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# Gender Pay Gap Report 2026

A law firm dedicated to making the difference.





# About Brabners

Brabners is a leading independent law firm with a national reach that is proudly anchored in the North. Its purpose is to demonstrate that business can bring about positive change by being innovative, diverse and sustainable, which is achieved through its mission to 'make the difference' for its clients, people and the communities it serves.

The firm provides legal services for a wide range of clients, from large and mid-sized businesses and ambitious small and medium-sized enterprises to public sector bodies, charities, entrepreneurs and high-net-worth individuals, senior professionals, athletes and celebrities.

Brabners is recognised as one of the UK's best law firms to work for by Best Companies, as well as one of the UK's top-ranked large employers and is a certified B Corp. It features regularly in The Times' annual Best Law Firms and was named Regional Law Firm of the Year at the Legal Business Awards 2025, as well as Firm of the Year at the Legal 500 Northern Powerhouse Awards. It has also been recognised for leading in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), winning awards at both the Liverpool and Manchester Law Society Legal Awards.

Founded in 1815, the firm has close to 600 colleagues across five offices in Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Lancashire and London.





**Nik White**  
**Managing Partner**

# Introduction

This year, we received our B Corp certification for the second time and were awarded Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Firm of the Year at the Legal 500 Northern Powerhouse Awards. This reflects our continued commitment to being a purpose-led firm and our belief that business can contribute positively through sustained action. Our 2026 Gender Pay Gap report sits within this broader context, alongside our recognition by Best Companies as one of the UK's Best Law Firms to Work For. Together, these milestones reflect our ongoing efforts to build a more diverse and inclusive firm, where all colleagues feel valued, supported and able to progress, regardless of gender or identity.

The wider legal sector continues to face structural challenges at senior levels, with men still disproportionately represented in leadership roles. The Solicitors Regulation Authority has reported that while women now make up a slight majority of lawyers in England and Wales, men continue to hold most full equity partner positions. Against this backdrop, our latest report shows a continued reduction in the partnership gender pay gap, with a clear year-on-year downward trend and a gradual rebalancing in favour of our female colleagues across all quartiles. While there is more to do, this provides reassurance that progress is being made at senior levels because of sustained, long-term effort.

One of the reasons for the short-term movement in this year's figures is that our long-term approach is beginning to take effect. We have been consciously increasing the number of women we recruit and strengthening the pathways that support development and progression over time.

At present, this work is having its greatest impact in the lower pay quartiles. While this has contributed to a widening of the overall gap this year, these initiatives are intended to reduce it sustainably as colleagues progress through the firm and as more women progress into senior roles over time.

This year's quartile analysis shows that most pay gaps remain below 5%. The relatively low gaps across most quartiles are encouraging, as they indicate comparable pay for men and women within the same quartile.

Although we would have preferred to report a reduction in our overall gender pay gap this year, we remain confident that our long-term approach is the right one. The actions we are taking are focused on addressing the underlying causes of the gap and are designed to deliver lasting and sustainable change.

We look ahead with a continued focus on progress and learning, recognising that meaningful change takes sustained effort. As we reflect again next year, we will do so with a clear view of the impact of the work underway and a continued commitment to the values that guide us at Brabners — being ambitious, showing we care, doing what's right and standing together.



**Laura Cordingley**  
Chief Operating Officer

# Reflections & shaping the future

Reflecting on the work delivered so far, we can see strong foundations now firmly in place across our people plans, with our continued focus on strengthening key people processes enhancing fairness, consistency and long-term capability across the firm — an approach reflected in our recognition as one of the UK's top 10 best large companies to work for in 2025 and a Stand Out Employer of Choice.

Talent Acquisition is firmly embedded as a specialist function, supporting equitable and consistent hiring practices underpinned by robust salary benchmarking. Whilst our evolved candidate sourcing approach ensures we reach and attract more diverse talent. Our approach to trainee and junior solicitor recruitment is intentionally designed to build a strong future talent pipeline, and although this can create short-term fluctuations, it strengthens our long-term trajectory by broadening access and supporting sustainable progression. Alongside this, the introduction of a more structured and evidence-based salary review process, grounded in external and internal benchmarking, has brought greater clarity and consistency to pay decisions.

