

Bird & Bird

Diversity & Inclusion

2024 Year in Review



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Introduction

Since launching our global Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) strategy ‘in all that we do’ in 2021, we have taken significant steps to ensure the principles of diversity and inclusion are embedded in the way we operate as a firm. D&I is firmly recognised as a leadership priority and a core part of our strategy, our employee networks have grown, new D&I committees have been established, and we have introduced policies, procedures and training to actively support inclusive decision making.

We also strive to have a workforce as diverse as the societies that we live in. It is widely accepted that the legal profession must do more to accelerate the attraction, retention and promotion of under-represented talent, and at Bird & Bird we are no different. We are focussed on improving the diversity of our leadership so that it better represents the world around us.

This year we committed to reaching 30% women in the global partnership, our first public goal of this kind, which sits at the heart of our five-year business strategy.

We achieved Mansfield Certification for the third consecutive year, and launched our 10,000 hours pledge – where partners collectively pledge to spend at least 10,000 hours over the next five years contributing towards our responsible business agenda – as well as rolling out mandatory Working with Respect training for all our partners. These actions demonstrate how seriously we take the role of leadership in shaping an inclusive culture, and a willingness to be transparent about our progress.

Additional global highlights include our new global D&I induction training, SayMyName AI tool and Progress Through Pride podcast. Across our international offices, our teams have run initiatives including reciprocal mentoring, internships and data collection, alongside an ongoing calendar of events and training. We are delighted to share more information about these, and a selection of other initiatives and activities, in this report.

Turning our D&I strategy into a reality is a collective effort, it does not happen by chance. We rely on inclusion flowing through everyone’s behaviours and actions, every day. That is the foundation we work from – we all contribute towards creating a workplace where everyone feels safe and respected. That is part of what makes Bird & Bird such a fantastic place to work.

There is no ‘end point’ to building an inclusive and diverse firm, but it is a pleasure to take a moment to pause and reflect on what we’ve been able to achieve over the past year. We look forward to building on this momentum in 2025.



Aylie Ewing | Chief People Officer



Christian Bartsch | CEO



Jess Kaye | Head of D&I & CR



Graeme Maguire | Chair & Partner



Deborah Emuchay | D&I Executive



D&I Strategy – In all that we do

There is no single version of a Bird & Bird person, everyone is unique and adds something different to our firm. We want to make sure we celebrate that fact and make it possible for a wide range of people to be successful here, across all our offices, and all our teams. Inclusion should be embedded into all that we do – the decisions we make, the way we run our teams, the way we manage our business, and how we interact with each other and our clients.

Our D&I ambition

- To have a culture built on empathy and respect, where identity is never a barrier to success, and we all have the freedom to be ourselves.
- To be inspired by the possibilities that diversity offers our people, our clients and our firm.
- To reflect the diversity of the communities and societies we operate in and to be inclusive in all that we do.

Our approach

Culture & behaviours: empowering all our people to contribute towards an inclusive environment, focusing on everyday interactions, behaviours, and decisions. Setting the tone from the top – establishing our leaders as champions and role models.

Policies & processes: deliberately designing our operations to be equitable and inclusive, so that we attract, hire and retain a diverse range of talent at all levels. Utilising our processes and policies as an enabler for inclusion.

Impact & inspiration: using our influence and client partnerships to champion inclusion within the communities we operate in, and the wider legal industry. Working alongside clients to progress their inclusion agenda and amplify our own.

Governance & accountability: setting ourselves transparent targets that we monitor and report against. Establishing a governance structure and support network with responsibility for driving progress towards our goals.

Our diversity pillars

- **Gender balance:** improving the retention and progression of women, particularly at leadership and partner levels, and ensuring all genders are supported to reach their full potential.
- **LGBTQ+:** ensuring that our ways of working are LGBTQ+ inclusive, and that anyone who identifies as LGBTQ+ is comfortable being themselves at work, without fear or hesitation.
- **Racial, ethnic and cultural diversity:** improving the attraction, retention and progression of racial and ethnic minorities at all levels of our business.
- **Social mobility:** providing opportunities to those who may not otherwise have the means or inclination to pursue a career in the legal industry and ensuring that anyone can thrive regardless of personal circumstances or background.
- **Wellbeing and mental health:** supporting the wellbeing of our people, and removing any stigma regarding discussing and addressing mental health in the workplace.
- **Faith:** celebrating and embracing all religions and faiths.
- **Family and carers:** supporting people to balance their working life effectively with family and caring responsibilities.
- **Neurodiversity:** creating a workplace that can adjust to the needs of people with neurodiverse conditions, enabling them to thrive.
- **Age and generations:** harnessing the perspectives of people at different stages of their life and career, and recognising the unique support they may need at each point.
- **Disability:** ensuring our firm takes the necessary steps to be inclusive of anyone living with a disability.

