

Browne Jacobson announced as top ranked law firm in Social Mobility Employer Index 2023

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Browne Jacobson LLP, a leading law firm in the UK and Ireland, has been announced as one of the top five employers in the 2023 Social Mobility Employer Index (SMI), unveiled today by the Social Mobility Foundation (SMF). The SMI represents the seventh annual edition of this national study, which evaluates the initiatives undertaken by employers to enhance social mobility within their organisations.

Building on its success for the fourth consecutive year as a top five ranked employer, Browne Jacobson has again secured its position as the highest-ranked law firm for the last three years and holds second place in the overall 2023 rankings.

Launched in 2017, the SMI has become the leading authority on employer-led social mobility. It assesses and ranks UK employers on the actions they take to ensure they are open to talent from all social backgrounds.

Since 2016, the firm has implemented various initiatives to improve social mobility both within the firm and in the wider legal profession. This includes revolutionising its recruitment processes by removing academic barriers, anonymising applications and focusing its outreach work on social mobility 'cold spots'.

This included the launch of FAIRE (Fairer Access to Real Experience) in 2021– an innovative programme offering in-person and virtual work experience opportunities to candidates specifically from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Since its launch, the annual FAIRE events have drawn participation from over 30,500 students representing 2000+ schools.

In particular, Browne Jacobson received accolades for praised for its school outreach programme. For instance, 100% of their outreach was conducted at non-selective state schools and 62% of the young people who took part were from lower socioeconomic backgrounds based on parental occupation.

This month, the firm introduced a dedicated Social Mobility Inclusion team to advance socio-economic diversity within the legal profession. The group will establish a clear and measurable strategy to advocate for and advance socio-economic diversity in the firm's hiring, retention, and promotion practices, ensuring equal opportunities for all, regardless of background.

Caroline Green, Senior Partner at Browne Jacobson, who leads on diversity, inclusion and well-being at the firm comments: *'I am incredibly proud that we have maintained our position as the highest ranked law firm and a leading employer for social mobility in the UK. The ranking is testament to our continued commitment to be at the forefront of society's biggest issues and a key component of this is to improve social mobility within the profession.'*

We constantly and consistently advocate for positive change. We firmly believe in fairness and reject the idea that success should hinge on "who you know".

We recognise that resources are limited, and therefore advocate for initiatives that can be embraced by all. By doing this, we have substantially broadened the talent pool and developed a workforce that is both diverse and inclusive.'

Tom Lyas, Head of Resourcing & Social Mobility at Browne Jacobson said: *"Socio-economic diversity is essential to the success of any organisation, and here at Browne Jacobson we've seen how the diversity of our workforce positively impacts the experience we're able to offer our clients, as well as ensuring we're an accurate representation of the societies in which we operate."*

Remaining as a top ranked employer in the Social Mobility Index represents and underscores our unwavering commitment to improving diversity and inclusion in the legal sector.

Our newly established Social Mobility Inclusion team is our latest commitment to advance that cause, and I couldn't be prouder to have the chance to lead us into this next phase of action."

This ranking follows the firm being named as 'National (British) Winners of the Equity Trailblazer' by the National British Chamber of Commerce (BCC) Business Awards earlier in the month.

Recently, the firm also launched a dedicated mentoring scheme for aspiring Black lawyers, partnered with Forage to launch an interactive online work experience programme to broaden access for aspiring young lawyers and was chosen to be one of only 13 UK businesses who will form the Social Mobility Commission's (SMC) new Employer Advisory Group.

The firm has also signed up to the Women in Law pledge and the Business in the Community Race at Work charter, demonstrating their commitment to gender and race equality across the legal profession. They were also recognised in the 'Race at Work charter report 2023: 5 years on' as one of the best practice firms for the meaningful actions we are taking as part of our commitment to the Race at Work Charter.

Key contact



Kara Shadbolt

Senior PR & Communication Manager

kara.shadbolt@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)330 045 1111