

SLAUGHTER AND MAY/

MAKING AND MEASURING PROGRESS: SETTING TARGETS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

December 2023

INTRODUCTION

The business case for greater socio-economic diversity in the workplace is clear – higher performing teams, better decision making and increased profitability. The moral case is equally powerful. We all want to live and work in a society where hard work and talent are what get you ahead, irrespective of background characteristics including socio-economic background.

Setting targets for socio-economic diversity is a vital part of our commitment to be more intentional in our search for talent irrespective of background; and publishing them ensures we are accountable to deliver change. Our targets are not quotas – but they are important measures of our performance as we continue to seek the brightest minds to join our community of lawyers and business services professionals.

Taking action on socio-economic diversity is a business decision to gain competitive advantage, not a charitable act. We work in a deeply competitive environment, handling the most important and complex projects on behalf of our clients. Our clients, including some of the biggest corporations in the world, governments and other institutions, work with us because they know they can access exceptional talent.

At the same time, we understand the barriers to a career in law, including perceptions of the profession that are shaped early, demanding formal academic standards and, for most, training that extends beyond undergraduate education – where access is unequal by background. We feel a responsibility to address this as an employer so that talented young people are given opportunities to succeed. We have worked for over a decade on raising aspirations, developing insights and connections in the sector, supporting individuals into and at university.

Our actions have already led to positive change, increasing the number of individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds entering the legal sector and our firm. Building on this longstanding commitment, we wanted to strengthen and accelerate our work in this area through informed and robust target-setting and a practical action plan to support it. The power of leadership engagement cannot be underestimated. This work was led and sponsored by our Executive team and wider partnership.

Target-setting must begin with a robust data set that can be rigorously analysed. We had the former and commissioned support from the Bridge Group (an expert non-profit consultancy) to apply rigorous research and workforce analytics to inform and guide our strategy. The results of this analysis revealed that socio-economic background does not impact the progression, retention and success of our lawyer population; and that our business services population broadly mirrors the wider UK working population. These data points, among many others, informed our targets and provided us with valuable information about where we needed to focus action to enable the change we wanted to achieve.

Measuring and setting targets in this area of diversity is progressive and complex. When we announced our social mobility targets in July 2023, there was positive interest from other employers (including our clients) about how they might undertake a similar exercise. This report provides an overview of our process, outlines our targets and describes how we are building on existing activity to achieve them. Our hope is that this will be helpful to other employers as they set their own ambitions for change.



Andrew Jolly
Partner and Chair of the Slaughter and May Social Mobility Working Group



Uzma Hamid-Dizier
Director of Responsible Business

// Research reveals how socio-economic background (SEB) can have a stronger impact on pay gaps and workplace progression compared with protected characteristics – including ethnicity or gender. ¹ This evidence base, and the business case for greater diversity by socio-economic background, is most compelling across our research in the legal sector.

Three key ingredients have enabled Slaughter and May to lead the sector globally in publishing these targets. First, the commitment and deep engagement of the most senior people in the partnership has ensured that there has been a resolute focus on the complementary aims of achieving competitive advantage and advancing social justice. Second, the unrelenting focus on the

evidence and rigorous data analysis has ensured that the targets are stretching but feasible – and have been built on strong analytical foundations. Finally, targets are necessary but not sufficient: the corresponding commitment to actions that will achieve change is the most important aspect of all.

We hope that others in the legal sector and beyond will find the guidance here valuable, and that they will also work towards publishing targets in a similarly robust way.



Nik Miller
CEO, The Bridge Group

// *Setting social mobility targets not only demonstrates a commitment to change through action but also highlights a desire to create a more equitable and innovative workplace. Deepening engagement and outreach with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to provide access to mentoring, work experience and subsequent full-time roles is a necessity to give those individuals the confidence to fulfil their potential through the creation of opportunities they might not have openly available to them.*

Lee Elliot Major, Professor of Social Mobility, University of Exeter

// *Targets are vital to increasing diversity by socio-economic background, and to strengthen firms' competitive advantage. The discipline of setting a target requires a thoughtful and robust approach to workforce modelling, and a sharp focus on the actions that will have the greatest effect.*

Sarah Atkinson, CEO, Social Mobility Foundation

WHAT IS SOCIAL MOBILITY?

Social mobility measures the extent to which people can move between different socio-economic groups, within their own lifetime and between generations. In the OECD rankings, the UK ranks lowest among 38 member countries.² This means that the connection between circumstances of birth and adult outcomes are strongest in the UK.

It is estimated that the productivity gains associated with improved social mobility could lead to a 9% increase in GDP.³ Low social mobility entrenches historical inequalities, and higher income inequality is closely related to lower levels of social mobility.