Together, these reinforce a more transparent and equitable people framework, supporting our broader commitment to fair progression and pay equity.

**As we look forward, we know that we need to focus and continue to drive our efforts in the places that make the difference and look to erode systemic blockers to equality. There is no quick fix.**

We will continue to strengthen leadership capability, improving data visibility and ensuring consistency in decision making across the employee lifecycle. While progress remains gradual, our data confirms that the actions we are taking are the right ones. This year's colleague gender pay gap, measured by both mean and median, has remained broadly consistent with last year, with the median gap continuing its downward trajectory since peaking in 2023. This reflects both the structural nature of the challenge within the legal sector and the intended path of our three-year plan.

Our focus has been building upon the strong foundations needed for long-term, sustainable improvement. This includes continued evolution in our Talent Acquisition approach, expanded People Business Partnering support to strengthen challenge and accountability, and clearer governance across pay, progression and internal mobility. Reward remains a critical lever for change. We have also begun to evolve our total reward package to better flex to varied needs, enabling greater agility in decision-making and reducing the risk of new disparities emerging whilst meeting the varying needs of our colleague population.

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**Laura Cordingley**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

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Leadership development is a key focus for the year ahead. We will establish a clear set of leadership principles that will form the foundation of our Talent and Leadership Development strategy. These principles support our standard for how leaders make decisions, support career progression, and create opportunities across the firm. By embedding inclusive leadership expectations into development programmes, we aim to strengthen leaders' capabilities. This behaviour-based approach will help ensure equitable access to growth opportunities and support our ongoing efforts to address the gender pay gap and improve progression outcomes for under-represented talent, including women progressing into more senior roles.

Improved insight continues to support better decision making. The evolution of My Voice into a continuous listening strategy, alongside People Pulse insight and enhanced diversity dashboards, will strengthen data quality and transparency. Together, these tools enable leaders to better understand how employee experience, inclusion and day-to-day decisions influence pay equity across hiring, development and progression.

Internally, we continue to foster a culture where all colleagues are supported to thrive. This includes enhanced policies and targeted initiatives such as our Menopause Champions, alongside active affinity groups representing LGBTQ+ colleagues, gender and ethnic diversity, physical and mental health, social mobility and sustainability. Supported by our Together Action Group (TAG) and People team, these networks ensure under-represented voices are heard and reflected in how we shape policies, programmes and decisions.

Collectively, these actions continue to strengthen our culture and improve the experience of our colleagues. Grounded in our B Corp principles and our commitment to being innovative, sustainable, and inclusive, we are confident that the foundations now in place will deliver continued improvement in our gender pay gap over time. While there is more to do, the progress made to date reinforces our commitment to doing what's right for our people, our profession, and the communities that we serve. As a leadership team, we remain committed to sustaining this focus and ensuring that progress continues over the coming years.



# The data calculation explained

**Our gender pay gap data is based on colleague salaries on the snapshot date of 5 April 2025.**

The colleague gender pay gap analysis solely refers to colleagues and does not include areas that we are not required to report on. We believe, however, that it is important to have a wider understanding of pay across our firm. Therefore, we have conducted separate analyses of our partnership and diversity data to ensure that we have an understanding of specific pay gaps.

We calculate the data in three different ways:

- > **Mean:** the mean hourly pay gap is the difference between the average hourly rate of pay between the groups.
- > **Median:** the median hourly pay gap ranks employees from the highest rate of income to the lowest, then selects the employee that falls directly in the middle of the ranking. The difference between the group's medians is then calculated.
- > **Quartiles:** we rank colleagues from lowest to highest earners and split them into four equal parts. The percentage of the groups who occupy each quartile is then calculated.