Data and accountability

There are a number of ways we can keep ourselves accountable, and use the data we have to help target our initiatives, as well as track our progress.

Role	Male	Female
Partners	72%	28%
Associates	43%	58%
Other Fee earners	58%	42%
Business Services	31%	69%

As of June 2024

Goals



30% women in the global partnership – significantly progress our journey towards greater gender balance, as part of our wider global five-year strategy.



10,000 hours pledge – partners collectively pledge to record a minimum of 10,000 hours over the next five years to the pursuit of responsible business education or action, including D&I alongside CSR and pro-bono activities.



Mansfield Certification – in July 2021 we were one of a handful of firms to participate in the Mansfield Certification UK pilot programme, representing a public and bold commitment that we can hold ourselves accountable to. We have achieved certification every year since, most recently in September 2024. The initiative aims to boost diversity and inclusion in law by asking that firms measure and commit to considering at least 30% of historically underrepresented lawyers for a variety of roles, including equity partner promotions, senior lateral hires, client pitches and leadership positions. This has required us to review our recruitment, staffing, promotion and selection processes, with a view to mitigating bias and increasing the chance of having a more diverse candidate pool.

Data and reporting



Gender and ethnicity pay gap – in London, we are required to report our gender pay gap annually. In 2021 we started voluntarily reporting our ethnicity pay gap too. You can find our latest pay gap report on our website [here](#), alongside previous reports since 2018.



Diversity data report – we report on the diversity of our London office every two years, including data on gender, age, race and ethnicity, LGBTQ+, disability, caring responsibilities, and social mobility. This relies on people voluntarily completing a diversity data questionnaire – our latest report can be found on our website [here](#), based on an overall completion rate of 88%.



Global diversity statistics – globally, we are able to report on gender and age. We publish this data on our website [here](#). The regulations regarding data collection across our locations is complex, but we are looking into ways that we can expand the diversity data we have for our population, so that in future we can report on dimensions beyond gender and age. In 2024, we launched a data collection exercise outside of London for the first time, in Sydney.

Key global successes

Global Women’s Development Programme

The Global Women’s Development Programme is our bespoke firmwide programme to support and empower more women on their path to partnership. The programme runs annually, with the aim to retain high performing women lawyers, promote an inclusive culture, and address specific gender related challenges women face in our firm. In 2024 the programme was held over 2.5 days in London, with 29 participants from across our global network. Since its launch in 2016, 207 women have participated and, of those, 45% have subsequently received a promotion to Legal Director, Counsel or Partner.



Working with Respect Training

In January 2024, our CEO Christian Bartsch launched a global roll-out of mandatory Working with Respect training for partners. This bespoke training course was designed in collaboration with external consultants, shaped by input from our leadership, HR and Risk teams, as well as feedback from engagement surveys and employee networks.

The 90-minute course covers the importance of leadership in creating an inclusive environment, how to address non-inclusive behaviour, and uses real life case studies to discuss how leaders can intervene effectively, especially in more challenging scenarios. So far, we have run 12 courses globally, and 305 partners have attended, representing a 74% completion rate. Our goal remains to achieve 100% partner completion with ongoing efforts to monitor and encourage participation.



 Global Women’s Development Programme

Inspire Programme

Inspired by the success of the Global Women’s Development Programme, in 2024 we launched the Inspire Programme, so that women in our client organisations could benefit from the same fantastic opportunity to reflect on their ambitions, build additional leadership skills, and create a network of peers navigating a similar path. The programme comprised five workshops over three months, with 31 participants across a global network of organisations. The feedback has been excellent and we are excited to build on this success for future iterations.

Global highlights

SayMyName AI Tool

February 2024 saw the launch of our 'SayMyName' AI tool in Outlook. This tool helps people add phonetic name pronunciation in email signatures. This initiative included guidance on why name pronunciation is a sign of respect and can make such an impact on feelings of inclusion.

Neurodiversity 101 and advice for Managers

In March 2024, we held a series of global webinars providing an introduction to Neurodiversity (Neurodiversity 101) and advice for Managers on how to support neurodiverse team members (Neurodiversity for Managers). The training covered neurodivergent strengths, key terminology and practical steps for boosting neuroinclusivity.


