

Macfarlanes Insider

Issue one - November 2020

Welcome to Macfarlanes Insider, a newsletter which has been created to give you a better insight into the firm.

The quarterly newsletter will be available on the Careers pages of the firm's website and is designed to ensure you remain well briefed on life at Macfarlanes. This includes recent firm news and events, our key priorities, and employee Q&A's, amongst other things.

Good Work Standard

The firm recently learnt that it has been awarded the Good Work Standard (GWS) at excellence level, the highest level possible. The Good Work Standard is the Mayor of London's accreditation recognising the best employment practices in London businesses. The four pillars of the Standard are: fair pay and conditions; workplace wellbeing; skills and progression; and diversity and recruitment. By achieving the GWS, businesses signal their commitment to healthy, fair and inclusive workplaces.



Recent news

RACE FAIRNESS COMMITMENT

Race Fairness Commitment

Macfarlanes is one of 15 initial law firm signatories to the Race Fairness Commitment (RFC). The firm is committed to increasing the number of Black and minority ethnic (BME) fee

earners across the firm and in senior business services roles.

The RFC is data driven and commits us to measuring things

like “application to interview” and “interview to offer” rates for different ethnic groups.



Reskilling the Recovery

The firm has pledged to support small businesses recover from the impact of the pandemic by donating some of the apprenticeship levy to London's “Reskilling the Recovery”

campaign. The campaign will help London's small businesses and their employees develop the skills they need to meet the challenges presented by the pandemic, while

helping to get Londoners into good quality jobs where they have the chance to progress. The firm made its first donation last month.

Networks

The firm's inclusion programme pivots on four staff-led networks. Each network provides an opportunity for social interaction, peer support and personal development. A variety of partners co-chair these networks.

Balance - a forum for all staff managing careers and home lives, enabling discussion, support and the exchange of information and ideas, to achieve a balance of opportunity for all.

Pride – a forum for networking and peer support, open to everyone regardless of their sexual orientation, to inform staff on LGBT+ action and to communicate information to colleagues interested in LGBT+ matters.

REACH (Race, ethnicity and cultural heritage) – a forum for networking and peer support between ethnic minority staff and allies, which enables the sharing and exchange of relevant information and ideas.

EnABLE – a forum to offer support to staff who have direct experience of or support others with neurodiverse conditions, long term health conditions, disabilities and mental health.

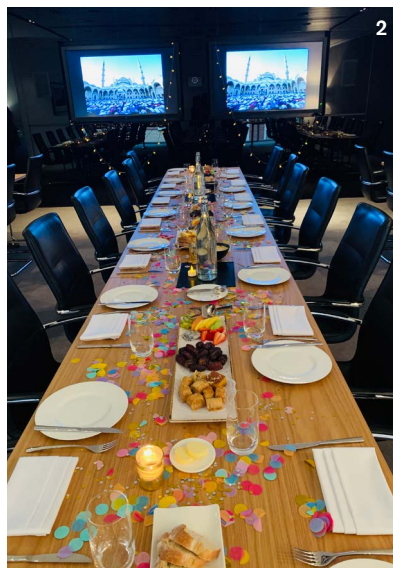
Trainee cohort

The Graduate Recruitment team has recently finished hiring for the September 2022/March 2023 trainees and were pleased to report that they recruited the most diverse cohort ever in relation to BME, female and social mobility hiring: 36% of the intake are BME; 66% are female; and 36% are from a social mobility background.

The Graduate Recruitment team partners with a number of programmes to attract applicants from a range of backgrounds including; [Aspiring Solicitors](#), [Pathways to Law](#), [Prime](#), [Rare Recruitment](#), [City Solicitors Horizon](#) and [upReach](#).



Recent events



Firm events and activities

The firm provides a diverse programme of events, open to everyone across the firm. There are various activities that staff can participate in regularly which include arts and crafts, chess, football, cricket, hockey, squash, cycling, table tennis, Pilates, yoga and music lessons. The firm also organises an annual triathlon to raise funds for the firm's charity of the year. This year the triathlon took place virtually, with teams competing to run, cycle and row the fastest.



1. Jenny Owen from the Marketing team taking on the Macs Tri. 2. Eid al-Fitr celebrations. 3. David Lammy speaking to the firm during Black History Month. 4. Trainees using their community day at Share Horticulture.



The firm also host guest speakers on various topics. Recent speakers have included the following.

- **Akala**, a BAFTA and MOBO award-winning hip-hop artist, writer and social entrepreneur, on his experience on the power of education.
- **Afua Hirsch** who delivered a firmwide seminar on #BlackLivesMatter and race relations in the UK and US. In addition Afua delivered a seminar where she discussed her perspective and learnings from facilitating our reverse mentoring programme this year, where our BME employees mentored partners across the firm for six months. She also explored other topical issues, including the development of anti-racism in our workplaces.
- **Dr Kamel Hothi OBE** who provided a lunchtime session on “the strength within” to mark Mental Health Awareness week.
- **Jon Snow**, the multi-award winning news legend, who talked about his fascinating career, which has taken him all over the world.

Upcoming news

The recruitment team are in the process of introducing an onboarding platform, which will allow the firm's future joiners to learn more about the firm, the culture, and find out more about the benefits that will be available to them once they start. The site will include videos, information about recent events and activities, and our staff networks. In addition the site will house all the documents they need to complete prior to joining.

Q&A with Eniga de Montfort

Senior solicitor within Corporate and M&A.

Start date: October 2019

What attracted you to Macfarlanes?