# Gender pay gap results

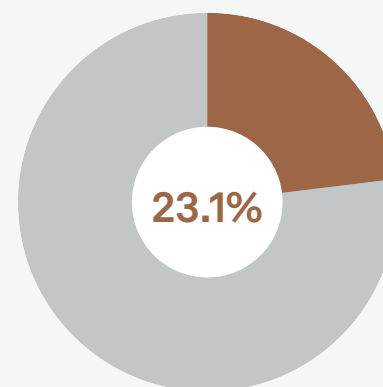
Proportion receiving bonus



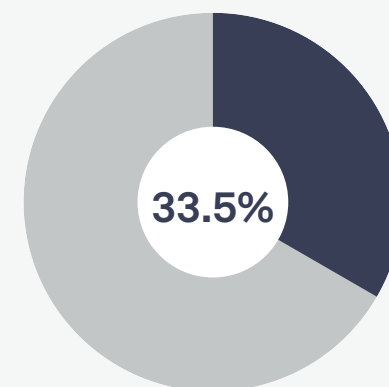
| Year | Mean % |        | Median % |        |
|------|--------|--------|----------|--------|
|      | Male   | Female | Male     | Female |
| 2020 | 26.60  | -1.02  | 32.30    | +2.35  |
| 2021 | 23.70  | -2.90  | 21.20    | -11.10 |
| 2022 | 25.32  | +1.62  | 32.64    | +11.44 |
| 2023 | 27.60  | +2.28  | 37.50    | +4.86  |
| 2024 | 23.00  | -4.60  | 34.30    | -3.20  |
| 2025 | 23.10  | +0.10  | 33.50    | -0.80  |

|                       | Male % | Female % |
|-----------------------|--------|----------|
| Lower Quartile        | 19     | 81       |
| Lower Middle Quartile | 23     | 77       |
| Upper Middle Quartile | 38     | 62       |
| Upper Quartile        | 40     | 60       |

