At Hill Dickinson, we understand the importance of creating a diverse and inclusive workplace and the far-reaching benefits it brings to our people, our clients and our business. We continuously work towards creating an environment where everybody is treated equally, with respect, and where differences are celebrated.

Our CEO, Peter Jackson, champions our diversity and inclusion initiatives and ensures that our values are embedded across the firm:

“We understand that our power as a firm comes from empowering our people. Only by encouraging and enabling individuals to be themselves at work can we truly benefit from their rich and varied strengths. Across the firm, we are working together to create an inclusive culture where everybody can reach their full potential.”

To help us break down any perceived barriers to recruitment, progression and retention, and offer equal opportunities to all, we have created a six pillar-programme as follows:

- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Accessibility, health and wellbeing
- LGBTQ+
- Social mobility
- Age

These pillars provide structure and focus when it comes to planning our activity and driving progress.

More about our current and planned activity within each pillar

Gender

In 2019 we set an aspirational target to double the number of women in senior roles by 2024. In support of this, we have reviewed and updated our promotions processes, billing targets, internal policies and Parenting Matters programme, as well as introducing gender-neutral language, career development plans, and much more.

Our latest dataset shows that we are on our way to achieving this target. Percentages of women have increased since 2019 in all senior positions, except at legal director level. We are, however, running an internal and external campaign to help change this and improve overall diversity over the next 12 months. The purpose of this campaign is twofold. Internally, we will better support existing colleagues to progress through the business by working with them to create solid career development plans and relaunching our mentoring programme. Externally, a recruitment campaign focusing on those who may be looking to return to the law following a career break, as we believe there is an untapped pool of talent here.
Race and ethnicity
We are committed to opening up the profession for Black, Asian and ethnic minority individuals and recognise that we have some way to go in driving change within our firm and the wider legal industry. To support this, we have become corporate members of the Black Solicitors Network, signed the Race Fairness Commitment and enlisted in the 10,000 Black Interns Programme.

Accessibility, health and wellbeing
Given the challenging circumstances the world has been facing since March 2020, we have placed considerable importance on ensuring our people feel supported and that they know how to access resources to support their mental health and wellbeing. There has been regular communication with our people, and a focus placed on creating a safe environment where people feel comfortable to talk and share their feelings and experiences.

In May, we signed the Mindful Business Charter to reinforce the importance we place on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our people. We have created a plan to embed the principles of the charter into our culture and adapt behaviours. This will be a focus for us over the next 12 months.

LGBTQ+
We have placed great importance on communicating key dates in the LGBTQ+ calendar and sharing knowledge and experiences via our internal networking group. Our partnerships with experts in this area provide assurances that we are doing everything we can to make our firm a welcoming environment for individuals in the LGBTQ+ community, whether employees or clients.

Social mobility
In addition to the collaborations we have in place surrounding our graduate recruitment activity, we have developed a school outreach programme, piloted in Liverpool, tailor-made to the school’s requirements and delivered by our people. The goal is to widen our reach and move into the remaining UK locations in which we operate.

Age
We want to ensure that all generations working in the firm feel valued, supported and understood, and enable them to work efficiently and collaboratively with the right support to deliver a quality service for our clients. As such, we have assessed our benefits offerings, communicated age-related health and wellbeing initiatives and sessions, such as our ‘Let’s talk about menopause lunch and learn’, and reviewed our support and processes in line with our multi-generational talent.

There is significant activity taking place across each of our six pillars, further details of which, including the charities and organisations we collaborate with and the commitments we have made, can be found on our website: Diversity and inclusion | Hill Dickinson.

Other initiatives
Equality leads
We have nominated equality leads within the business, who:
• help create a safe space for our people to raise concerns or talk about particular problems, on an informal and confidential basis;
• provide informal and impartial advice and act as a sounding board to discuss issues and potential solutions
• signpost further support and guidance, highlighting where issues need to be escalated to HR.

Networking groups
We have introduced networking groups that mirror each of the six pillars within our D&I framework. These provide opportunities to knowledge-share, put forward ideas and plan activities and communications. We have also recently introduced additional menopause and parenting networking groups.

D&I calendar
We have created a diversity and inclusion awareness days calendar, put together by our D&I leads and networking groups, to ensure we acknowledge and celebrate dates important to our people. Each month, our colleagues host an internal talk focusing on a particular date/event in the calendar. This is an opportunity for us as a firm to open the conversation and continue the dialogue surrounding key topics within our diversity and inclusion framework.

Role model campaign
We celebrate our diverse workforce through shared personal experiences written directly by our people. They are an opportunity to highlight and celebrate individuals’ journeys and backgrounds and discuss any obstacles encountered and solutions found. They also help showcase the routes and pathways into various law careers, demonstrating that anybody can pursue a career in the legal industry, no matter their circumstances or situation.

Our data
It’s important to highlight the timeframe between our last data collection in 2019 and current data in 2021 is just 18 months and we therefore expect to see further significant changes in future reports.

The response rate for information has increased from 68% in 2019 to an average of 82%, demonstrating a positive shift in internal culture, behaviours and engagement. This suggests that our people recognise the importance we place on capturing this information in order for us to benchmark our progress and implement change.

*Data current as at July 2021
*Percentages and totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding up and/or down
Day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months - UK

- Yes - limited a lot: 0.3%
- Yes - limited a little: 4.0%
- No: 89.0%
- Prefer not to say: 2.2%
- Non declared: 4.5%
Either parent attended university by the time you were 18 - UK

- No, neither of my parents attended university: 45.0%
- Yes, one or both of my parents attended university: 22.3%
- Don't know/not sure: 2.5%
- Prefer not to say: 4.5%
- Non declared: 25.7%

Primary carer for a child or children under 18 - UK

- Yes: 28.5%
- No: 66.8%
- Prefer not to say: 1.7%
- Non declared: 3.1%

Occupation of main household earner when you were about 14 - UK

- Modern professional and traditional professional occupations: 28.6%
- Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators: 16.6%
- Clerical and intermediate occupations: 9.3%
- Technical and craft occupations: 9.3%
- Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations: 14.1%
- Small business owners who employed less than 25 people: 4.9%
- Long term unemployed: 1.9%
- Other e.g. retired/does not apply to me/I don’t know: 3.5%
- Prefer not to say: 7.8%
- Non declared: 8.4%

Look after or care for someone with long term physical or mental ill health caused by disability or age (not in a paid capacity) - UK

- No: 85.8%
- Yes (1-19 hours a week): 5.7%
- Yes (20-49 hours a week): 0.5%
- Yes (50 or more hours a week): 0.5%
- Prefer not to say: 3.8%
- Non declared: 3.8%