisations** to stay close to best practice.
- Using **anonymised CVs** to help remove any potential bias and barriers in the recruitment process.
- Using **data** in regular equal pay audits, as well as people processes to help drive equitable behaviours.
- Using the **REM Trailblazers accreditation** to help embed equitable processes and build employee engagement.

8%

of our partners are from an ethnic minority background.

“As a business, we are committed to building an inclusive and diverse pipeline of talent, where Black lawyers are not only provided with a level playing field but are equipped with tools and interventions to place them on an equitable and just footing with their peers.”

Bridget Tatham, Partner and REACH programme sponsor



REACH mentoring programme

Case study

“Thank you for allowing us to support the programme this year and to the mentees for allowing us to be a part of their journey. I can’t recommend the REACH programme enough - I’ve not come across a better scheme supporting aspiring black lawyers!”

Tayyab Majeed, Head of Legal, Commercial, BUPA

Any aspiring lawyer, regardless of their race, should have equal access to a career in the legal profession.

However, it’s far from being a fair and level playing field, and individuals from the Black community are still hugely underrepresented in the legal profession.

As of 2024, just 3% of lawyers in the UK are Black. We developed a highly targeted solution in response to a very clear and specific problem.

Our REACH mentoring programme has two clear aims:

1. To significantly increase the career prospects of aspiring Black lawyers.
2. To create a sustainable pipeline of Black talent from which we and other firms can hire our future lawyers, as well as supporting ethnic diversity targets that organisations have set.

The programme offers:

- Six months of 1:1 mentoring with lawyers from the REACH network
- Paid in-person work experience at one of our UK offices.
- Bespoke masterclasses and skills-building sessions, covering wellbeing and resilience, personal branding, presentation skills, routes into law, and meeting client expectations.

- Opportunities for mentees to strengthen their CVs, expand professional networks, build confidence, and develop practical skills that lay the groundwork for lifelong success.
- Access to some of the UK’s highest-profile Black legal role models (including I. Stephanie Boyce and Shaun Wallace).

Through the REACH mentoring programme, we’re creating meaningful pathways for Black professionals in the legal sector. Our approach goes beyond a short-term placement, supporting participants to build sustainable careers and progress within the profession.

Social mobility

At Browne Jacobson, we are passionate about levelling the playing field for those who wish to enter the legal profession, breaking down barriers that have historically limited access for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

55%

of our training contract offers went to students from non-Russell Group universities.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCAD), only one in ten¹ students from less affluent backgrounds achieve career success comparable to their wealthier peers, with the attainment gap growing year by year. We are determined to address these systemic inequalities and unlock potential that might otherwise go untapped.

Our approach to inclusive recruitment

In 2016, we removed minimum academic grade requirements for all roles across the firm and anonymised application forms to eliminate unconscious bias. This approach allows us to look beyond traditional academic benchmarks and focus on the unique skills and experiences candidates bring.

We use RARE's contextual recruitment system to assess candidates' achievements in the context of their personal circumstances, ensuring fairer,

more nuanced decision making. These changes have dramatically expanded our talent pool and opened doors for exceptional candidates who might have been overlooked.

Our progress tells a clear story. In 2016, none of our training contract offers went to students from non-Russell Group universities; today, that figure stands at 55% – demonstrating our commitment to creating real opportunities for talented individuals, regardless of their background.

Extending our reach

To support the next generation of lawyers in a meaningful way, we are committed to nurturing talent from the early stages of education through to employment.

Our outreach strategy has evolved to include virtual events, removing geographical barriers and allowing us to engage with students across the UK. We focus on schools in 'cold spots' – regions identified by the Social Mobility Commission as having limited social progress and career opportunities

– delivering presentations that offer guidance on pursuing legal careers, writing CVs, and navigating the recruitment process.

As signatories to the Social Mobility Pledge, we actively participate in mentoring and alumni schemes aimed at students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including initiatives like the Law Society's Diversity Access Scheme, the Social Mobility Foundation's Pathways to Law programme, and our own in-house programmes.

In early 2025 we launched our social mobility incubator that supports other organisations on their social mobility journeys.

¹ Economic Co-operation and Development (OCAD)

FAIRE (Fairer Access Into Real Experience)

Case study

Launched in 2021, our award-winning FAIRE programme is a cornerstone of our social mobility efforts. Designed to provide equal access to paid work experience for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, FAIRE removes barriers that might otherwise prevent talented individuals from entering the legal sector.

Participants gain hands-on experience, working alongside our lawyers, learning how the legal industry operates while building their professional networks.

Our internal targets ensure that across our national offices at least 50% of work experience placements go to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

So far, over 37,500 students have participated in FAIRE events, with 58% identifying as being from ethnic minority backgrounds and 62% coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Beyond our own firm, we've supported 64 clients in establishing their own social mobility initiatives and partnered with leading organisations to deliver workshops on entrepreneurship, broadening career horizons for young people.

