

Social Mobility Pay Gap Report 2022

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Social mobility pay gap report 2022

Social mobility is incredibly important to us at Lewis Silkin; improving social mobility is one of the two focus areas of our Responsible Business activity and a key pillar of our Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

In this report, we set out the socio-economic breakdown of our workforce followed by a series of pay gap statistics for 2022. We explain the reasons for any gaps and set out what measures we are taking to improve social mobility both inside and outside of the firm.

“The data in this report makes for interesting but sometimes uncomfortable reading. Historically, a legal career has been more accessible for people from more privileged backgrounds. Like many law firms, our data shows that a disproportionately large proportion of lawyers at Lewis Silkin attended private schools and come from more economically advantaged backgrounds.

By supporting fair access to the legal sector to talented people from different backgrounds we can better reflect the people and communities we represent. But championing equality of opportunity isn’t just the ‘right’ thing to do – a more diverse workforce, with colleagues who come from a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds, leads to more collaborative, innovative and creative organisations.

We are very proudly a leading law firm on this issue – the Social Mobility Foundation’s employer index ranked us as a top ten law firm because of the work we have been doing in the past few years. However, there’s more to be done. We are committed to doing everything we can to improve social mobility in our society and our firm, and have set ourselves a number of challenging objectives going forwards.”

Jo Farmer, Joint Managing Partner



Jo Farmer
Joint Managing Partner

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Our approach

We have followed guidance on data collection and analysis set out by the Social Mobility Commission and asked employees and partners to provide information about their background voluntarily. We have data relating to:

- ▶ Socio-economic background (based on parental occupation at age 14)
- ▶ Whether they received free school meals (if they attended school after 1980)
- ▶ Whether they attended a state school (and if so whether comprehensive or selective/grammar) or private school
- ▶ Whether either of their parents graduated and gained a degree

Using this information, we applied the same methodology used in gender pay gap reporting in order to calculate a series of pay gap statistics, using 5 April 2022 as our “snapshot” date.

We have also included in this report a breakdown of the socio-economic profile of our workforce. In addition to the above categories, this covers:

- ▶ Household eligibility for income support
- ▶ Housing tenure during secondary education



Our workforce

In this section we publish data on the socio-economic profile of our workforce as of 5 April 2022.

	Working class background (%) ¹	Intermediate (%)	Professional (%)	Received free school meals (%)	Attended comprehensive / academy (%)	Attended private / public school (%)	Attended grammar school (%)	"First in family" to graduate from university (%)	Lived in social housing during secondary education (%)	Household was eligible for income support (%)
PAs / Secretaries	45.5%	9.1%	45.5%	24.1%	82.1%	5.1%	12.8%	21.1%	19.4%	19.4%
Junior Business Services	16.7%	8.3%	75.0%	7.4%	55.6%	30.6%	13.9%	39.1%	11.1%	22.2%
Senior Business Services	28.9%	10.5%	60.5%	6.5%	62.9%	14.3%	22.9%	51.7%	8.8%	14.3%
Junior legal roles (Paralegal to Associate)	20.7%	8.5%	70.7%	11.1%	56.4%	26.9%	16.7%	43.1%	4.3%	16.2%
Senior legal roles (Senior Associate to Legal Director)	17.8%	2.2%	80.0%	0.0%	55.3%	36.2%	8.5%	42.9%	2.4%	4.7%
Other legal roles	17.8%	4.4%	77.8%	0.0%	46.7%	33.3%	20.0%	43.2%	6.8%	4.5%
Partner	22.6%	3.8%	73.6%	6.0%	42.1%	38.6%	19.3%	50.9%	3.9%	5.8%
Employees only	23.3%	7.2%	69.5%	7.8%	58.9%	25.4%	15.7%	41.9%	7.7%	13.0%
Whole firm	23.2%	6.6%	70.2%	7.5%	56.1%	27.6%	16.3%	43.7%	7.1%	11.8%
NATIONAL AVERAGES	39.0%	24.0%	37.0%	15.0%	92.5%	7.5%		67.0%	N/A	N/A

	Class	Free school meals	Type of school attended	First generation to attend university	Housing tenure	Household eligibility for income support
Response rates	73.9%	65.5%	75.1%	63.3%	66.1%	67.9%

¹ This is determined using parental occupation at age 14 and we follow the recommendations set out by the Social Mobility Commission in its employer toolkit. Although research shows that parental occupation is the best measure of socio-economic advantage, we recognise that it is only one indicator. This is why we have chosen to report across various different measures of socio-economic advantage.

Socio-economic background or “class”

What is this?

The Social Mobility Commission recommends defining an individual’s socio-economic background using the occupation of the highest earner in their household when they were aged 14. Using this guidance, we asked people to choose from a range of options. We then grouped these choices according to the guidance.

Examples of “working class” occupations according to the guidance include electrician, farm worker, train driver, cleaner, security guard and plumber. Examples of “intermediate class” occupations are secretary, call centre agent, nursery nurse and restaurant manager. Examples of “professional class” occupations are teacher, nurse, accountant, solicitor, scientist and police officer.