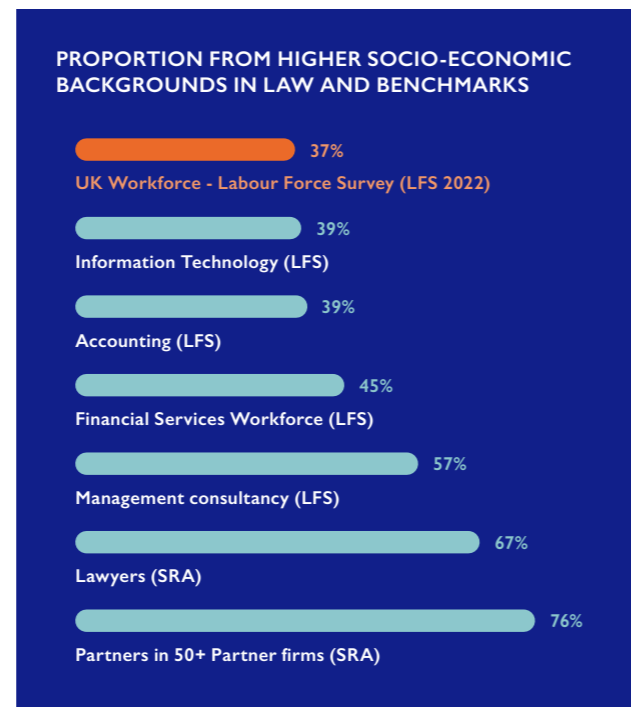
Enhancing social mobility can convert this vicious cycle into a virtuous one and has positive benefits on broader economic growth. Economies with higher levels of social mobility are often also associated with higher levels of health and happiness, and lower levels of crime and societal discontent.⁴

Socio-economic diversity in the workplace contributes importantly to social mobility – since it gives access to higher socio-economic status roles to a wider range of people. In Bridge Group research, this aspect of diversity also has important relationships with other aspects of diversity, including gender and ethnicity.⁵

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIVERSITY IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

The contribution of the legal services sector is worth £60 billion annually to the UK economy.⁶ Legal services are critical to our society and economy as they uphold the rule of law and support business continuity and growth. For a profession that relies on its people to create value through advice, recruiting and progressing the best talent is key to firms' success.

Law is one of the least diverse professions by socio-economic background. Data from the Solicitors' Regulatory Authority (SRA) show that the proportion of individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds in the legal profession is 67%, significantly higher than the UK workforce at 37%.⁷ This difference is significantly larger in the legal sector, compared with, for example, financial services and accountancy (illustrated in the chart above). At partnership level this gap is even wider (at 76%), with wider evidence indicating that roles at the highest levels in the largest firms are still dominated by white, male lawyers from higher socio-economic backgrounds.



Numerous studies show that socio-economic background is the biggest barrier for individuals to access and succeed within the legal sector.⁸ Recent Bridge Group research⁹ has highlighted that:

- those from higher socio-economic backgrounds are much more likely to apply, and more likely to succeed in the application process, to gain training contracts;
- among leading law firms, trainees from lower socio-economic backgrounds are statistically more likely to be in the top decile of performers (though these high performers are less likely to progress and more likely to leave their employer);
- on average, it takes those from lower socio-economic backgrounds a year and a half longer to reach partner compared with their peers from higher socio-economic backgrounds; and
- the negative effects of being from a lower socio-economic background are compounded for women and those from minority ethnic groups.

// As a business, people are our most important asset – and having access to the best available talent, from a diverse range of backgrounds, is critical to the firm's sustained success. Actions to improve the diversity of our workforce across protected characteristics are part of our business strategy.

Our focus on socio-economic background is as an extension of this work. For over a decade, we have developed partnerships with charities, schools, universities and recruiters to improve access into the sector and to hire the brightest minds into our business. We work across our firm to embed this approach so that responsibility sits across many teams and people. This longstanding commitment and related activity allowed us to gather insights and establish visibility of diverse socio-economic talent in our business, without which we would not have been able to set targets or pinpoint the key further actions that we need to take.

Deborah Finkler, Managing Partner

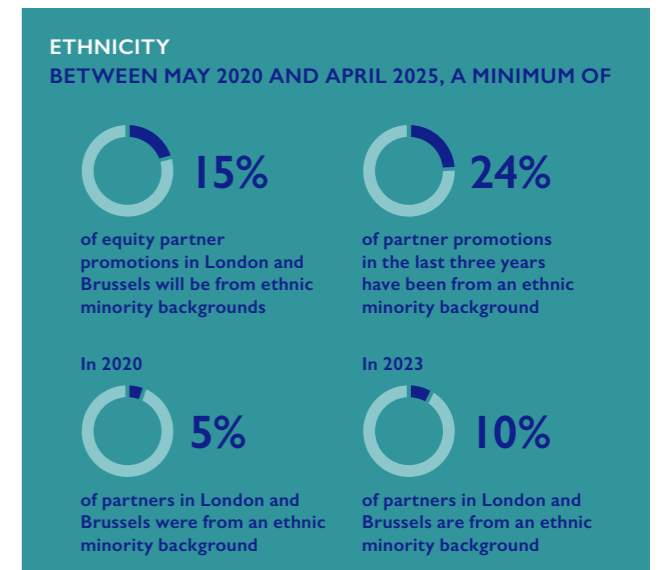
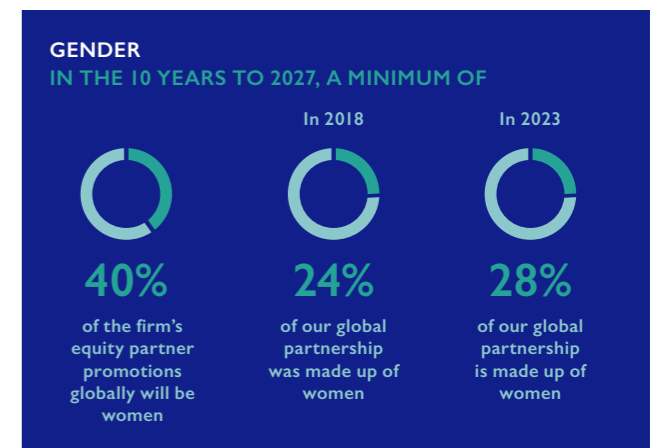
WHY SETTING TARGETS MATTERS

Public targets are a standard approach for businesses to show commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), to be accountable for change and to be transparent about progress. The discipline of setting targets requires organisations to interrogate their data, processes and employee experiences in detail, so that targets are stretching but feasible. The Legal Services Board, based on Bridge Group research, outlines that target-setting is one of the most important items to have in place to drive equality in the workplace.¹⁰

Setting ambitious workforce targets keeps the focus on hiring or promoting the best talent based on performance and potential – and is importantly different from quotas. Targets are goals tied to strategies to achieve these, and to measure and report progress; quotas have mandated outcomes and must be met.

