

ashfords

GENDER PAY GAP 2022



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retrospective and we most recently reported our pay gap data as 5 April 2020, whilst also reflecting on our previously unpublished pay gap data as at 5 April 2019. This report focuses on our pay gap data as at 5 April 2021.

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 you are given 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.

COVID-19

It is also worth noting that as we began to make use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme from 1 April 2020, furlough impacted our publishable pay gap as at 5 April 2020. By law, we can only include employees receiving full pay in our calculations, therefore 137 employees had to be excluded from our data set when, under normal circumstances, they would have been included.

We therefore conducted a data analysis including all furloughed employees in order to show how our 2020 pay gap would have looked had the furlough scheme not been in operation. For the purposes of this report, we have provided our 2021 pay gap data and our pay gap data including furloughed employees from 2020.

PAY GAP DATA

Whilst our median pay gap saw a small decrease in 2021, our mean pay gap has disappointingly seen a further increase. These movements are, in part, due to the way in which we are required to report the data but also serves to highlight the amount of work and the time it will take for these figures to improve.

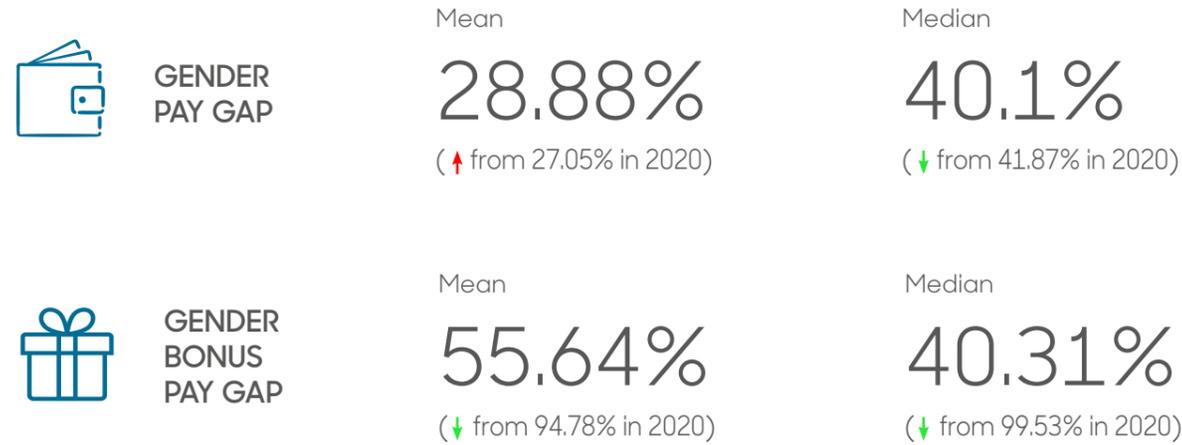
We are conscious and mindful of fair pay and in comparing pay levels across each group of partners and employees, there is no indication of any pay inequality between men and women in the same or equivalent roles.



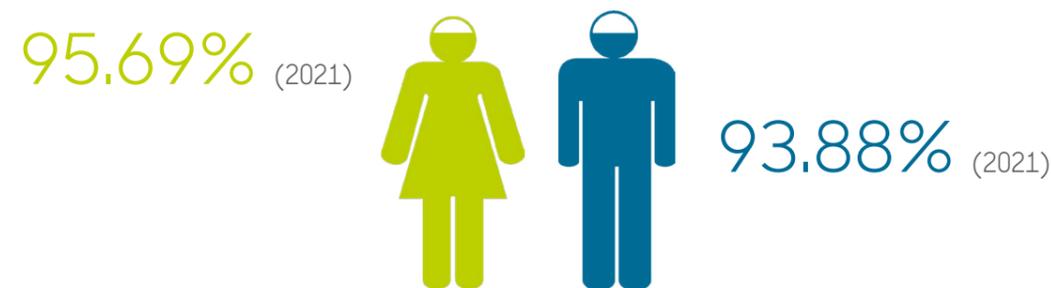
THE FIGURES IN CONTEXT

EMPLOYEE ONLY DATA

Our statutory key Gender Pay Gap reportable data (in other words, 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 have a predominantly female workforce, with a population of 76% women and 24% men. This presents a challenge as, to completely eradicate our pay gap, these proportions would ultimately need to be mirrored across all of our pay quartiles.

