

Partnership Targets Action Plan 2021-2026

Year two update 2023

In May 2021 we launched our Partnership Targets Action Plan which sets out how we plan to improve representation of female and ethnic minority lawyers in our partnership as well as to continue to drive inclusion across the firm.

To learn more about the actions that are underway, please read:

- the original [Action Plan summary](#); and
- [the year one update](#).

We are now reporting on our progress two years on.

1 Improve the diversity of the partnership

Progress two years on

In 2023, eight lawyers were promoted to the partnership, of which 50% were women. From 1 May 2023, 24% of our partners are women and 2% are from an ethnic minority background. We are pleased that progress is being made but recognise this will not be linear year on year.

2 Progress diverse recruitment and attraction

Progress two years on

Trainee recruitment

Throughout 2022/2023, we have continued to deliver events at a range of universities and increased our work with specialist outreach organisations. Towards the end of 2022, we launched our bursary and scholarship programme.

We have designed this [national bursary](#) to account for the financial demands of being a university student and prospective trainee solicitor. There are three grants available – a technology grant, accommodation grant and participation grant.

Through our [training scholarship programme](#), the firm will support three Brunel law students annually through a fully funded programme from the first year of their law degree onwards. The firm will cover the full cost of university tuition fees, alongside paid work experience, a paid placement year at the firm, and mentoring from senior lawyers throughout. This significantly reduces the financial burden faced by many socially mobile graduates when they enter the workplace and gives participants the opportunity to develop their legal knowledge and skills, while building their networks in the profession.

Close to 1400 people have now completed exercises on the [Macfarlanes trainee experience app](#), 57% of whom live in social mobility cold spots. The next phase of this project is to include more practice area exercises.

Continuing our review of our application process and online assessment platforms, we made the following changes during 2022/2023 to enable us to gather a more rounded view of candidates.

- We moved to Rare Recruitment's 'Candid' applicant tracking system.
- Updated our current assessment material.
- Moved away from recruiting on a rolling basis.
- We are working with Cappfinity, a leader in behaviour and strengths-based assessments.

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2 Progress diverse recruitment and attraction (continued)

Progress two years on

Outreach

During 2022/2023, we delivered diversity and inclusion (D&I) and skills building events at the majority of universities with which we partner. This approach, combined with working with organisations such as **upReach**, **Rare Recruitment**, **Aspiring Solicitors** and **Bright Network**, has resulted in us recruiting from a wider range of backgrounds for our 2023 vacation schemes. 38% of all participants are from a socially mobile background and 52% identify as coming from an ethnic minority background. We continue to ensure that our assessment process is unbiased and levels the playing field for those from underrepresented groups.

Our MLA cohort this year comprises year 12 students from a range of schools and colleges in the social mobility “cold spots” of Birkenhead, Essex and various London boroughs.

In late 2022, we also introduced our “Back to School” programme, which encourages Macfarlanes’ employees to use a Community Day (volunteering day) to deliver a careers presentation at a school where students may have limited access to, and knowledge of, City law firms.

Lateral recruitment

Last year 20 of our key recruitment agencies signed up to our new policy to help us identify the widest talent possible for our roles. This year a further four agencies have joined, supporting our goals around inclusive recruitment.

We continue to deepen relationships with specialists and have received positive feedback. For example, a D&I manager at one agency said “After meeting you, I was able to feedback to our team. My overall impression is that Macfarlanes aims to have a relaxed, inclusive, positive and supportive environment for its employees”.

New potential partner roles are subject to a mapping exercise to review the market for all possible candidates. During 2022/2023, four lateral hire partners joined the firm, 50% of which were women.

3 Ensure equality of opportunity and progression

Progress two years on

We continue to review our people policies from a D&I perspective. For example, from feedback gathered across the firm, we launched our Speak up hub, which outlines all the resources available to help people raise something that concerns them.

Each practice area has a Diversity Partner Champion (DPC). The DPCs work closely with the other partners in their practice area to develop and implement their diversity action plans, provide regular updates to their teams, encourage participation and report back to the Policy Committee (our management board) on progress for their practice area.

This year we created a new role of D&I Champions in business services.

We have also been promoting the **Business Services Academy** (a talent development programme) and providing more clarity around the Business Services Framework (a competency framework that assists with performance evaluation).

The Diversity Champions Committee continued to meet this year to support the sharing of best practice and collaboration between the DPCs.

In October 2022 and February 2023, the “people plans” for each practice area were reviewed and updated by the relevant head of practice area, DPC and HR business partner. This process is ongoing.

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4 Understand each other

Progress two years on

During 2023, 19 pairs of partner mentees and reverse mentors from under-represented groups are participating in our reverse mentoring programme, MentorMacs, offering a broad spectrum of intersectional perspectives.

This year we delivered D&I training sessions to practice area partners, PAs, EAs and business services teams.

Laura Durrant also held a series of focus groups during 2023, some with our REACH (race, ethnicity and cultural heritage) network and some open to the firm, in preparation for the delivery of firm wide workshops later on in the year.

5 Be accountable

Progress two years on

Our in-house HR data team has continued to produce data reports and analysis to support the work of the HR business partners, DPCs, practice area heads and senior management.

We submitted our data for year two of the Race Fairness Commitment. The results were circulated by Rare to the signatory firms in May 2023. We are currently reviewing these results.

We continue to participate as one of the founding and steering committee firms of **Legal CORE** (collaboration on race and ethnicity). We hosted a learning exchange event in May 2023 with D&I leads from Legal CORE member firms to discuss data and metrics.

During 2023 we also worked with a number of key clients to share our knowledge and approach around specific D&I programmes.

This year we held a second **Networks Fair**, bringing together and showcasing the work of our four diversity-focused employee Networks and the Green Network.

Throughout 2023 we delivered a series of Network Roadshows; steering committee members from each Network have been raising awareness of the Networks to all teams firm wide.

During 2023, Luke Powell (Managing Partner) and Kate Milliken (Chief Operating Officer) attended the steering committee meetings of each diversity-focused Network to hear more about the work they are doing.