At our firm, decisions about hiring and progression are always based on performance and potential. We have public targets in place to increase the representation of women and ethnic minorities in our partnership. This heightened focus has been successful in creating greater awareness and action across the business and we have seen the numbers increase over time.

These targets were formulated using data driven insights as a critical quantitative means to diagnose and resolve inequalities



for under-represented groups and so we were keen to use the same methodology. We felt it was important to do this publicly to show our commitment to change and to be held accountable to deliver it.

KPMG were among the first organisations to publish targets for socio-economic background in 2021, aiming to see 29% of UK partners and directors come from a lower socio-economic background by 2030.

In 2022, the BBC announced its target for 25% of staff to be from a lower socio-economic background (and ensuring 50% of radio and 60% of TV programme production spend is outside London) by the end of 2027. They also committed to delivering 1,000 apprenticeships per year by 2025.

Progress Together, a consortium of 25 UK Financial Services firms focused on socio-economic diversity at senior levels within the sector. The recent 'Shaping Our Economy' report is the largest study of its kind analysing firms' data and practices, with a recommendation that all firms should collect socio-economic background data from their workforce and use this to drive change, including setting targets for socio-economic background diversity.¹¹

MEASURING SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Measuring socio-economic background is complex. There is no single indicator that captures fully the multifaceted nature of a person's background, and the opportunities that have been available to them.

We collect, and will continue to collect, a range of data on socio-economic background which includes eligibility for free school meals, school type, parental attendance at university by the time the individual was 18, first generation to go to university, as well as contextual information on disadvantage and academic performance. However, based on research and extensive employer consultation, in setting our targets we followed best practice guidance and focused on the parental occupation indicator as outlined below.

According to the Social Mobility Commission, parental occupation of the main household earner when 14 years old is the best individual measure to assess someone's socio-economic background and is applicable to people of all ages and internationally.¹² Responses to this question are reported in three socio-economic background classifications: higher, intermediate and lower. In 2021 the SRA updated the socio-economic questions in its survey requests to include this indicator.

We have been collecting data on socio-economic background for a decade (since 2013); this means we have robust insights into our workforce – 71% of our workforce have voluntarily shared this socio-economic background information with us.

The high proportion of our workforce that have shared their socio-economic background means that the data underlying the targets (and our assessment of progress) is rigorous and reliable. The parental occupation indicator is preferred for various reasons:¹³

- It is a strong predictor for adult outcomes and the extent to which people have access to resources that support social, cultural and economic status.
- It is applicable to people of all ages.
- It is applicable to people who were not educated in England (unlike many of the other indicators including Free School Meal eligibility and school type).
- It enables robust benchmarking with the workforce and university student populations, since this measure is also collated in the national census, the quarterly Labour Force Survey and during the UK university application process.

It is within this context that in this report and in our targets we use the term lower socio-economic background (Lower SEB) by reference to this indicator.

OUR APPROACH TO SETTING TARGETS

We established a social mobility working group made up of partners and business services professionals to lead this work, supported by, and working closely with, the Bridge Group.

Our aim was to set ourselves stretching but achievable targets, based on robust data and analysis and accompanied by concrete measures and actions that would allow us to track and monitor tangible change.

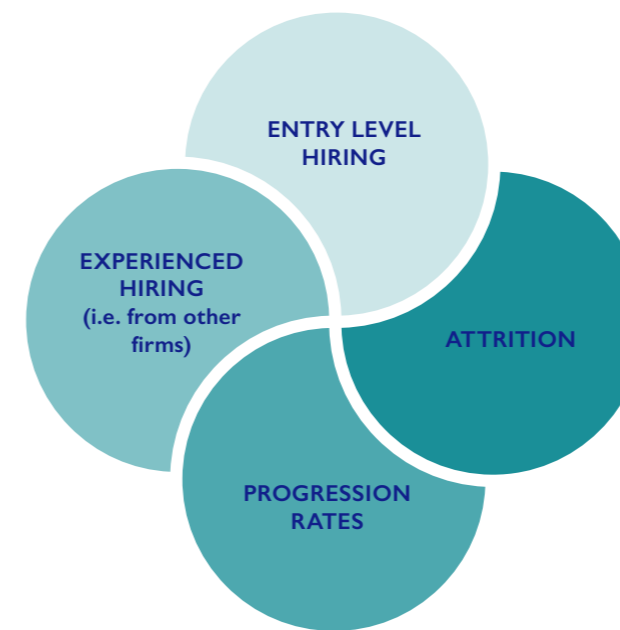
We modelled our workforce in detail and the levers that are available to impact on the overall diversity of our workforce – including lawyers and business services professionals.