Progress Through Pride

During Pride month we released our three-part Progress Through Pride podcast, exploring LGBTQ+ inclusion across generations. Each podcast is a conversation between two Bird & Bird colleagues, who discuss their own experiences, covering topics including the power of assumptions, the importance of networks and the strength it takes to be your authentic self. Each episode highlights progress made, and the work still needed to support LGBTQ+ inclusion. To listen to the podcast [click here](#).

MindForward Alliance: Leadership Pledge

In October 2024, we joined the MindForward Alliance: Leadership Pledge, a global initiative that seeks to accelerate businesses on their journey to building a mentally healthy workplace. By signing this pledge, we are committing to an open culture where discussions about mental health are encouraged, helping to break down any remaining stigma and promoting supportive conversations among colleagues and managers. It is a springboard for further action, and means that we are part of a global community of businesses who are committed to accelerating progress on this crucial topic.

International Women's Day 2024

In honour of the 'Inspiring Inclusion' theme for International Women's Day this year, we shared interviews with women from across our international offices, who are truly inspiring inclusion at our firm and beyond. You can watch a summary of these videos [here](#). We also launched our Women in Tech podcast series, featuring some of the most trailblazing women in the tech industry, and hosted a webinar with internationally acclaimed author Mary Ann Sieghart, who explored the themes in her book 'Why are women taken less seriously than men, and what can we do about it?'.





 Progress through Pride



 International Women's Day



 MindForward Alliance



Highlights from our international network

Data collection in Sydney

This year we collected voluntary diversity data in our Sydney office for the first time. Inspired by the London office, Sydney launched a 'Count Me In' campaign, to encourage people to complete their diversity questionnaire, so that we can more accurately understand the makeup of the office, beyond just gender, and focus our D&I efforts more accurately. Currently the completion rate is 60%, and we will continue building on this.

Reciprocal mentoring in London

As part of our focus on race, ethnicity and cultural diversity, the London office launched its first structured reciprocal mentoring programme, in collaboration with the Embrace (multicultural) network. The programme paired 19 senior leaders (mentees) with individuals who identify as ethnically diverse (mentors), with the aim of fostering a more understanding and inclusive environment, providing a space for open dialogue, and room to ask questions. Mentors and mentees explored experiences and perspectives on race, ethnicity and culture over a six-month period, with a toolkit and guidance to support them. We hope to repeat this meaningful programme in the coming year.

Gender Equality Certification in Italy

We are proud that our Italian offices were officially recognised and certified as an organisation committed to gender equality this year, according to UNI/PdR 125:2022 standards, which define the guidelines on the management systems for gender equality. Certification was achieved after a thorough review of our policies, strategies and procedures against specific criteria. This reflects our commitment to promoting women’s access to leadership positions, ensuring equal career opportunities, providing training opportunities and creating an inclusive work environment.

Endowment fund celebration event in France

Our French team has a D&I and CSR endowment fund dedicated to supporting organisations with missions related to inclusion, diversity and charity. The fund is supported by members of the France D&I committee and backs various organisations including TalentsdesCités, Revel@Her, ViensVoirMonTaf, Droit d’accès, Club XXIe siècle, l’Autre Cercle and Urgence Identité Afrique. This summer, our French team invited recipients of their support to a celebration event, to honour the work they are doing together, build connections and strengthen their relationships.

Equilibrium mentoring programme in the Czech Republic

The Equilibrium mentoring programme in the Czech Republic is run by the British Chamber of Commerce, and focuses on empowering and supporting women in business. For the second year running we will have four mentees and two mentors from Bird & Bird taking part in the 20224/25 iteration. The 10-month programme offers activities such as weekly seminars and discussions with inspiring women. The goal is to foster an inclusive and nurturing environment where women can thrive, break barriers, and achieve their full potential.

Social mobility internships in Hong Kong

Our Hong Kong office hosted two interns through a collaboration with the Zubin Foundation as part of their social mobility initiatives. The goal of the Zubin Foundation is to improve the lives of Hong Kong’s ethnic minority communities, through opportunities and outreach work.



