

# Gender Pay Gap

April 2025





# 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 of 5 April 2023. This new report focuses on our pay gap data as of 5 April 2024.

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

We are pleased to report that our mean employee gender pay gap has decreased for the fourth consecutive year. While the slight increase in the median pay gap is disappointing, it does reflect the higher representation of women in roles within the lower quartiles.

On a positive note, the employee bonus pay gap has seen a significant reduction this year, continuing to move in the right direction. Although a gap still exists, it is much smaller than in previous years, and this progress is encouraging.

While there is a slight increase in our partner pay gap figures this year, a closer analysis of the data reveals that recent female promotions had an unintended negative impact as more women are now in the lower quartile of the partnership. These promotions represent a positive and important step toward equity within the partnership but it will take time for these promotions to have a more favourable impact on the gender pay gap data.

Despite significant progress in recent years, a gap does remain with women still underrepresented in senior roles and, as a result, over represented in the lower pay quartiles. As we have noted before, reducing the pay gap requires sustained effort, and it will take time for these figures to improve even further.

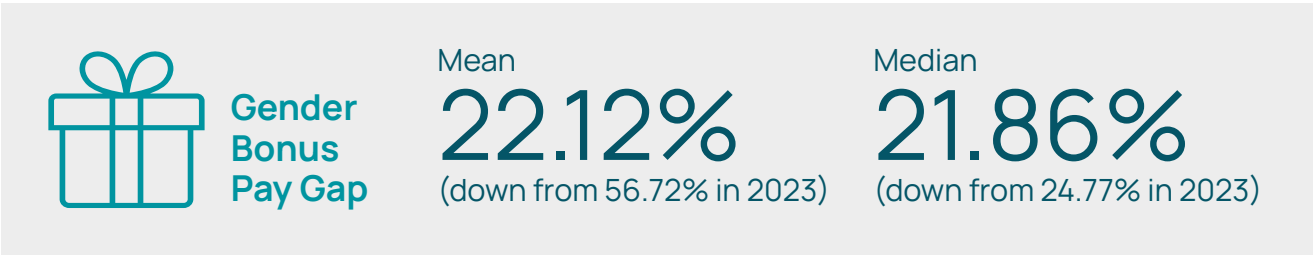
We are conscious and mindful of fair pay. Our regression analysis of pay gap data supports that in terms of comparing pay levels across each group of partners and employees, there is no indication of pay inequality between men and women in the same or equivalent roles.



# The figures in context

## Employee only data

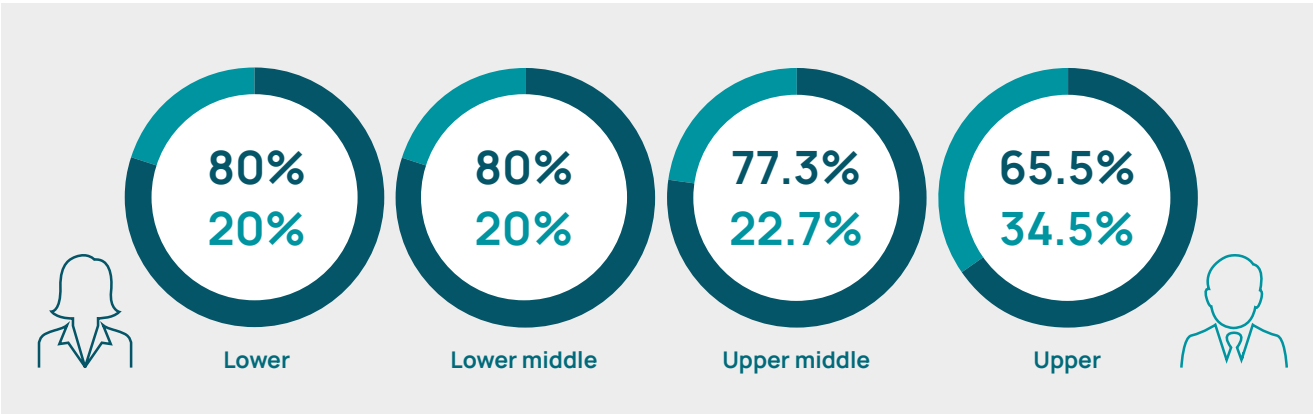
Our statutory key gender pay gap reportable data (thus excluding partners) covering pay as of 5 April 2024 and bonuses paid in the year to 5 April 2024 is as follows:



## Proportion of females and males receiving a bonus payment



## Proportion of females and males in each pay quartile



## Analysis

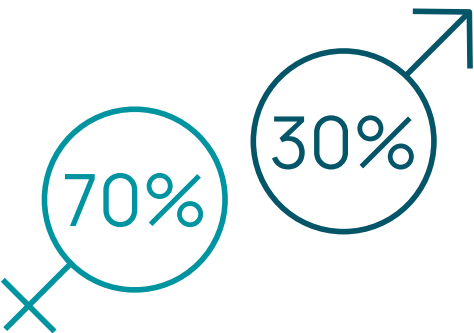
It is important to note that we continue to have a predominantly female workforce overall which presents a challenge in eradicating our pay gap. We have previously reported that our population breaks down into 71% women and 29% men and this remained consistent in 2024 with a 70% female and 30% male split.