Slaughter and May is a general, pure equity, lockstep partnership. This means all partners have equal voting rights and partners promoted to the partnership at the same time are remunerated equally. The size of the partnership has generally remained pretty constant over many years. We typically retain and promote our trainees, and draw our partners from the associate workforce, rather than through lateral hiring of partners (i.e. from other firms).

Our business service professionals are drawn from a range of disciplines such as Technology, Marketing, Human Resources, Responsible Business, Knowledge and Innovation, Facilities and Operations, Finance, etc. who are hired at all levels into the firm.

Our principal office is in London, UK and the vast majority of our workforce (c.89%) is London based.

The four main aspects considered in our modelling are:



DATA FINDINGS

In this section we share in brief the analysis that underpins our targets. This has included consideration of a variety of benchmarks, outlined below.

BENCHMARKS

To calculate targets, it was important for us to understand our data in the wider context – considering the 'talent pipeline' and relevant benchmarks. We compared our findings with a range of benchmarks, including:

- UK Census national working population¹⁴
- Labour Force Survey data, the quarterly collation of employment data¹⁵
- SRA - Solicitors in England and Wales at 50+ partner firms, Partners in England and Wales at 50+ partner firms, England and Wales 'other staff' at 50+ partner firms¹⁶
- HESA data - Proportion of university students by SEB classification and selected relevant disciplines at a range of universities¹⁷
- Previous research by organisations including the Bridge Group on progression in law firms, the Social Mobility Commission and the Sutton Trust

We undertook a longitudinal study of our permanent UK workforce, exploring the indicators above, with a focus on 'parental occupation at age 14'. This enabled us to understand the diversity of our current workforce and to model the workforce over a ten-year period, exploring how different factors (e.g. trainee recruitment, retention and progression rates, experienced hiring) impact on diversity over time. This enabled us to understand the effect of different approaches, and to consider these different variables to inform targets.

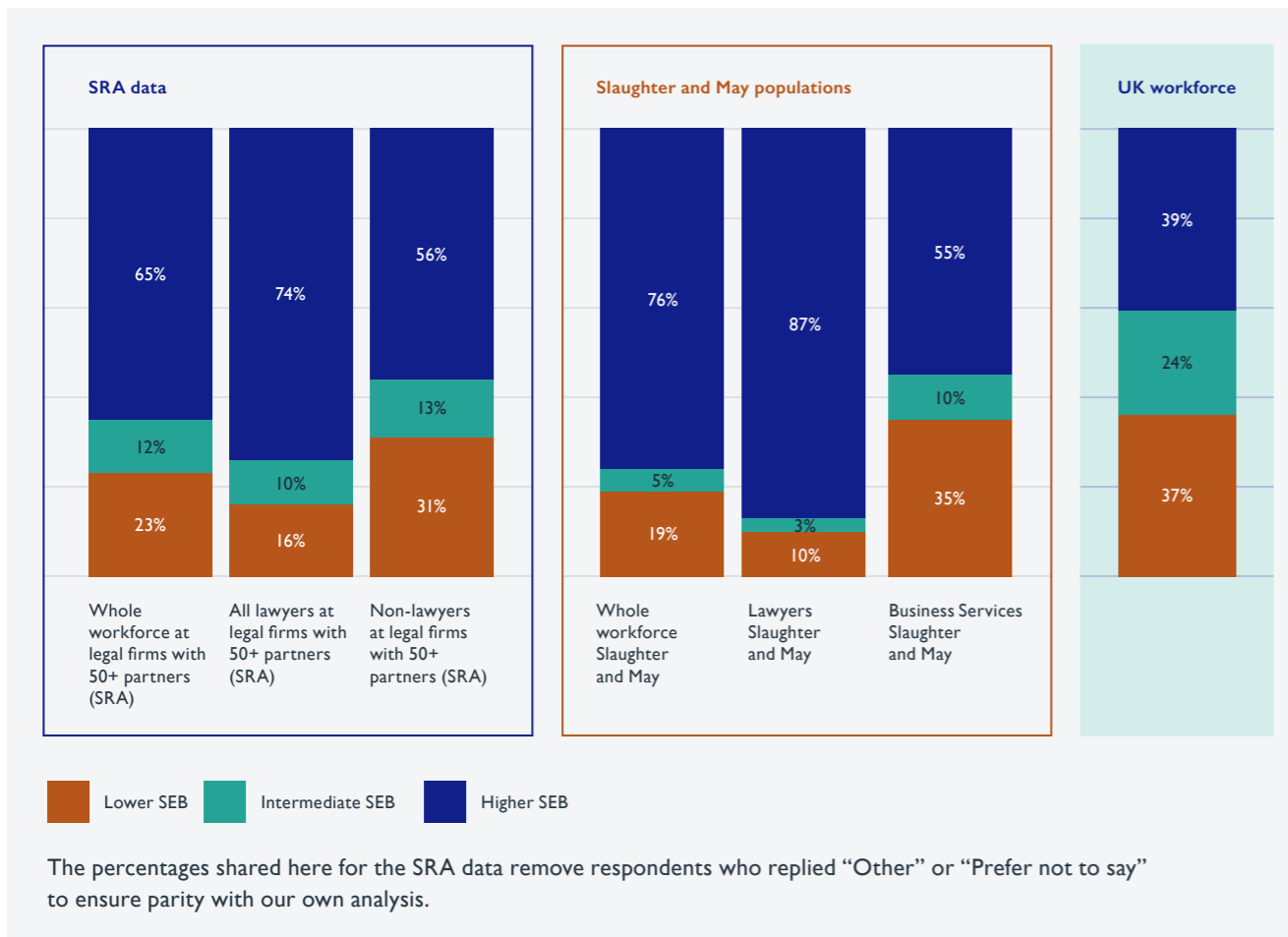
We explored detailed data for recruitment, attrition and progression rates to analyse historic and current levels of the movement of people from different socio-economic backgrounds at the firm in our legal and business services populations.