Partnerships, collaborations and training



This year we delivered over 320 hours of training related to D&I, to over 1,200 participants, with topics including:

- D&I Fundamentals
- Creating LGBTQ+ inclusive homes
- Neurodiversity in the Workplace
- Role modelling respect - Living our DNA
- The subtle art of empathic leadership
- Working with Respect
- Push for Progress – gender balance
- D&I: Engaging with others



In addition, we offered a range of training related to positive health and wellbeing, including:

- Blending busyness and wellbeing
- Managing your mental health more effectively
- Supporting colleagues in distress and burnout
- Getting stress under control
- Optimising sleep



We partner with a host of organisations across the globe to support, enhance and amplify our D&I agenda. Here is just a selection of the incredible partners we have worked with, and supported, this year:

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| • 10000 Black Interns | • Fundación Prodis | • Out for Australia |
| • Aspiring Solicitors | • Grace Papers | • Pink Dot Hong Kong |
| • Black Solicitors Network | • L'Autre Cercle | • Pride Business Forum |
| • Business Disability Forum | • Law Council of Australia | • Red Empresarial por la Diversidad e Inclusión LGBTI |
| • Charta Der Vielfalt | • Legal Core | • Social Mobility Business Partnership |
| • ChIPs | • Legal Diversity Alliance | • UNSW Equity Textbook Scheme |
| • Club 21 Siecle | • Lexxic | • Viens Voir Mon Taf |
| • Diveristy Council Australia | • PWN Paris | • Young Professionals |
| • Droit Comme Un H! | • Mansfield Rule | |
| • Forward Legal LTBTQ+ Network | • Mindful Business Charter | |
| • From Babies with Love | • Mind Forward Alliance | |
| | • Muslim Employment Charter | |

Leaderships and networks

We have a number of groups and committees across the firm who actively drive D&I progress.

Networks

Our networks are led by employees, and supported by the business to create safe spaces based on shared identities or experience related to D&I. They help raise awareness, celebrate our diversity and provide a collective voice to feed back to D&I leadership and support the D&I strategy.

NeuroNetwork: Our neurodiversity network raises awareness and promotes better understanding of neurodivergence in the workplace. The network also consults on training sessions and webinars, ensuring our approach is inclusive and supportive of our neurodivergent colleagues.

StandOUT: Our LGBTQ+ network raises awareness and represents the LGBTQ+ staff and allies. We recently globalised the network, and currently have 12 representatives in eight countries. StandOUT runs events throughout the year during times such as Pride Month. The network members act as mentors and champions, as well as providing input into our broader D&I strategies.

Faith Groups: Our Faith groups celebrate and support colleagues of different religions across the firm. The groups include our Christian Network, Jewish Network and Muslim Network. These networks provide spaces for colleagues to connect, share experiences and celebrate their faith together.

Beyond Backgrounds: Our social mobility network highlights the importance of equitable opportunities in the firm. The network aims to increase awareness of social mobility challenges, champion initiatives that break down barriers and provide a platform to support employees from underrepresented backgrounds.

Embrace: Our multicultural network supports and celebrates multicultural experience within the firm. The network raises awareness of important cultural and historical moments (such as Black History Month) and gives back to multicultural communities through community engagement. Recognised for its impact, Embrace won The UK Diversity Legal Awards 2019 for Outstanding BAME Employee Network and was nominated by the Inclusive Awards 2022 for an Outstanding Diversity Network Award.



 International Rainbow Laces campaign



 Rosh Hashana celebrations



 Underexposed Arts launch

D&I Leadership

The Global D&I Leadership was established to drive our global D&I ambitions. The group includes members from our senior leadership teams, to ensure D&I has visibility at the highest levels of our firm. Their role is to:

- Articulate our global vision and strategy for D&I including global priorities, measures, and goals
- Establish and maintain the governance and accountability framework needed to drive progress
- Advise countries on aligning with, and implementing, global D&I plans
- Track, and report on, progress towards our D&I goals.

D&I Advisory Group

The Global D&I Advisory Group was established in 2021 to advise the Global D&I Leadership, providing input and feedback into key elements of our D&I strategy. The group represents a cross section of our firm globally and membership is by nomination only, every two years, with the second iteration of the group announced in February 2024. The group brings diverse perspectives to discussions, acting as a sounding board, and is a forum for new ideas or alternative approaches for our D&I strategy.

D&I Country Partners

Each country has appointed a D&I Partner who leads the local D&I agenda, coordinates D&I activities and chairs the local D&I Committee. Their role is to:

- Raise the visibility of D&I topics with country leadership to ensure they remain a priority
- Chair the local D&I Committee, and work with them to create and implement local plans
- Ensure local plans maintain alignment with global priorities
- Facilitate collaboration with other D&I Partners and committees across the network.



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