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.

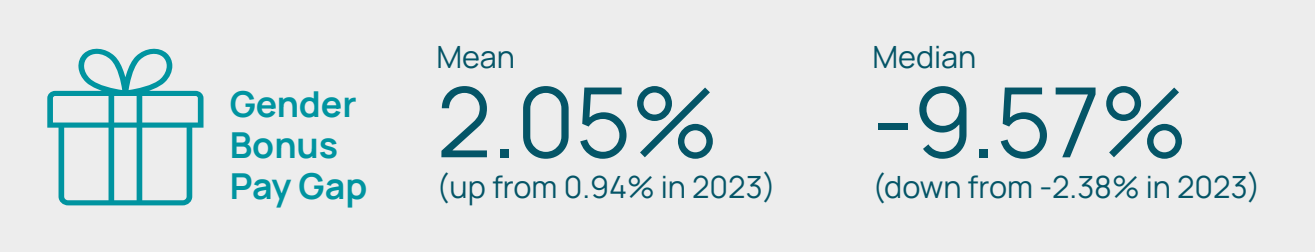
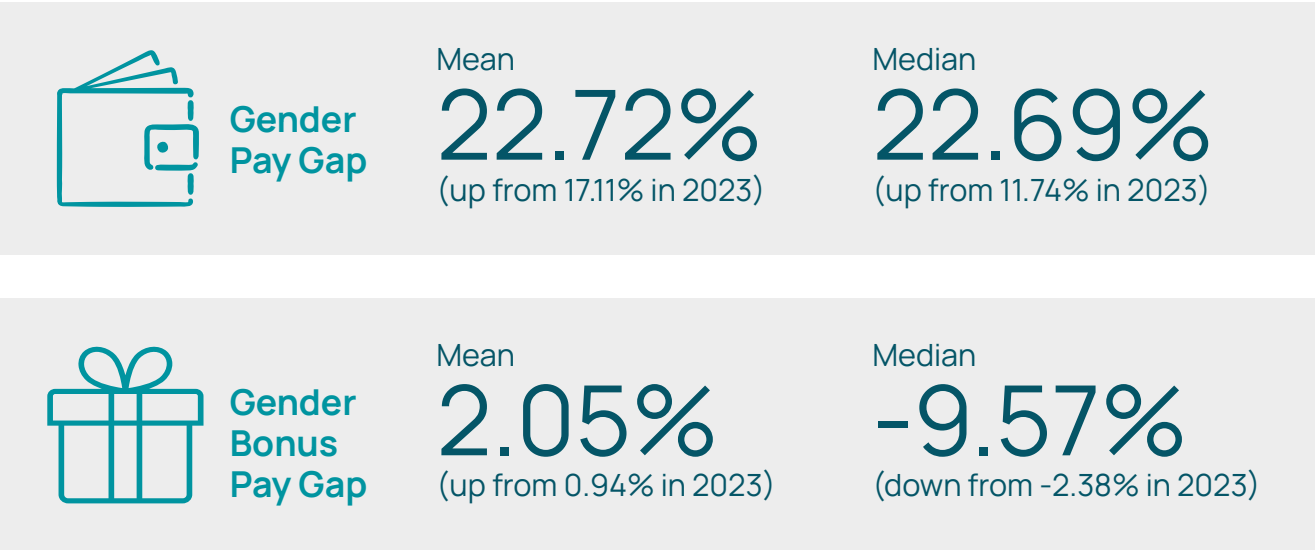
However, the firm once again saw a high percentage of female promotions (69%) over male promotions (31%) this year, demonstrating our strong commitment to supporting female progression across the business. The progression of females into the upper middle and upper quartiles has contributed to our mean gender pay gap coming down.

It is encouraging that our mean bonus gap has decreased significantly in 2024, and that the median bonus gap also decreased. With more men sitting in the upper pay quartile and with the bonus received being directly linked to base pay, the bonus gap does continue to be prevalent for us.

