Diversity pay report 2025

Hill Dickinson

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Hill Dickinson is a business that welcomes all. We're delivering meaningful progress in increasing representation levels across the business, with genuine breakthroughs in key areas, ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to build a fulfilling career with us.

It's our people, after all, who are fundamental to our success as a business – those who deliver industry-leading legal support to clients and drive firm-wide growth. The diversity of their experience, expertise and perspective cannot be overstated. In building a firm that truly represents the communities and broader society around us, we can continually drive the quality of our work and retain the very best talent.

To ensure we're building a diverse and inclusive environment, we have created a robust firm-wide framework of ED&I initiatives. Our six pillars of ED&I underpin this work, encompassing: gender, multicultural, social mobility, LGBTQ+ inclusion, accessibility, health and wellbeing, and family and life stages. By providing a supportive and collaborative platform for people from these groups to connect, we can encourage inclusion while identifying and addressing the unique challenges they face in the workplace and beyond.

Over the past year, we've continued to extend the activities of these pillars with genuine impact. We've maintained our Networking Groups with clear leadership and expectations for members. Our Lunch & Learn programme has expanded, with internal speakers and external subject matter experts providing comprehensive overviews of each pillar's purpose and activities.

We've also made significant progress in increasing diversity within leadership roles. We've increased female representation at leadership level to 36.7%, putting us well on track for our 40% target by 2028. This includes 46% of leadership promotions over the past year being women – well above our 40% target threshold – showing we're not just on track but ahead of pace for our 2028 goal.

For ethnic minority representation, we've increased this to 12.5%, maintaining momentum towards our target of 20% by 2028. Our initiatives to base recruitment on ability and ambition, rather than background, continue to drive this forward. We've enhanced our use of the Amberjack recruitment tool and Rare Contextual Recruitment System, ensuring we consider achievements in the context in which they were gained.

Most notably, we've virtually eliminated our ethnicity pay gap – from 4.3% to just 0.4% – representing one of the most substantial improvements in the legal sector

We're particularly proud of our ongoing work with our ED&I partnerships, including Aspiring Solicitors, Bright Network and 10,000 Interns – organisations dedicated to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the legal profession and nurturing exceptional talent regardless of background.

This year, 40% of our trainees were recruited through these programmes, with one trainee previously recruited via 10,000 Interns progressing to a training contract.

Our partnership with Strawberry Fields has become a flagship initiative. As the first law firm to partner with this Liverpool-based charity, which supports neurodiverse teenagers and young adults in employment, we've seen remarkable results. What began as a 12-week placement has evolved into a permanent role for one individual, and we're launching a wider work experience programme this November. This innovation earned us the Excellence in Recruitment Award from People in Law, making us one of the first law firms to be recognised for neurodiverse employment initiatives and demonstrating our commitment to breaking new ground where others haven't ventured.

This Liverpool-rooted approach to innovation reflects our deep community connections across all our UK locations, where we're not just present but actively invested in local talent development.

These initiatives ensure we are a firm where everyone can feel welcome and succeed in their career. A critical metric for measuring this progress is pay gap reporting.

In this report, we outline our pay gap performance over 2024, covering gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background. By assessing our firm-wide performance, we've identified areas for continued improvement as we work to eliminate industry-entrenched disparities. These continual improvements all serve to support us in building a firm that is genuinely open to and inclusive of everyone.

Carolyn Morgan
Chief People Officer,
Hill Dickinson

Pay gap reporting

How we calculate our data

Our Gender Pay Gap data is based on employee salaries on the snapshot date of 5 April 2024. The employee gender pay gap analysis solely refers to this area and does not include areas for which we are not required to report.

It's essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of pay across the entire business. Therefore, although we're not required to report on them, we've conducted separate analyses of our ethnicity and socio-economic data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of specific pay gaps. We plan to extend our reporting to other areas in the coming years.