Our pay gap statistics

These statistics are calculated by comparing the average (mean/median) person of a working class background against the average person who is not from this background. Positive values (ie greater than 0%) show that the mean/median person from a working class background is paid less than the mean/median person not from this background. Negative values (ie less than 0%) show the reverse.

	Employees only	Partners only	Whole firm
Mean pay gap	12.9%	-15.8%	0.4%
Median pay gap	24.4%	-33.2%	24.6%
Mean bonus gap	37.1%	-47.0%	0.2%
Median bonus gap	8.8%	-33.3%	18.5%
Proportion of intermediate/professional class people receiving a bonus	79.0%	87.8%	80.4%
Proportion of working class people receiving a bonus	78.5%	83.3%	79.2%
Lower quartile (percentage of working class people)	34.3%	15.4%	31.3%
Lower-mid quartile (percentage of working class people)	25.4%	23.1%	25.0%
Upper-mid quartile (percentage of working class people)	14.9%	23.1%	16.3%
Upper quartile (percentage of working class people)	20.9%	28.6%	22.2%

Our mean class pay gap for the whole firm is low, but the median gap is high. This is because of the impact of the partnership.

Class has some correlation with age because of the way in which it is determined: parental occupation at age 14. Older people are more likely to have had their parent working in a job now classed as working class; there is a higher proportion of “working class” people among our partner population than among our non-partner lawyer population, and the “working class” partners also tend to be highly paid. Because partners are highly paid, this pushes the mean pay gap down. We consider that the median pay gap is a more reflective figure of disparity as it is not so affected by a small group of highly paid people. The median pay gap is high, showing that overall working-class people tend to occupy lower paid roles.

Our greatest class diversity is among our PAs and this group is most reflective of the general population.

Free school meals

What is this?

According to the Social Mobility Commission's employer toolkit, this is a measure of "extreme economic disadvantage".

The poorest 15% of the UK population receive free school meals. By measuring this, we hope to understand the degree to which our workplace is accessible to the poorest in society.

Our pay gap statistics

These statistics are calculated by comparing the average (mean/median) person who received free school meals against the average person who did not receive free school meals. We followed Social Mobility Commission guidance and excluded anyone who did not attend school after 1980.

	Employees only	Partners only	Whole firm
Mean pay gap	43.6%	0.6%	31.3%
Median pay gap	48.6%	-29.7%	52.3%
Mean bonus gap	68.5%	-15.4%	44.5%
Median bonus gap	38.3%	-33.3%	52.5%
Proportion of people who did NOT receive free school meals	79.6%	91.5%	81.6%
Proportion of people who received free school meals	73.7%	66.7%	72.7%
Lower quartile (percentage who received free school meals)	20.3%	7.7%	16.9%
Lower-mid quartile (percentage who received free school meals)	5.3%	0.0%	9.9%
Upper-mid quartile (percentage who received free school meals)	6.7%	16.7%	0.0%
Upper quartile (percentage who received free school meals)	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%

As shown above, 15% of the UK population receive free school meals but just 7.5% of our workforce received them. Because it is such a small proportion of the workforce, it means these gaps are potentially liable to change. The addition or removal of just a few extra people could have a big impact on averages and so change the gap.

The quartiles show that those people who received free school meals are not spread out equally across our business. Whereas 1 in 5 of the lowest paid employees received free school meals, none of the highest paid employees did.

Type of school attended

What is this?

We asked people to state what type of school they attended at age 14. This is a measure of extreme economic advantage. The options were:

- ▶ State comprehensive/academy
- ▶ Grammar
- ▶ Private/public school

Our pay gap statistics

These statistics are calculated by comparing the average (mean/median) person who went to a state comprehensive/academy against the average person who did not go to a state comprehensive/academy.

	Employees only	Partners only	Whole firm
Mean pay gap	16.3%	14.4%	35.3%
Median pay gap	32.6%	5.4%	27.8%
Mean bonus gap	22.9%	20.2%	40.3%
Median bonus gap	16.0%	25.0%	38.5%
Proportion of people who went to an independent school receiving a bonus	73.0%	84.8%	75.7%
Proportion of people who went to state comprehensive/ academy receiving a bonus	83.6%	87.5%	84.1%
Lower quartile (percentage who went to state comprehensive/academy)	60.9%	50.0%	64.6%
Lower-mid quartile (percentage who went to state comprehensive/academy)	79.3%	35.7%	69.1%
Upper-mid quartile (percentage who went to state comprehensive/academy)	44.8%	57.1%	50.0%
Upper quartile (percentage who went to state comprehensive/academy)	51.5%	26.7%	41.0%

In the UK, 7.5% of people went to a private/public or grammar school. In our workplace, people from this background are overrepresented: 41% of our employees – and 58% of our partners – went to private/public or grammar schools.

First generation university

What is this?

We asked people “if you went to university, were you the first generation in your family to do so?”.

Although this is not a measure of social background, attending university gives a nuanced form of cultural advantage, as organisational cultures can favour graduates. Being the “first in family” to attend signals that someone may have had a potential lack of support to navigate university and entry into the graduate workforce. If pay gaps calculated on this basis are high, it suggests that people with that advantage may be more likely to succeed. They may find it easier to be recruited and have successful careers.

