

Gender Pay Gap 2023



Gender pay gap reporting

This report is given pursuant to The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017. We can confirm the accuracy of this information.

Gender pay gap reporting is always retrospective and we most recently reported our pay gap data as 5 April 2021. This report focuses on our pay gap data as at 5 April 2022.

By law, the requirement is to publish data relating to employee pay and bonuses only and not to include our partners. However, we think it is vital that the firm reports the full picture and so, we continue to take the decision to present the figures with and without partners for complete transparency.

The data shows the average difference in hourly earnings between all men and women within our firm. The mean is the average of all the data and the median is the mid-point of the data when the results are ordered by value.

Pay gap data

It is positive to see that both our mean and median pay gaps have seen a decrease from our 2021 figures and are moving in the right direction. We do however continue to see a significant bonus pay gap.

Despite our progress with the pay gap figures, a significant gap does remain with women less represented in more senior roles and therefore over represented in the lower pay quartiles. As we have noted before, reducing the pay gap requires ongoing action and it will take time for these figures to improve even further.

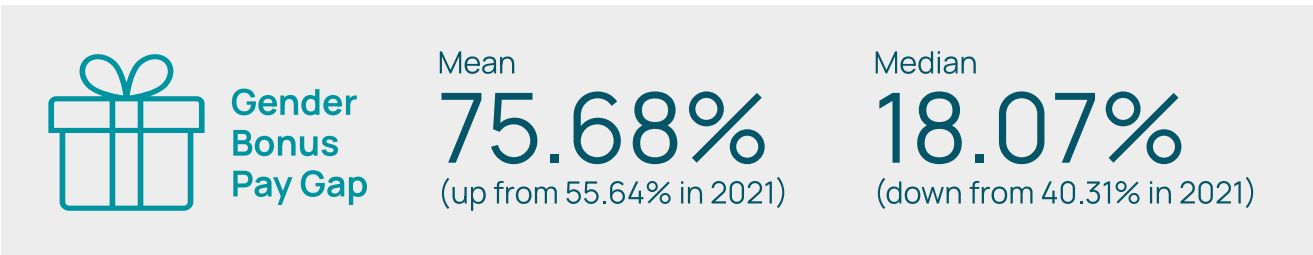
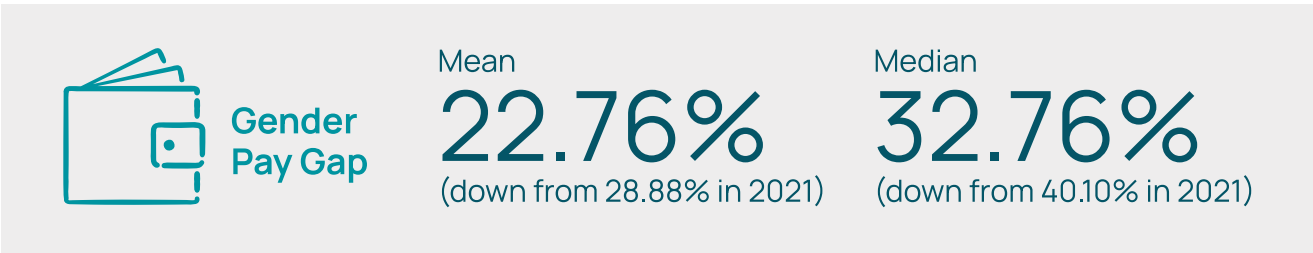
We are conscious and mindful of fair pay. Our regression analysis of pay gap data supports that in terms of comparing pay levels across each group of partners and employees, there is no indication of any pay inequality between men and women in the same or equivalent roles.