Throughout the report, we calculate the data in three different ways:

- **Mean:** the mean hourly pay gap is the difference between the average hourly rate of pay between distinct groups.
- **Median:** the median hourly pay gap ranks employees from the highest rate of income to the lowest, then selects the employee that falls directly in the middle of the ranking. The difference between the distinct group's medians is then calculated.
- **Quartiles:** we rank employees from lowest to highest earners and split them into four equal parts. The percentage of distinct groups who occupy each quartile is then calculated.

Gender pay gap

Employee hourly pay gap

	April 2024	April 2023	April 2022	April 2021
Mean	18.0%	22.3%	21.2%	23.2%
Median	17.9%	20.4%	24.0%	18.4%

Employee bonus gap

	April 2024	April 2023	April 2022	April 2021
Mean	51.0%	63.3%	57.8%	63.8%
Median	21.2%	29.2%	23.0%	31.4%

Employee pay quartiles

Quartile	April 2024		April 2023		April 2022	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Upper	43.2%	56.8%	47.5%	52.5%	51.4%	48.6%
Upper Middle	38.0%	62.0%	34.8%	65.2%	31.6%	68.4%
Lower Middle	26.0%	74.0%	27.1%	72.9%	28.2%	71.8%
Lower	27.1%	72.9%	22.8%	77.2%	22.6%	77.4%

Partner pay gap

Partner hourly pay gap

	April 2024	April 2023	April 2022
Mean	32.6%	35.0%	30.7%
Median	29.7%	39.8%	33.6%

Diversity reporting

The ethnicity pay gap analyses the difference in the mean hourly pay rate between white and non-white employees. The socio-economic pay gap analysis examines the difference in mean hourly pay rates between individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those from upper or middle socio-economic backgrounds.

Socio-economic background is determined by a range of factors, including parental occupation, type of school attended and highest parental qualification obtained.

Mean hourly pay gap

	April 2024	April 2023	April 2022
Ethnicity pay gap	0.4%	4.3%	8.4%
Socio-economic	17.0%	15.7%	11.7%
Sexual orientation	30.6%	22.6%	19.3%

Analysis

Closing historic gender pay gaps within law is a process that takes time, yet it's a critically vital endeavour to ensure the long-term success of our industry. Having implemented several initiatives over recent years to address our gender pay gap levels, we're now seeing the impact of these efforts reflected in our figures.

Our median employee pay gap has continued to decrease compared to 2023 (2024: 17.9%; 2023: 20.4%) and is now slightly above the industry average of 17.6%. This demonstrates genuine progress towards our goals, which we'll continue to reduce year on year.

When examining the mean employee pay gap, it has also improved significantly (2024: 18.0%; 2023: 22.3%). This consistent decline suggests structural improvements in pay equity, with the convergence of mean and median values implying a more balanced pay structure across the organisation.

A notable progress has been in our upper quartile representation, where female representation has increased to 56.8% from 52.5%, indicating genuine progress in senior-level gender balance while maintaining strong representation in other quartiles.

We've made significant progress in recent years to ensure we're delivering on our long-term strategy of closing our gender pay gap at all levels of seniority, including partnership. Our partner median pay gap has improved substantially from 39.8% to 29.7%, while the mean has also decreased to 32.6%. We remain firmly on track to meet our target of 40% female leadership by 2028.

Across our central services teams, we've promoted women to senior positions while maintaining our executive board representation. We're particularly proud that 22% of partner promotions were made on flexible schedules in 2024, demonstrating our commitment to flexible working arrangements.

We continue to develop the next generation of talent through our robust development framework for newly qualified solicitors, senior associates and legal directors. Over 249 people are participating in career development programmes, with a sustained focus on mentoring – we're working towards establishing 200 mentoring relationships by 2027.

Progress in diversity metrics

Our ethnicity pay gap has shown remarkable improvement, dropping from 4.3% to just 0.4% – representing the near elimination of this gap. This progress reflects our focused efforts on diverse recruitment, with 18% of our trainees and apprentices coming from ethnic minority backgrounds and 29% of assessment day places going to people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

These efforts are supported through our partnerships with 10,000 Interns, Bright Network and Aspiring Solicitors. This approach earned recognition from the Chambers Student Guide and a commendation at the Aspiring Solicitors All Star Awards.