DIVERSITY OF THE WORKFORCE

As a starting point, we explored the current diversity of our legal and business services workforce and compared this with relevant benchmarks. We found that 18.8% of our total workforce (including trainees recruited but yet to commence their training contracts) were from a Lower SEB, 5.3% from an Intermediate SEB and 75.1% from a Higher SEB. This hourglass pattern is reflected in the data collated by the SRA from law firms with 50+ partners – as illustrated in the chart below alongside other relevant benchmarks.

We analysed our business services workforce separately, recognising the different approaches to hiring and progression routes for colleagues in this area of the business – including against appropriate benchmarks. We found that the data highlighted that the diversity of this population in our workforce is very close to mirroring socio-economic diversity in the wider UK workforce.

Various benchmarks are illustrated in the chart below.



- In 2022, 10.1% of our total legal population (partners, associates, trainees, future trainees, PSL, senior counsel) were from Lower SEBs. In the same period our Lower SEB representation is: Partners at 7%, Associates at 12% and Trainees at 9%.
- 34.7% of our business services population are Lower SEB, slightly lower than the whole UK working population (37% Lower SEB) and higher than the legal sector when compared with SRA data (32%).
- Recognising this substantial difference in Lower SEB representation in our business services population and that paths into business services careers and progression differs from lawyers, we modelled the data for lawyers separately.

RETENTION AND PROGRESSION

To model the workforce over a ten-year period we considered current trends in retention and progression.

Wider research has highlighted that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds typically progress less quickly within large law firms: those from lower socio-economic backgrounds take a year and a half longer on average to reach partner than their colleagues from higher socio-economic backgrounds.¹⁸

In contrast to these sector-wide research findings (and in other professional services including accountancy and financial services), at Slaughter and May our analysis of data of the past five years indicates that socio-economic background does not impact on progression, pace of progression or retention.

Our data also demonstrates that progression and retention among lawyers from lower socio-economic backgrounds is in line with their peers from higher socio-economic backgrounds. In the five-year period studied there has been more diversity in respect of Lower SEB in the partner population than historically. Our retention rate among trainees is high (93%) and we have a flat pay structure for associates – so that they progress through their careers based on their years of qualification. Progression beyond associate is into a partner or senior counsel role.

// Socio-economic diversity is a core part of our strategy and a key consideration when planning our attraction, engagement and assessment activities for all of our programmes at Slaughter and May. I am proud that we were one of the founding firms to implement the Rare Contextual Recruitment System (CRS) in 2014 into all our application forms - allowing us to identify high potential candidates by putting their achievements in the context of their social and educational background. We have strengthened partnerships with organisations such as The 93% Club, Rare Recruitment and the Bright Network to ensure that we are engaging with the widest possible pool of applicants. Our Spring Work Experience Scheme targets first year students from a lower socio-economic and/or ethnic minority background and, together with our Spring open days, creates a pipeline of diverse talent from an early stage, allowing us to encourage and support these students through to our summer schemes and our training contracts.

Janine Arnold, Head of Recruitment

// We have thoroughly enjoyed co-chairing SoMo, the firm's social mobility network. We've grown rapidly over the past year and now have over 200 members. It's been really enjoyable to see so many people from all different departments around the firm support our network and become more involved in SoMo activity, including seeing almost 100 of us at our off site social in June to celebrate National Social Mobility Awareness Day. We are looking forward to our next chapter and to supporting the firm's work with our SoMo targets.

Chloe Halloran and Amy Hughes, Associates and Co-Chairs of the SoMo Network

OUR TARGETS

Following extensive data modelling we have set targets across our business with action plans to achieve them.

Our whole workforce target reflects our holistic approach to widening access across the firm. Our total lawyer target demonstrates our commitment to widen access to the legal profession at all levels; and a business services target recognises that we want to maintain and further close the small difference between this population and the UK working population with respect to SEB.

These targets are long-term in nature, reflecting our high levels of trainee retention, limited lateral hiring and equal rates of progression among those from different SEBs.

1	Our total workforce will have a baseline of	
	18.8% in 2022	25% Lower SEB representation by 2033
2	Our lawyer population will have a baseline of	
	10% in 2022	15% Lower SEB representation by 2033
3	Our Business Services population will have a baseline of	
	34.7% in 2022	40% Lower SEB representation by 2033

// Setting targets on social mobility is the 'new frontier' for employers serious about tackling the lack of socio-economic diversity in the workplace and at the top of organisations. We have worked with Slaughter and May for a number of years and understand their commitment to finding the best talent to join the firm. I was pleased to see this commitment evolve into targets and actions plans – demonstrating that they have thought carefully about the pathways to creating higher representation of individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The impact of their announcement of social mobility targets is much wider than their own firm - it sends a signal to elite firms and professions that change is possible and needed.