Macfarlanes has a certain attraction for a corporate lawyer because of its excellent reputation for high quality corporate and M&A work. What then clinched it for me was that the co-head of corporate and M&A, whom I met in my final interview, recognised the challenges faced by working mothers and openly discussed the ways in which the department (and the firm more widely) could support me in balancing my childcare commitments with work. The partner took the initiative to broach a tricky subject, which was incredibly refreshing and positive. My husband and I both work full-time so it is important to me to have an employer who understands the reality of a dual-career family.

How would you describe the firm from your first perception to now?

Historically, the firm has been perceived as being traditional. However, since joining the firm I have found Macfarlanes to be a dynamic, high-energy environment where people are keen to explore new workplace ideas and learn from the experience of others; the firm has a number of dedicated forums designed to do this.

The firm is also prioritising its diversity and inclusion initiatives. Our September 2022/March 2023 trainee cohort will be the firm's most diverse cohort to date in regards to BME, social mobility and female hires. The firm is also committed to changing the diversity of its staff at senior levels and there is real positive momentum in this regard.

Whilst it is important to recognise that the diversity and inclusion initiatives at Macfarlanes are still work in progress, the firm has made significant advancement, with concrete actions on this front compared to where it was a few years ago.

How easy was it to integrate into the practice and firm?

As a female from an ethnic minority background I wondered whether I would struggle to find my feet and settle in at Macfarlanes. Partners and staff are

approachable and generous with their time, and the fact that I joined the firm at a busy period meant that I was able to hit the ground running with transactions. I believe that the best way to integrate is to get stuck into work - that's how you form relationships.

How have you felt supported by the firm?

The level of support has been remarkably good because of the resources available. Partners and staff have gone out of their way to help me integrate, and various events were organised to welcome me as a new joiner. I also joined the steering committee for our REACH (race, ethnicity and cultural heritage) staff network, where partners and staff across the firm champion diversity and inclusion activities. This has provided me with opportunities to meet more people outside of my practice group.

What have you most enjoyed since joining the firm?

I have really enjoyed watching the firm embrace the diversity and inclusion challenge on different levels – particularly this year.

Earlier in the year, Macfarlanes signed up as one of 17 initial law firm signatories to Rare's Race Fairness Commitment (RFC). The RFC is data driven and commits us to measuring key data points, including around the recruitment and promotion of BME staff.

The #BlackLivesMatter movement has brought diversity and inclusion into sharp focus for partners. It has been encouraging to see the partners at Macfarlanes recognise the challenge and seek to rise to it.

Covid-19 and Zoom have contributed to the ongoing dialogue regarding challenges faced by working parents. Prior to Covid-19, working parents would leave their family life at home when they would go to work; however, the advent of Zoom has given our colleagues a window into our homes and the personal responsibilities some of us juggle alongside our professional commitments. The partners at Macfarlanes have been very supportive of the working from home culture, recognising the importance of personal circumstances.

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Q&A with Alexandra Gaynor

Paralegal within Investment management, and future trainee. Initially joined the firm as administration assistant within Banking and finance, progressing to paralegal within the group. Start date: May 2017

What attracted you to Macfarlanes?

I wanted to move to a City firm with one main office – this was important to me as I wanted to meet the colleagues I work with instead of working with people in different countries on different time zones. I was also impressed with the firm's reputation in the market.

I initially joined the firm's secretarial team and have progressed to paralegal and more recently, future trainee. The firm is of a size where there is room for people to develop and progress if they put the time in, work hard and prove themselves.

How would you describe the firm from your first perception to now?

From the outside the firm appears to be traditional but that is simply not the case. The firm is dynamic and more relaxed than the external perception. Partners have an open door approach, there is a dress down policy everyday (except for client meetings), and the diversity of staff continues to improve, making the firm more enriched. Staff and partners understand the importance of jointly creating an inclusive environment and the firm has done some great things including educating staff on different religious festivals; this year we've had a "Tea at 3" to celebrate Diwali, an Eid dinner and a Purim party.

What have you most enjoyed since joining the firm?

Aside from the opportunities to progress my career, I've really enjoyed the firm's real-time feedback culture which has allowed me to know how I'm performing and be the best version of myself. Real time feedback makes a big difference as it's too late to receive feedback in an appraisal months after the work you have done. I've also really enjoyed the firmwide events including the netball tournament, charity walk, bake-off and JP Morgan run. There's something for everyone.

Tell us about your journey and the opportunities the firm has provided you?

When I joined the secretarial team I was also studying for a four year, part-time, law degree. The team were very supportive of my studies and helped me to leave work on time to attend lectures, as well as offering me study leave. On completing my second year of university, I asked the head of the department if I could transfer into a paralegal role, which was supported. I continued to leave work on time on the days that I had lectures and, depending on work levels, I would either hand work over to a colleague or return to the office after my lecture. Within my first six months as a paralegal I worked across the practice and strengthened my relationship with partners and associates. I applied for a training contract this year and attended an assessment day, which is exactly the same for internal and external applicants. I was paired with partners who didn't know me to ensure the process was fair. I was thrilled to hear the news that I was successful. Having witnessed first-hand the work of the trainees, the exceptional training and education, and the firm's culture, I knew that Macfarlanes was where I wanted to remain.

What would you say to somebody who is considering applying for a role at Macfarlanes?

Macfarlanes is a great place to learn, be treated as an individual and to develop. If you work hard, put yourself out there and show your ambition, the firm will encourage and support you on your journey. At no point did the firm ever make me feel like the role I started in was all I could ever become. The firm has development programmes which allow you to choose your pathway – there are many examples of employees that have moved within business services departments or from business services roles to paralegals and future trainees.

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