Our pay gap statistics

These statistics are calculated by comparing the average (mean/median) person of who was the first generation in their family to graduate from university against the average (mean/median) person who is not the first generation in their family to graduate from university. We excluded all people who did not wish to provide this information or who had not provided any response.

	Employees only	Partners only	Whole firm
Mean pay gap	-6.5%	1.4%	-18.2%
Median pay gap	4.1%	-8.4%	-2.7%
Mean bonus gap	6.9%	-11.1%	-18.2%
Median bonus gap	-11.1%	-33.3%	-41.8%
Proportion of people who were NOT the first generation to graduate from university who received a bonus	83.5%	92.6%	85.0%
Proportion of people who were the first generation to graduate from university who received a bonus	69.8%	78.6%	71.8%
Lower quartile (percentage of people who were the first generation to graduate from university)	32.7%	42.9%	33.3%
Lower-mid quartile (percentage of people who were the first generation to graduate from university)	54.5%	46.2%	50.7%
Upper-mid quartile (percentage of people who were the first generation to graduate from university)	32.7%	71.4%	42.3%
Upper quartile (percentage of people who were the first generation to graduate from university)	46.4%	42.9%	47.8%

Our gaps are low, which suggests that we understand the experiences and needs of employees. If people do come to Lewis Silkin with some sort of advantage as a result of having parents that attended university, it is not something that they are able to make use of.

Among our lawyers, 56% were the first in their family to attend university. This compares with 67% among employers generally across all sectors.

A larger proportion of our partners were the first generation to attend university compared to the rest of our workforce. This may be because partners tend to be older and, because of the rise in university education over the past 20-30 years, it is more likely that they were the first in their family to attend university. This – combined with the fact that partners are the highest paid members of our workforce – is why the mean pay gap for the whole firm is much lower than the median pay gap; median pay gaps are not distorted.

What we are doing to improve social mobility

We are taking a number of steps to improve social mobility, within both our firm and our industry.

Social mobility cold spot outreach

We deliver remote and in-person careers events to students in Year 10 and upwards in areas with low social mobility (known as social mobility 'cold spots'). Over the 2022/23 financial year, we ran 18 sessions in schools in these areas, as well as sessions in state schools in other areas.

We also use our position as advisors to many large employers in various sectors by encouraging clients to take part in our outreach events. These events aim to raise aspirations and provide the advice and support needed to achieve them. We build lasting relationships and attendees at our cold spot events have gone on to subsequently win our social mobility essay competitions, take part in our mentorship scheme and carry out work experience at the firm.

Mentoring schemes

Our Mentoring Scheme is a nine-month programme for students aged 16-18, many of whom attend school in social mobility cold spots. Our mentors meet regularly with their mentees and help them with their career aspirations (legal or otherwise) by offering advice, information and resources about various paths, whether related to university, apprenticeships or job experience. Our mentors hold various roles including lawyer, accountant, paralegal or project manager; we currently have 42 mentor-mentee pairings.

Social mobility index

We are committed to improving our ranking on the Social Mobility Foundation's Employer Index. Since 2021 we have risen from 59th in the index to 18th (and are now the 10th highest law firm) - we are really pleased with this progress. We have a social mobility group made up of individuals from across the firm who are empowered to take action on the feedback we receive from the Employer Index.

Improving access to the legal sector: apprenticeships

We have embraced alternative methods of accessing the legal sector. We have a number of apprentices in the firm in both legal and non-legal roles.

Our first cohort of solicitor apprentices joined the firm in 2021 and will qualify in 2027. In September 2022 we also welcomed our third solicitor apprentice to the firm and aim to continue hiring more solicitor apprentices across the country as we grow.

Social mobility week

We held a social mobility week in January 2023. During this week, we held an event where individuals from across the firm (including many Partners) shared their social mobility stories and openly discussed the challenges they have faced in their careers.

Data and analysis

We have proactively built an internal social mobility dataset. By being open and transparent about our objectives, over 70% of our workforce has chosen to voluntarily provide data about their socio-economic backgrounds, which we use to inform decision making.

PRIME

We are a member of PRIME (an alliance of law firms across the UK and Republic of Ireland determined to improve access to, and socio-economic diversity within, the legal profession). As part of our PRIME commitment, we offer work experience placements for students from less privileged backgrounds who might otherwise not have the opportunity to access careers in the legal world.

Rare

We use the Rare Contextual Recruitment System for our graduate roles, which uses data to help us identify candidates with the greatest potential. The system compares the economic and social circumstances of applicants to produce contextual data on every candidate, allowing us to spot talent we might otherwise have missed, and ensure we build an even richer and more diverse staff population.

Targets

We have set a number of challenging targets to push ourselves to do more in a range of areas. Our targets are:

- ▶ By 2025, to be carrying out 20 outreach sessions each year in social mobility cold spot areas.
- ▶ By 2027, to achieve a ranking in the top ten of all employers in the social mobility index.
- ▶ By 2033, to have one or more previous attendees of a social mobility cold spot outreach event working for the firm as a qualified solicitor.



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