Sophie Pender, Founder & CEO, 93% Club

// As part of our community outreach programmes, we aim to increase access to education and employment opportunities for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with some of our programmes running for over 10 years. Last year, we worked with over 180 students aged 16-18 years. From our tutoring programme with Central Foundation Boys' School, 89% of A-Level students received offers from the top third of universities in the UK. Our work insight programmes, Excellerators and Lead in to Law, reached 88 students last year, increasing their awareness of professional roles in the legal sector and developing their skills and confidence. 40 of these students completed a two year in-person programme to widen access to the legal profession with alumni being successful at securing work experience placements and training contracts with the firm and across the sector.

Sinead Boden, Head of Community and Pro bono

// We are now in our fifth year of partnership with Slaughter and May and have enjoyed working with the team to develop the Law Springboard programme. Over the years the offering to students has gone from strength to strength and the direct impact of this has meant that students are able to build their practical knowledge of law as a profession, build networks and relationships with Slaughter and May lawyers as well as access financial aid and gain legal work experience. I am so proud that our alumni have gone on to become trainees of the firm, each one of them achieving their full potential and being judged on their potential and performance.

Nick Bent, CEO, upReach

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION

We will publish our progress against the social mobility targets in our annual Responsible Business Report. Setting these targets and sharing them externally is part of making our commitment clear and to keep us accountable to deliver change.

Our targets are accompanied by a modelling tool that allows annual tracking which will enable us to assess our performance and actions year on year. This insight will assist in informing us where we may need to scale up positive actions or discontinue others that are not impacting positively on recruitment, progression, retention and our inclusive culture.

We believe that this work will also have a corresponding positive impact on other areas of under-representation such as gender and ethnicity, based on research in the legal sector and financial services.¹⁹

Oversight on progress will be monitored by our partnership board alongside our gender and ethnicity targets.

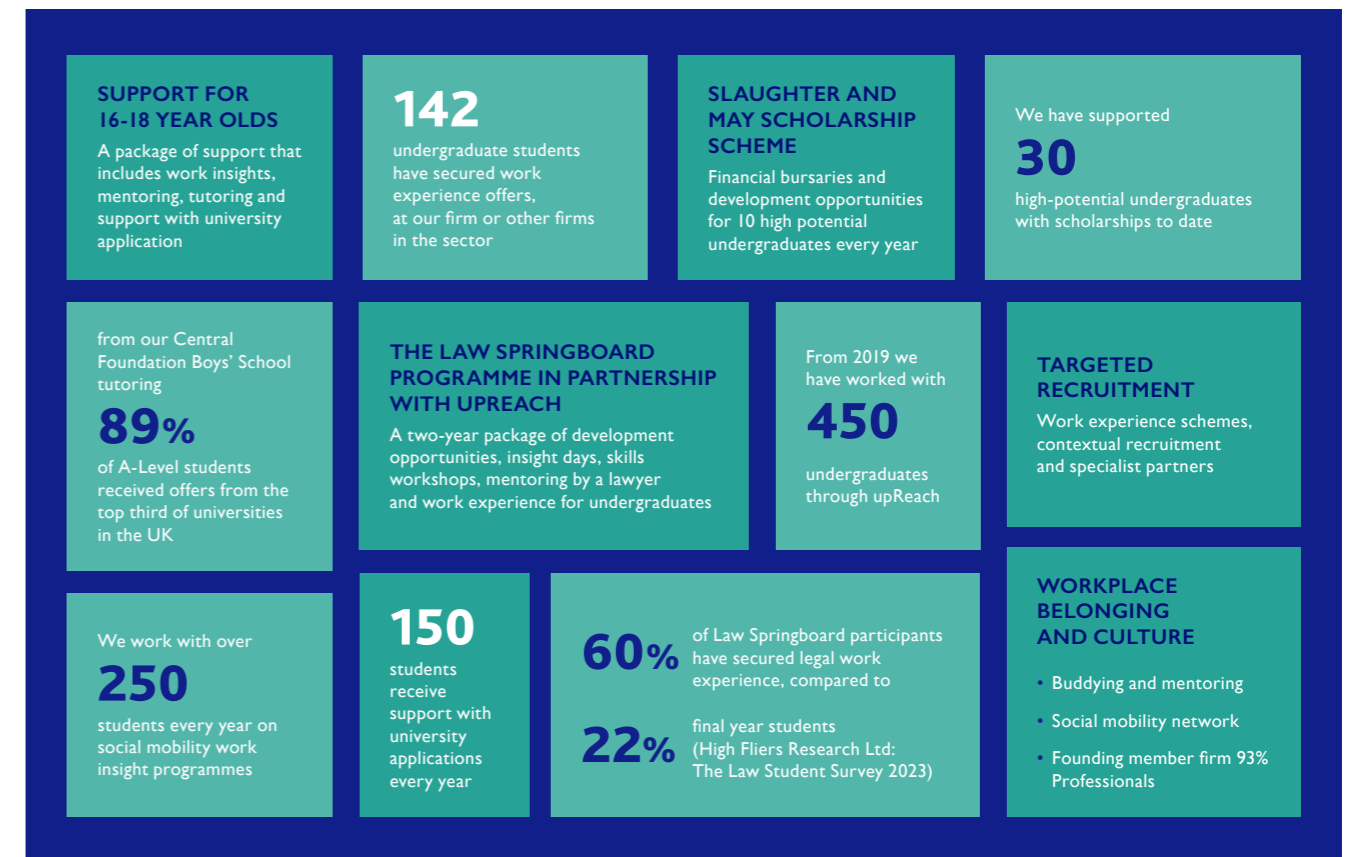
// We launched our partnership with upReach on the Law Springboard programme in 2019, a 2-year development programme for university students from a lower socio-economic background interested in a career in law. Students receive mentoring, skills development and opportunities to join a dedicated work experience programme. A number of Law Springboard alumni have gone on to attend vacation schemes with our firm and others, as well as successfully gaining training contracts. In 2021, we introduced the Slaughter and May scholarship providing financial support to 10 undergraduates per year, for three years, including access to a leadership development programme. To date we have supported 30 scholars. Our work in social mobility has had impact year on year and it is great that this was recognised in 2023 with Slaughter and May ranking 19th in the Social Mobility Employers Index. I am looking forward to ongoing collaboration to drive change in increasing socio-economic diversity, to enhance our inclusive culture.