What we have seen in the 2021 pay gap data is an increase in our mean pay gap. This is because we had a small decrease in female representation in our upper quartile. Notably, we had 16 Bristol and London based male employees in our upper quartile in 2020, compared to 18 female employees. In 2021, the number of male employees increased to 20 whilst the number of female employees remained the same. A smaller proportion of men in the business overall means that even a very slight increase in the number of senior male employees into higher salary locations such as Bristol and London, has a visible impact on our mean pay gap.

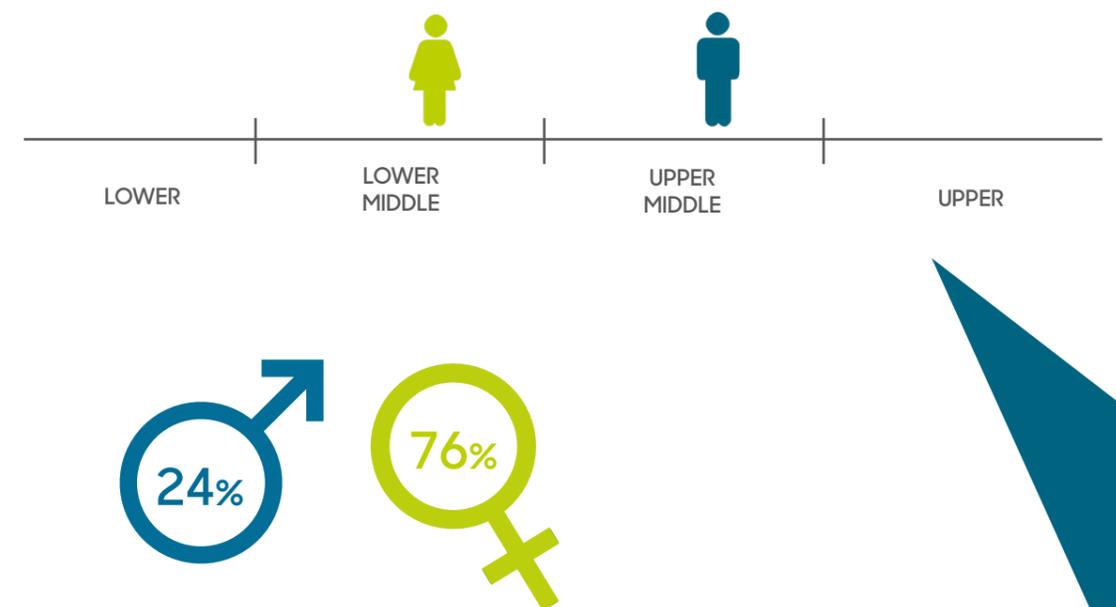
As part of our data analysis, we also need to consider the extent to which employee turnover and promotions across the business influence our gender pay gap each year as employee movements have the ability to both reduce and increase our pay gap. In 2021, three female employees moved into the upper quartile as a result of promotions and 10 new female employees joined the business in the upper middle and upper quartiles between May 2020 and April 2021, compared to 8 male employees.

This clearly shows that we are invested in female progression within the business, however it has a limited effect on our gender pay gap as there continues to be a much higher number of women occupying business support roles compared to men. In 2021, the percentage of women in our lower pay quartile further increased from 80.2% to 84.2%, which ultimately lowered the average female rate of pay and therefore increased our overall pay gap.