The figures in context

Employee only data

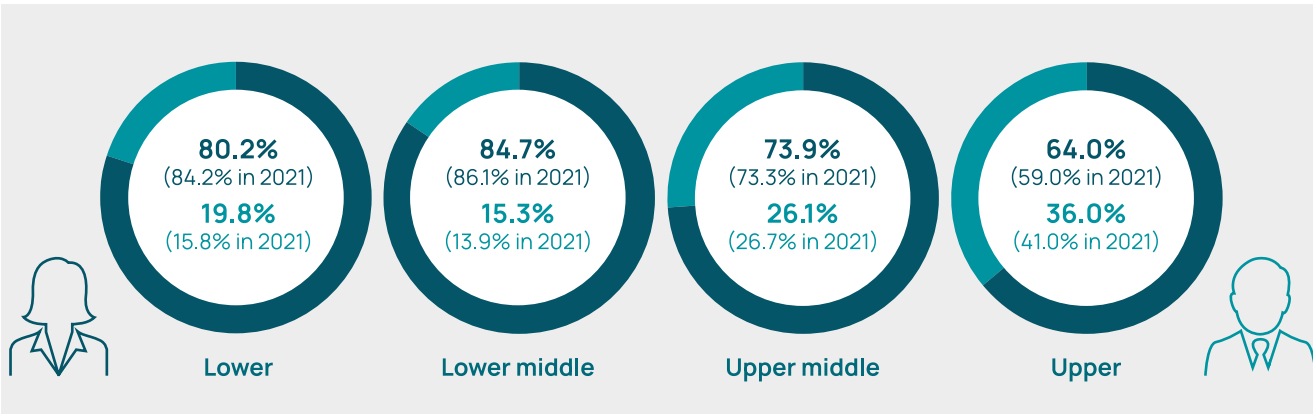
Our statutory key Gender Pay Gap reportable data (thus excluding partners) covering pay as of 5 April 2021, and bonuses paid in the year to 5 April 2021, is as follows:



Proportion of females & males receiving a bonus payment



Proportion of males and females in each pay quartile



Analysis

It is important to note that we continue to have a predominantly female workforce overall which presents a challenge in eradicating our pay gap. We have previously reported that our population breaks down into 75% women and 25% men and this shifted in 2022 to reflect a population of 69% women and 31% men.

Our data also suggests that a person's career level within the firm significantly contributes to the pay gap. This indicates that another key contribution to the pay gap is that despite there being fewer men in the business, they still hold more senior roles in the firm.

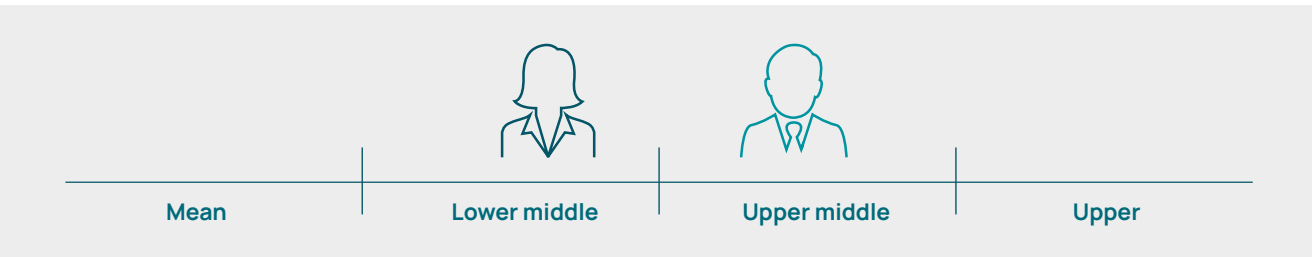
Despite these data points, it is positive to see that the percentage of females in the upper pay quartile has increased in 2022. During this year, the firm saw a high percentage of female promotions (73.1%) over male promotions (26.9%), demonstrating our strong commitment to supporting female progression across the business.

We also saw more men join the firm into entry level or junior roles, therefore increasing the male representation in our lower and lower middle pay quartiles. Both these trends will have influenced and helped to reduce our pay gap in 2022.