Jane Edwards, Real Estate Partner and D&I Partner

EXISTING ACTIONS TO INCREASE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

Our work on social mobility is a key part of how we work to reduce inequalities within the legal sector; improve the diversity of candidates we recruit and retain the best talent. Our actions focus on increasing the number of candidates from lower socio-economic backgrounds joining the firm and ensures that the culture within the firm is inclusive so that everyone feels a sense of belonging, irrespective of background.

As part of this we work with students from 16-18 years old and university undergraduates from lower socio-economic backgrounds to upskill, inspire and equip young people to enter the legal profession. In the past few years, we have started to see an increase in the number of alumni of our social mobility programmes qualify for work experience schemes and gain training contracts directly into our firm and into other law firms. Below are some highlights of our activity and impact.



// The upReach Law Springboard and the Professional Experience Week provided me with a practical insight into commercial law, and enabled me to build long-standing relationships within the firm, which were invaluable when completing applications and preparing for interviews. This culminated in my acceptance of a training contract at the firm.

Tanyah Hamid, Trainee and upReach alumni

// The programme sums up everything you need to get a good understanding of what a career in law would entail as well as the available support to help you get there.

Nasseeba, Lead in to Law alumni

The focus of our action plan is to continue and expand our existing work and to increase the number of individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds joining the firm.

Increase the number of individuals from a Lower SEB recruited into the firm	Increase targeted recruitment activity to meet students that we might not come across through our traditional routes. This means that we need to look harder to find these people and to ensure that they see us a viable and attractive proposition.	
	Work closely with a range of universities to ensure we are able to attract and hire students with the highest potential irrespective of background.	
	Continue to use the Rare Contextual Recruitment System and to extend its use into our business services programmes.	
	Provide legal and business services apprenticeships as an alternative route into the firm.	
Deepening our work to widen access to the profession	Deepen our early engagement work with students from a Lower SEB to build a pipeline of diverse talent applying to join us as a trainee or for other opportunities within the sector.	
	Extend the Slaughter and May Scholarship scheme, which provides financial bursaries and leadership development opportunities to ten high potential undergraduates from a Lower SEB every year to mitigate the financial stress of going to university.	
	Introduce a new financial bursary scheme for selected individuals aged 17–18 years from a Lower SEB.	
Retention and progression	Maintain the support mechanisms we already have in place for individuals from a Lower SEB to continue the positive trend identified in the analysis of our data and the Bridge Group research referred to above.	
	Use data to further interrogate our current systems, processes and culture to understand why this trend is positive compared to our peers.	
Enhancing data driven insights for workforce	Robust and reliable data allows us to be transparent and monitor our progress as well as to direct evidence-based decisions at the key points of recruitment, retention, progression and work allocation to ensure equity.	Continue to encourage all our workforce to self-declare diversity data to reach 100% completion.
		Publish voluntary social mobility related pay gaps.

LESSONS FROM OUR EXPERIENCES

We have found the process and work undertaken to set and announce our social mobility targets rewarding. Without doubt, it has had a positive impact on the firm. We have shared our three key learnings below.

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 24px; margin: 0;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT IS KEY</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 0;">The tone from the top who can articulate the business case and lead the change is key.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 24px; margin: 0;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS ARE CRITICAL</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 0;">There is a need to invest in developing robust and reliable data to inform decisions and targets.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 24px; margin: 0;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">TARGETS AND ACTIONS COME HAND IN HAND</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 0;">Good intentions alone will not help to hit targets. Setting concrete targets should not be done in isolation. As part of setting targets an action plan is required that will underpin the actions that will be taken to achieve the targets set.</p>
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SLAUGHTER AND MAY SOCIAL MOBILITY WORKING GROUP