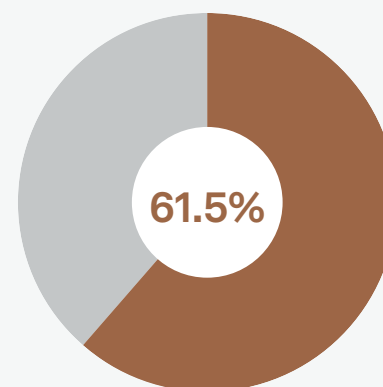
Mean gender pay gap



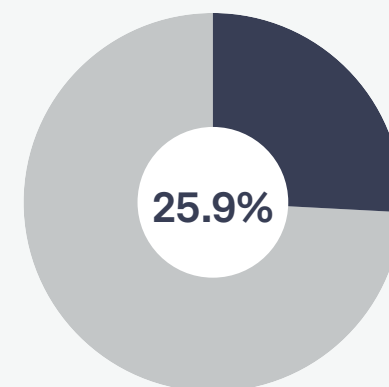
Median gender pay gap



Mean bonus pay gap

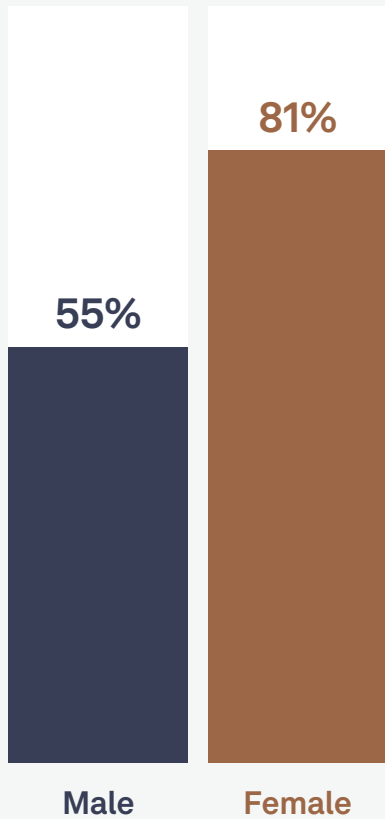


Median bonus pay gap



# Partner pay gap results

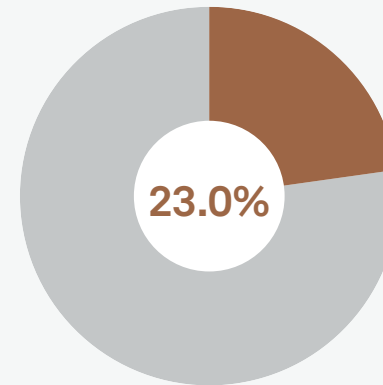
Proportion receiving bonus



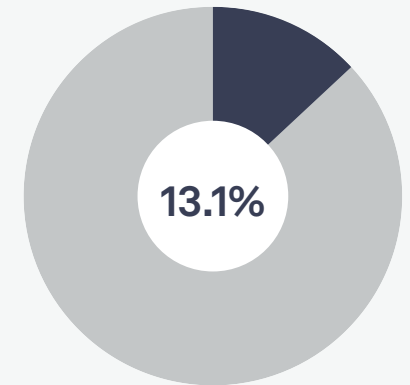
| Year | Mean % |       | Median % |       |
|------|--------|-------|----------|-------|
| 2020 | 32.27  | +2.01 | 26.90    | -6.95 |
| 2021 | 34.20  | +1.93 | 30.00    | +3.10 |
| 2022 | 32.31  | -1.89 | 25.31    | -4.69 |
| 2023 | 24.21  | -8.10 | 17.40    | -7.91 |
| 2024 | 30.00  | +5.79 | 21.60    | +4.20 |
| 2025 | 23.00  | -7.00 | 13.10    | -8.50 |

|                       | Male % | Female % |
|-----------------------|--------|----------|
| Lower Quartile        | 60     | 40       |
| Lower Middle Quartile | 58     | 42       |
| Upper Middle Quartile | 71     | 29       |
| Upper Quartile        | 83     | 17       |

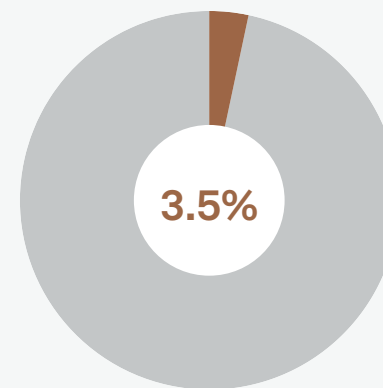
Mean gender pay gap



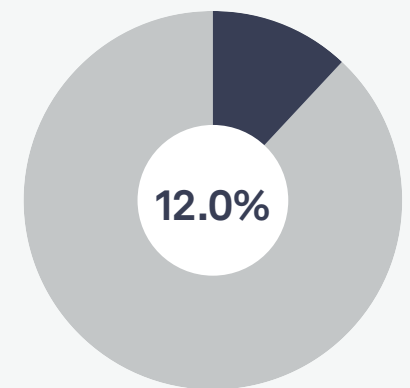
Median gender pay gap



Mean bonus pay gap



Median bonus pay gap





# Diversity reporting

## Disabled colleagues

| Disability Pay Gap | Employee | Partner |
|--------------------|----------|---------|
| Mean               | 12.0%    | Unknown |
| Median             | 12.4%    | Unknown |

Partner disability pay gap cannot be reported due to insufficient disability data disclosed

## Ethnic minority colleagues

| Ethnicity Pay Gap | Employee | Partner |
|-------------------|----------|---------|
| Mean              | 15.7%    | 56.9%   |
| Median            | 13.8%    | -33.8%  |

## LGBT+ colleagues

| LGBT+ Pay Gap | Employee | Partner |
|---------------|----------|---------|
| Mean          | -3.5%    | -20.1%  |
| Median        | 6.7%     | -8.2%   |

## Statement of Accuracy

We confirm that the data is accurate and meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap information) Regulations 2017.

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