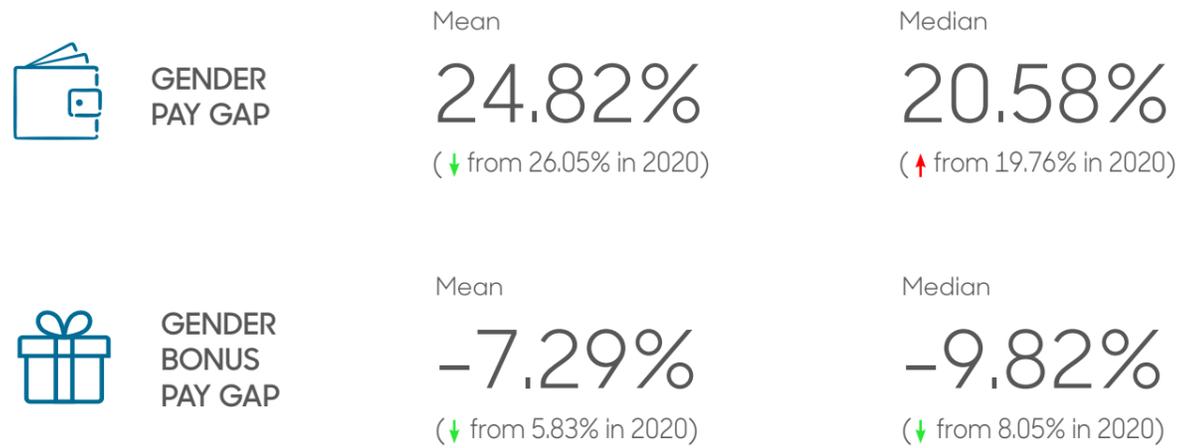
MEDIAN PAY GAP

Our median pay gap has decreased slightly in 2021. We had 98 male employees in the business in 2021, compared to 96 in 2020 with the biggest increase in male representation in the upper middle quartile, where the median male rate of pay hits. The additional male employees in this quartile entered at the lower end of the upper middle pay scale, which reduced the median rate of male pay and caused this small reduction in our median pay gap.

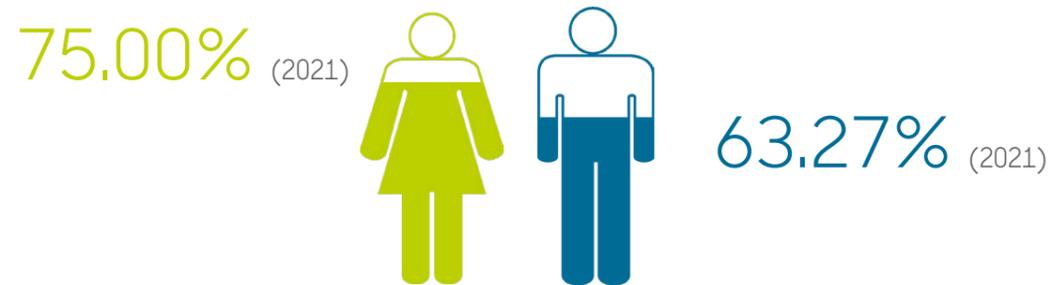
MEDIAN POINT FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN RELATION TO QUARTILES