 <p>Andrew Jolly Partner and Chair of the Slaughter and May Social Mobility Working Group +44 (0)20 7090 3034 andrew.jolly@slaughterandmay.com</p>	 <p>James Stacey Partner +44 (0)20 7090 4124 james.stacey@slaughterandmay.com</p>
 <p>Deborah Finkler Managing Partner +44 (0)20 7090 4088 deborah.finkler@slaughterandmay.com</p>	 <p>Gemma Porter Senior Diversity & Inclusion Manager +44 (0)20 7090 5893 gemma.porter@slaughterandmay.com</p>
 <p>Uzma Hamid-Dizier Director of Responsible Business +44 (0)20 7090 5332 uzma.hamid-dizier@slaughterandmay.com</p>	 <p>Janine Arnold Head of Recruitment +44 (0)20 7090 5049 janine.arnold@slaughterandmay.com</p>
 <p>Jane Edwarde Partner +44 (0)20 7090 5095 jane.edwarde@slaughterandmay.com</p>	 <p>Dominic Robertson Partner +44 (0)20 7090 3848 dominic.robertson@slaughterandmay.com</p>
 <p>Samay Shah Partner +44 (0)20 7090 5104 samay.shah@slaughterandmay.com</p>	 <p>Camilla Sanger Partner +44 (0)20 7090 4295 camilla.sanger@slaughterandmay.com</p>
 <p>Simon Nicholls Partner +44 (0)20 7090 3372 simon.nicholls@slaughterandmay.com</p>	 <p>Harriet Edwards Diversity and Inclusion Manager +44 (0)20 7090 3608 harriet.edwards@slaughterandmay.com</p>
 <p>Harry Bacon Partner +44 (0)20 7090 3258 harry.bacon@slaughterandmay.com</p>	

APPENDIX – SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

We collect a range of other data on socio-economic backgrounds.

Eligibility for free school meals	In the UK a child may be able to get free school meals if they are in receipt of any of the following government benefits: Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance. ²⁰
School type	All children in the UK are offered a free state-funded non-selective school place. There are also state-funded schools that are selective and independent fee-paying schools. This is a measure that firms may have collected for many years and according to the Social Mobility Commission measures extreme economic and cultural disadvantage. This is a helpful indicator in the legal sector as a high percentage of lawyers are educated at fee-paying independent schools compared to 7.5% of the UK population.
Parental attendance at university by the time the individual was 18	This question can highlight the potential lack of support to navigate university entrance for those who did not have a parent that attended university during childhood. ²¹
If an individual is the first person in their generation (in the context of their family) to attend university	In the past decades the access to varying UK institutions has increased, which has resulted in more people going to university, with 67% of graduates being the first in family to attend university. ²²
Parental occupation of main household earner when 14 years old	The responses to this question are reported in three groups where the three socio-economic background classifications are, higher, intermediate and lower. In 2021 the SRA updated the socio-economic questions request to include this indicator. The categories are set out in the table below.
The Rare Contextual Recruitment System (CRS) is a sophisticated recruitment tool which measures disadvantage and academic outperformance.	The CRS uses a blend of various indicators to measure social disadvantage, such as postcode, care leaver status, refugee status, average grades at secondary schools attended, etc. Academic achievements are set in the context of the schools in which they were gained, allowing employers to look for individuals who significantly outperform their peers. We have been using the rich data from the CRS for ten years, and it has helped us, and many other employers, identify high-potential graduate candidates we previously might have missed.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF RESPONSES TO 'PARENTAL OCCUPATION AT 14'

Lower SEB	Technical and craft occupations such as:	Motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.
	Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations such as:	Postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff.
	Long-term unemployed	(Claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year).
Intermediate SEB	Small business owners who employed less than 25 people such as:	Corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner.
	Clerical and intermediate occupations such as:	Secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse.
Higher SEB	Modern professional & traditional professional occupations such as:	Teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer.
	Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators such as:	Finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.

NOTES

- For example, see recently published research 'Social Mobility Progression Report 2022: Mind the Gap' (2022) KPMG and The Bridge Group, available at www.kpmg.com/uk/en/home/media/press-releases/2022/12/social-class-is-the-biggest-barrier-to-career-progression.html
- www.oecd.org/stories/social-mobility/
- 'Social mobility and economic success: How social mobility boosts the economy' (2017) Jenkins et al, available at www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Oxera-report_WEB_FINAL.pdf
- For example, see 'The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better' (2009) Pickett and Richardson
- Research and studies available at www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research
- www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/research/contribution-of-the-uk-legal-services-sector-to-the-uk-economy-report
- Latest analysis of the Labour Force Survey and data from the SRA (accessed 2023: Bridge Group).
- For example, see 'Socio-economic background and early career progression in the law' (2018) and 'Socio-economic diversity and progression to partner in the law' (2020) The Bridge Group, available at www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research
- 'Socio-economic background and early career progression in the law' (2018) and 'Socio-economic diversity and progression to partner in the law' (2020) The Bridge Group, available at www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research
- www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/news/legal-regulators-must-better-understand-the-impact-of-diversity-programmes-if-we-are-to-drive-meaningful-change
- www.progresstogether.co.uk/resources/
- www.socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/
- For example, see www.socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/ and numerous studies including research from The Bridge Group, available at www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research
- www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/industryandoccupationenglandandwales/census2021
- www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforhouseholdsandindividuals/householdandindividualsurveys/labourforcesurvey
- www.sra.org.uk/sra/equality-diversity/diversity-profession/diverse-legal-profession/
- www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students
- For example, see 'Socio-economic diversity and progression to partner in the law' (2020) The Bridge Group and 'Shaping our Economy: Senior roles in financial services and socio-economic diversity' (2023) Progress Together and The Bridge Group, available at www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research
- There are several studies exploring the important relationships between SEB and gender, and ethnicity. For example, see 'Navigating the labyrinth: socio-economic background and career progression in the Civil Service' (2021) Social Mobility Commission, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/navigating-the-labyrinth and 'Shaping our Economy: Senior roles in financial services and socio-economic diversity' (2023) Progress Together and The Bridge Group, available at www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research-1/2023/09/21/progress-together
- 'Free school meals: Guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, academies and free schools' (2023) Department for Education, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities
- www.socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/
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