## Gender Split



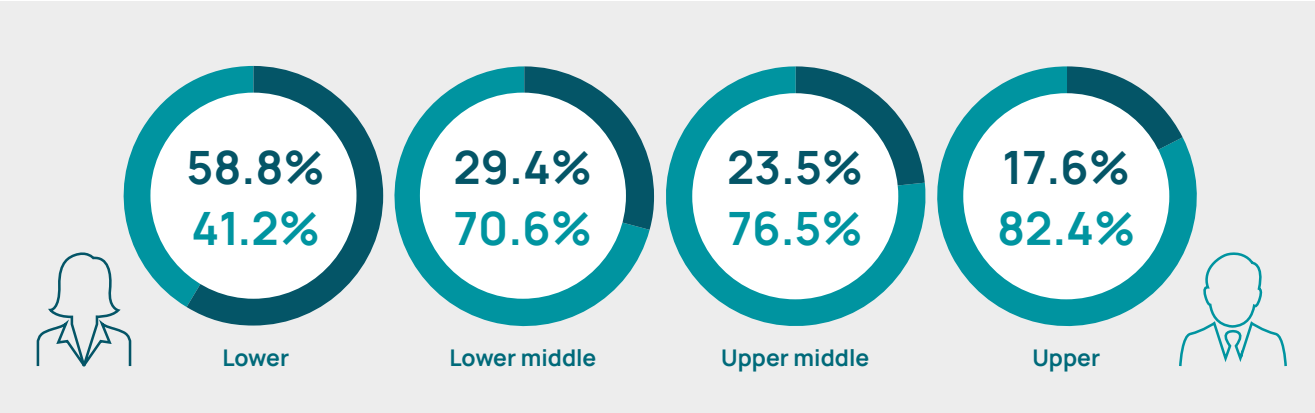
Partner only data



Proportion of females and males receiving a bonus payment



Proportion of females and males in each pay quartile

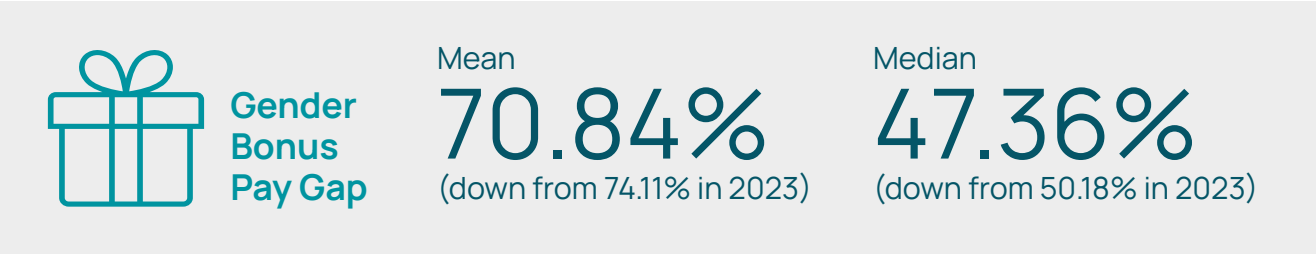
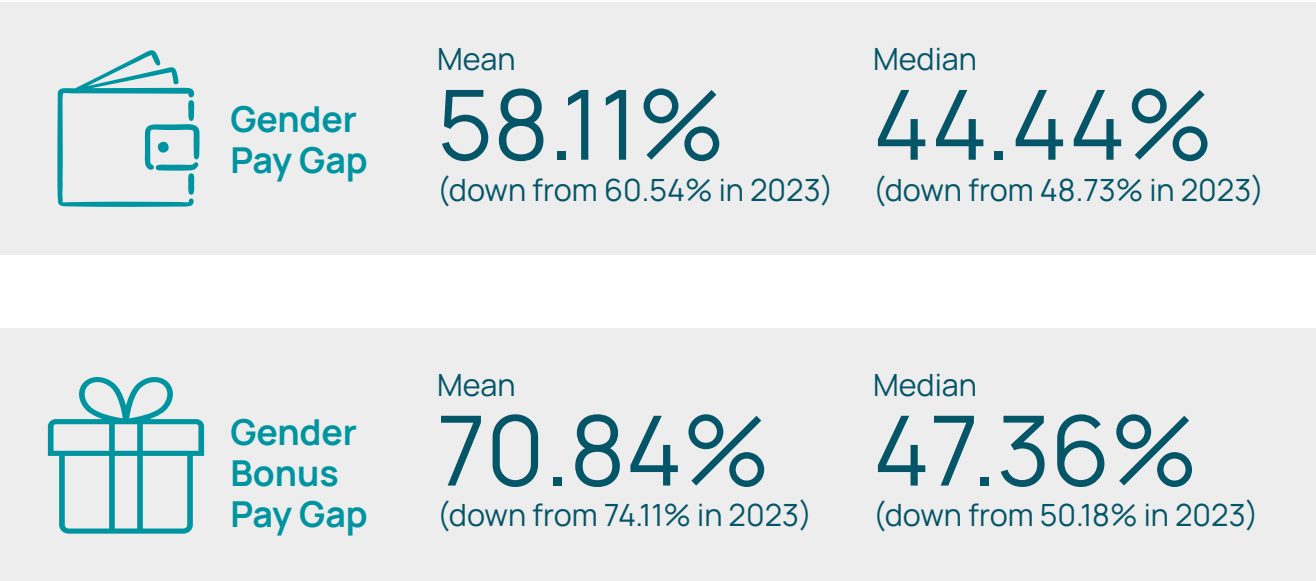