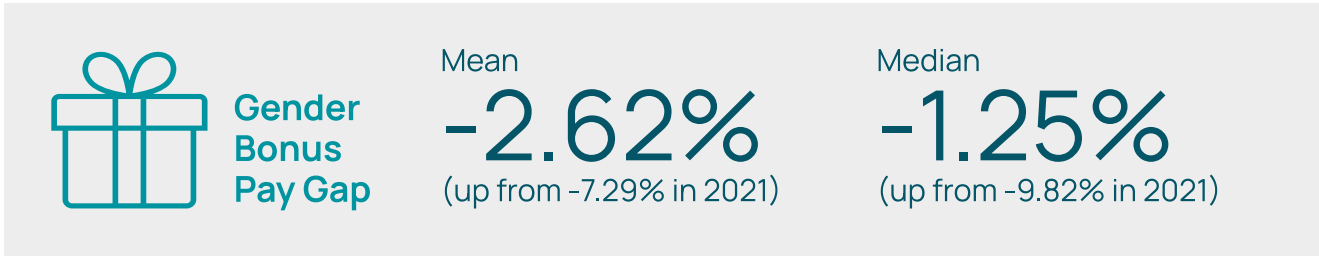
It is disappointing that our bonus pay gap has increased again. Overall, the data suggests that while a higher percentage of women receive bonuses, we have more men sitting in the upper pay quartile and with the bonus received being directly linked to base pay, the bonus gap continues to be prevalent for us.

However, it's worth noting that the significant difference between the mean and median pay gap suggests that a few outliers may significantly contribute to this overall bonus pay gap.