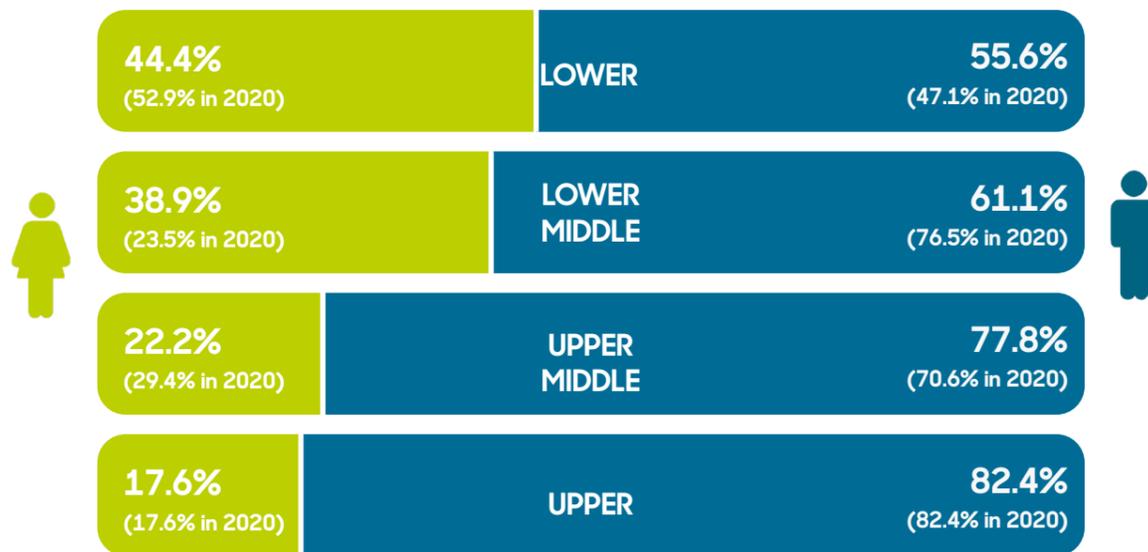
PARTNER ONLY DATA



PROPORTION OF FEMALES & MALES RECEIVING A BONUS PAYMENT



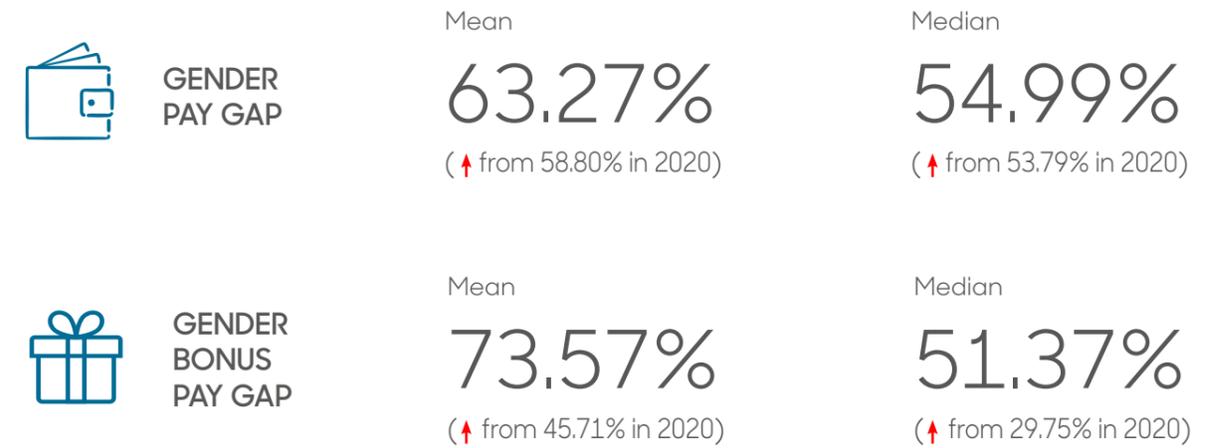
PROPORTION OF MALES AND FEMALES IN EACH PAY QUARTILE



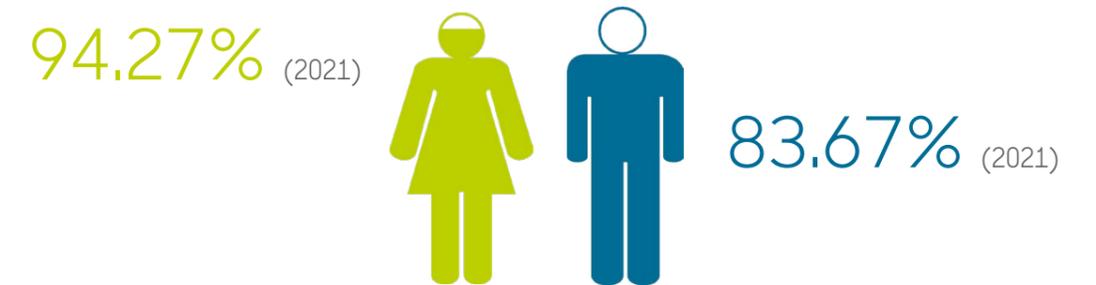
ANALYSIS

The mean Partner pay gap saw a small decrease in 2021 compared to 2020. The proportions of male and female employees in the upper quartile remain unchanged, therefore the decrease in the mean pay gap can be attributed to movement in the lower quartiles, notably the lower middle quartile where female representation has increased, therefore increasing the average rate of female Partner pay. This is a positive sign of female progression through the Partnership. The median Partner pay gap saw a small increase in 2021 due to the increased male representation in the upper middle quartile as a result of three new male Partners joining the business, where the median point hits.

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. There also continues to be significantly more women than men occupying the lower pay quartile, with that number increasing further in 2021. These two factors in combination means that our combined mean pay gap data saw an increase in 2021. An increase in the proportion of women in our lower pay quartile in 2021 also led to an increase in our combined median pay gap as it lowered the median point of female pay, whilst the male median point of pay remained largely unchanged.

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.

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

These have included:

- Promoting the framework that supports our more flexible Ways of Working approach, recognising and understanding the relationship between flexible working and productivity, and ensuring consistency of approach.
- Ensuring that we weave the importance of being inclusive (and avoiding unconscious bias) into all our development programmes, including recent Management Development training for all Partners, Senior Lawyers and Business Support Managers.
- Providing good career support through conference day events for all Career Levels, 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 as a signatory to the Law Society's Charter for Diversity & Inclusion.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

Over the coming months we will be:

- Encouraging the development of mentoring networks within the business, giving people access to recognised role models.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 our involvement with relevant professional female networking groups and establishing a broader range of networks for other under-represented groups.



Louise Workman, CEO



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