Our dedicated social mobility team also host events and roundtables to share best practices and explore how we can advance social mobility, not just within the legal profession, but across other industries too.

“The FAIRE programme has been incredible. It’s really highlighted the importance of authenticity, being confident when faced with taking risks, and also how being resilient when you are taken out of your comfort zone will see you do a good job even when the work gets hard. This has completely opened my eyes to the various pathways into law. Thank you, Browne Jacobson!”

FAIRE attendee



“A day filled with genuine connection, learning and insight. At the end of the day, I felt so inspired by the presenters I met and the core pillars demonstrated by Browne Jacobson. The FAIRE programme is truly amazing and provides a safe space that supports growth and career ambition in every way. Excited for what’s ahead for me now.”

FAIRE attendee

Working families and carers

Balancing a career with parental or caring responsibilities can present significant challenges both inside and outside of work. We are committed to pioneering a people-first culture that champions innovative policies and initiatives designed to support working families and carers.

Our commitment to supporting working families and carers extends to providing comprehensive guidance for line managers, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate the multifaceted journeys of parenthood and caregiving.

We believe that our approach helps our people succeed in their careers, enables them to be authentic when at work, and produces role models across all levels of our firm.

Our most recent policy development was the significant enhancement and equalising of our paternity, co-parent, and co-adopter leave policies. Those who can use this policy are now entitled to take up to 26 weeks of paid paternity, co-parent or adoption leave.

We're taking action to promote inclusion by:

- Championing **flexible working** to support our people in their careers at work and with their work-life balance.
- Continuing to **review and enhance our policies** so that they are family friendly and help promote gender equity.



- Growing our **working families network** which is led by a senior sponsor in the firm, to provide peer to peer support and a community of working parents and carers.
- Focusing on the **return to work experience** encompassing pre-leave, in-leave contact, and return to work transition support for occasions such as parental leave, long-term sickness and absence.
- Promoting our **families' hub** that provides our people with access to all our policies and procedures related to parenthood and caregiving, with easy-to-find links to resources.

These enhancements position us as one of the leading firms in the legal sector for family leave benefits. They are part of a wider range of initiatives designed to create an inclusive and supportive work environment that values the importance of family life.

Measuring our impact

We're committed to open and honest reporting, and we're proud to share a few of the following outcomes:*

67%

of our junior lawyers are first-generation university students - an increase of 23% in just one year.

45%

of our employment offers now go to candidates who, under previous criteria, would not have been eligible to apply.

58%

of the 37,500+ attendees at our FAIRE events came from ethnic minority communities.

* Data as of December 2024

Awards, accreditations and pledges

We are proud signatories of:

- Law Society Diversity and Inclusion Charter.
- Law Society Women in Law Pledge.
- Law Society Diversity Access Scheme.
- Business in the Community Race at Work Charter.
- The Menopause Pledge.
- The Halo Code.

We are members of:

- Business Disability Forum.
- ENEI (Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion).
- Birmingham Black Lawyers.
- WorkLife Central.
- Stonewall.
- East Midlands LGBTQ+ Alliance.
- Wellbeing of Women.
- National Literacy Trust.
- Social Mobility Commission.

Accreditations:

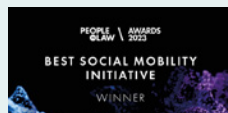
- Level 3 Disability Confident Leader.
- Living Wage Employer.

Awards



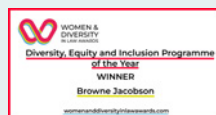
Winner

The Legal 500 ESG Awards 2025
Ethnicity: Best Initiative to Attract and Retain Talent (REACH mentoring programme)



Winner

People in Law Awards 2023
Best Social Mobility Initiative



Winner

Women and Diversity in Law Awards 2023
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programme of the Year



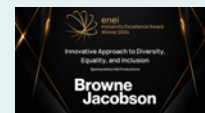
Winner

Personnel Today Awards 2023
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award (Smaller Employers)



Top employer

UK Social Mobility Index 2024



Winner

ENEI Inclusivity Excellence Awards 2024

Most innovative approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (REACH Mentoring Programme).



Winner

The Legal 500 ESG Awards 2024
Social Mobility: Best Initiative to Attract and Retain Talent (outside London)



Winner

European Diversity Awards 2023
Social Mobility Initiative of the Year (FAIRE)



“The legal profession needs a variety of skills. If everyone comes from the same background, with the same experiences and skillset, we won’t be representative of society and we won’t be able to provide the best service to our clients.”

Caroline Green, Senior Partner at Browne Jacobson

For further information about
any of our services, please visit
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