Median point for men and women in relation to quartiles



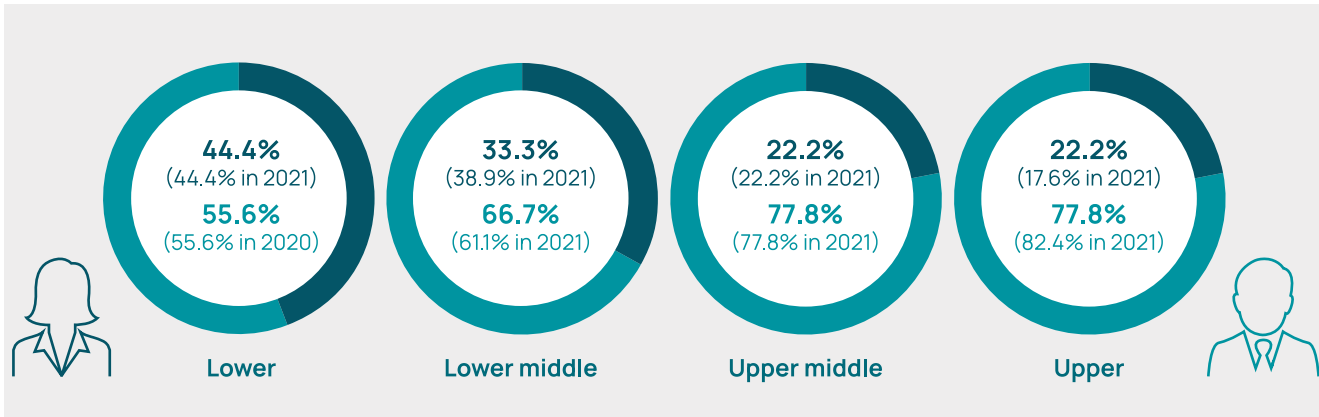
Partner only data



Proportion of females & males receiving a bonus payment



Proportion of males and females in each pay quartile

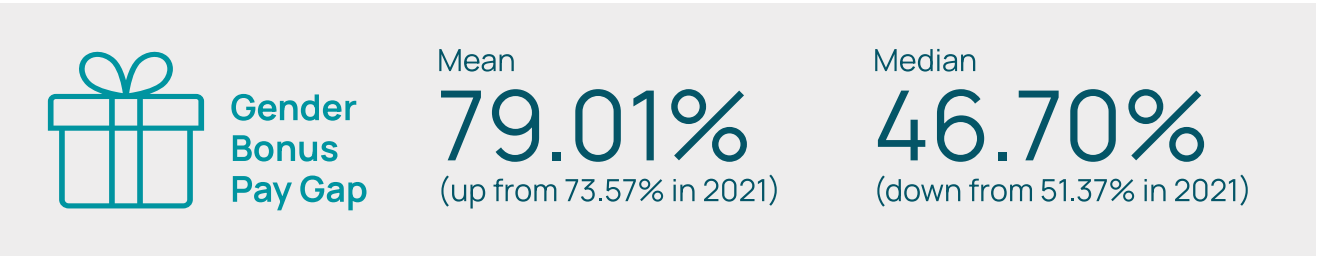
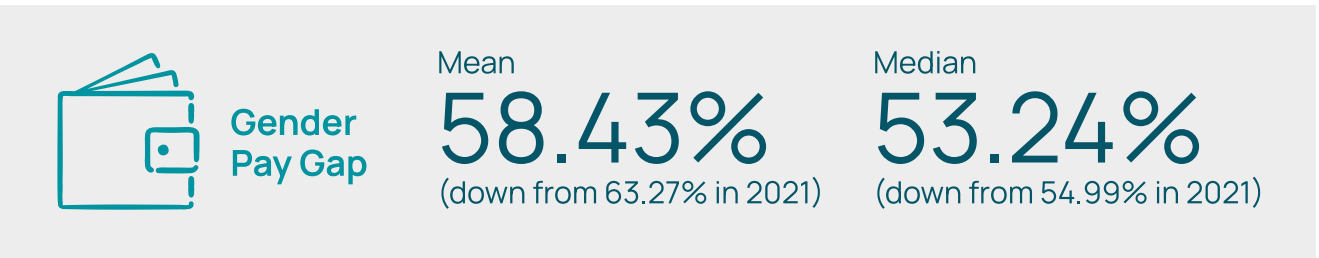


Analysis

The mean Partner pay gap saw a further decrease in 2022 compared to 2021 and 2020. This continues to show positive signs of female progression through the Partnership with more females moving into the upper pay quartile. In terms of progression into the partnership, 2022 saw

more men than women promoted internally, demonstrating that there is still work to be done in relation to having more equal representation of male and female partners across the quartiles and to see more women moving through from the lower quartile into the lower middle and upper middle quartiles.