Analysis

After four consecutive years of decreases to our mean pay gap within the partnership, we have observed a slight increase this year. While disappointing, the increase can be attributed to recently promoted female partners increasing the number of females in the lower quartile. In 2023, we were delighted to have an equal number of men and women promoted to the partnership, a positive

step toward more equal representation. Unfortunately, because of the relatively small size of this group, even a small shift can negatively impact the pay gap. These promotions are an important step but won't start to decrease the pay gap until these females move through to the upper quartiles, which will likely take a number of years.

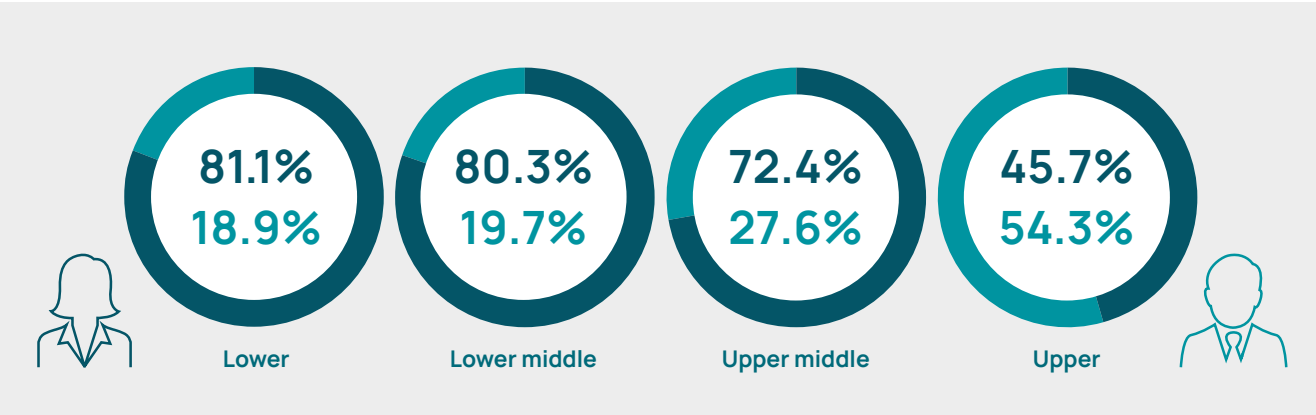
Combined partner and employee data



Proportion of females and 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. It is however positive to see a 5% increase in the representation of women in the upper quartile in 2024. We also continue to

have significantly more women than men occupying the lower pay quartile, although it is again positive to note a 4.5% increase in males being recruited into entry level and junior roles in 2023/4.

# Our commitment

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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:

- Continuing to operate a flexible, hybrid working model through our Ways of Working framework.
- Developing our wellbeing strategy to impact on the broadest range of people across the business – we have created an annual calendar of events with key focuses across mental, physical and financial wellbeing. We have a number of resources available to our people including a wellbeing app and financial education sessions.
- We are committed to improving our support to parents and those with caring responsibilities. Our membership with Employers for Carers is helping us to create an inclusive, carer-friendly workplace. We recently reviewed our family leave policies, increasing maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental pay for eligible employees.
- We have a number of employee led inclusion groups, working hard to keep diversity, equality and inclusion front of mind. The groups have four main focuses; Gender & Sexuality, Neurodiversity, Social Mobility and Race & Religion.
- Focusing on employee engagement

and responding to those needs through the introduction of an annual people survey, the regular use of shorter pulse surveys on specific topics and focus groups.

- Our Menopause Group has become well established since its launch in 2023. The group aims to educate and raise awareness of menopause in the workplace but also provides a valuable support network to our people. We are committed to becoming a menopause friendly employer and the menopause group are leading the way toward achieving this accreditation.
- Continuing to provide a variety of learning and development opportunities to support and enable individuals and teams to excel in their career with us. We have designed a curriculum which has something for colleagues at every stage of their career.

This includes core business topics and leadership development topics. We also have an ongoing management development programme in place to equip people managers to better support their teams and enhance their employee experience.

- Continuing to open up alternative routes into law through apprenticeships and study support towards professional qualifications.

In 2024, we welcomed our latest cohort of apprentices, including four paralegal apprentices. 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 Diversity and Inclusion Charter.

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

Ashfords LLP  
**ashfords.co.uk**