Our socio-economic pay gap has increased to 17.0% from 15.7% – a direct result of our significant investment in early careers, with 17 school leaver apprentices currently in the firm and a 64% increase in applications. This temporary impact reflects our long-term commitment to social mobility.

We've seen a 0.2% increase in the 16-24 age demographic as we provide opportunities for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Naturally, younger employees starting their careers are paid less than their peers later in their careers, but this investment in social mobility is fundamental to our values.

Through our schools outreach programme, we've attended 14 events and provided 44 work shadowing opportunities across the UK.

We've hired six school leaver apprentices in our 2024 cohort. For our 2025 cohort, we're targeting 25% of annual apprentices to be recruited through our schools programme.

Our sexual orientation pay gap has increased to 30.6%, but this correlates directly with improved data collection. Our efforts to increase equality data return rates – now at 86% – enable us to hold more comprehensive information about our workforce makeup. This increased transparency has enabled better analysis while creating a culture that encourages openness.

Closing remarks and looking ahead

We strive to ensure that everyone, regardless of background, gender, race, sexuality, or age, has an equal opportunity to progress and build a fulfilling legal career. As we've shown in this report, we've made genuine progress in key areas while maintaining an honest assessment of ongoing challenges.

For 2025 specifically, we're committed to:

- Launching our expanded Strawberry Fields work experience programme in November
- Growing ED&I programme recruitment by 20%
- Targeting 25% of apprentices through our schools outreach programme

Our achievements and priorities for the coming year include:

Structural commitment and leadership

- Establishing our Responsible Business Executive to drive ED&I initiatives forward with dedicated leadership focus
- Increasing female representation in leadership roles to 36.7%, maintaining momentum towards our target of 40% by 2028
- Growing ethnic minority representation to 12.5%, progressing towards our target of 20% by 2028
- Achieving 95% retention rate for employees returning from maternity leave

Innovation in inclusive employment

- Expanding our award-winning Strawberry Fields partnership, launching wider work experience programme in November 2024
- Continuing as one of the first and most committed law firms to break new ground in neurodiverse employment
- Growing our apprenticeship programme with 17 school leaver apprentices currently in the firm
- Building new university partnerships, especially with non-Russell Group institutions

Enhanced support and development

- Supporting 249 participants in our internal development programmes with continued focus on progression
- Working towards 200 mentoring relationships by 2027
- Maintaining our Working Families Top 10 Employer status – recognition across all UK industries, not just the legal sector – with continued focus on family-friendly policies
- Exploring introduction of fertility benefits and enhanced peer support groups

Community and partnership focus

- Expanding our schools outreach programme across all six UK locations
- Maintaining partnerships with Aspiring Solicitors, 10,000 Interns and Bright Network
- Strengthening our six networking groups focused on gender, LGBTQ+, multicultural, social mobility, life stages and health and wellbeing accessibility

Data and accountability

- Increasing equality questionnaire completion rate from 86% towards 90%
- Continuing salary review analysis to identify opportunities for further pay parity
- Setting new targets for disability and socio-economic representation
- Maintaining transparency in reporting across all diversity dimensions

Looking ahead, we recognise that while we've made genuine progress – particularly in ethnic representation and gender leadership – we must maintain momentum in areas that require continued focus. Our commitment is evidenced not just by targets, but also through structural change, innovative partnerships, and measurable outcomes that demonstrate lasting impact.

At Hill Dickinson, we don't just talk about diversity – we innovate in it, measure it honestly, and deliver results that matter.

The above actions are acknowledged and endorsed by Hill Dickinson's senior leadership.

About Hill Dickinson

Hill Dickinson LLP is a leading and award-winning international commercial law firm with more than 1050 people including over 200 partners and legal directors.

The firm delivers advice and strategic guidance spanning the full legal spectrum, from non-contentious advisory and transactional work, to all forms of commercial litigation. The firm acts as a trusted adviser to businesses, organisations and individuals within a wide range of specialist market sectors.

Hill Dickinson