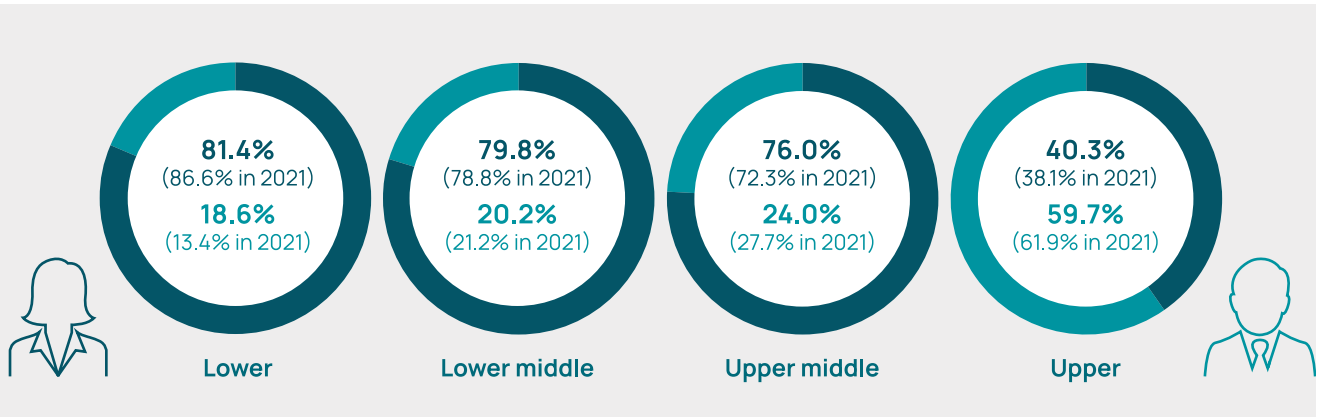
Combined partner & employee data



Proportion of females & males receiving a bonus payment



Proportion of males and females in each pay quartile



Analysis

In combining Partner and employee data, there continues to be more men than women occupying the upper pay quartile, although it is positive to see the representation of women increase slightly in 2022. While we also continue to have significantly more

women than men occupying the lower pay quartile, it is also positive to see the slight increase in male representation here. An increase in the proportion of men in our lower pay quartile in 2022 also led to a decrease in our combined median pay gap.

Our commitment

Our aim is to ensure that everyone at Ashfords understands that they have an equal opportunity to succeed at work and progress within the firm, recognising that everyone is different and taking account of individual circumstances.

While recognising that initiatives to address the gender pay gap are not about quick wins but longer term strategic and cultural change, we continue to take a number of actions to positively contribute to desired change. These have included:

These have included:

- Continual refreshing of our Ways of Working framework, most recently in February 2023, recognising and understanding the relationship between flexible working and productivity, and ensuring consistency of approach.
 - Our first annual employee survey in December 2022 demonstrated that our people are broadly happy with our approach to Ways of Working
- Developing our wellbeing strategy to impact on the broadest range of people across the business, taking their physical, mental, emotional and financial needs into account.
 - We have created an annual calendar of events with a key wellbeing focus each month to take into account a broad range of individual and group needs, including focusing on areas like men's health and the menopause.
- We are improving our support to parents and those with caring responsibilities by introducing a series of parenting workshops and providing better and more consistent support to people returning from maternity, shared parental or other leave. We are in the process of reviewing our family leave policies and have recently introduced coaching support for maternity returners.
- Introducing our Ashfords Diversity Group, led by a Partner and focused on keeping diversity, equity and inclusion front of mind when embracing and engaging with the firm's values. There are three distinct pillars of activity
 - working practices, education & awareness and events & celebrations
 - with a broad range of employees getting involved.

- Focusing on employee engagement and responding to those needs through the introduction of an annual employee survey, the regular use of shorter pulse surveys on specific topics and focus groups. We are in the process of establishing both special interest groups (eg Menopause, Women's Affinity, Working Parents) and career level networking groups.
- Continuing to provide good career support through career level briefings, development centres for recently promoted individuals, access to coaching where appropriate, regular 121s and performance review discussions.
- Continuing to open up alternative routes into law through apprenticeships and study support towards professional qualifications, most recently launching our Solicitor Apprenticeship route.
- Continuing to use the Rare Contextual Recruitment System in our trainee recruitment process to support us in making informed decisions about applications from people with different backgrounds.
- Continuing to operate a fair and objective recruitment process with regards to lateral hiring.
- Building a network of contacts at local schools and colleges to improve social mobility at the junior recruitment level and to actively promote and encourage the broad range of entry level roles and career opportunities we can offer to both men and women.
- Continuing as a signatory to the Law Society's Charter for Diversity & Inclusion.



Louise Workman, CEO





ashfords

Exeter

Ashford House,
Grenadier Road,
Exeter EX1 3LH
T: +44 (0)1392 337000

Bristol

Tower Wharf,
Cheese Lane,
Bristol BS2 0JJ
T: +44 (0)117 321 8000

London

1 New Fetter Lane
London EC4A 1AN
T: +44 (0)20 7544 2424

Plymouth

Princess Court,
23 Princess Street,
Plymouth PL1 2EX
T: +44 (0)1752 526000

Taunton

Ashford Court,
Blackbrook Park Avenue,
Taunton TA1 2PX
T: +44 (0)1823 232300

Ashfords LLP
ashfords.co.uk