

Browne Jacobson launches dedicated team to advance Socioeconomic Diversity

27 October 2023

UK and Ireland law firm, Browne Jacobson, has today announced the launch of dedicated Social Mobility Inclusion team to advance socio-economic diversity within the legal profession.

The group will establish a clear and measurable strategy to advocate for and advance socio-economic diversity in the firm's hiring, retention, and promotion practices, ensuring equal opportunities for all, regardless of background. It will also seek to further develop the multi-award-winning FAIRE initiatives, collaborating with educational institutions and community organisations to deepen relationships and create opportunities for those traditionally under-represented in our profession.

Declan Vaughan, People Director

Browne Jacobson

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It will also work to develop mentorship programmes and resources for both external individuals and existing employees, to provide guidance and support to individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds with the aim of helping them both 'get in', but also to 'get on'. It will also seek to enhance cultural awareness and sensitivity within the firm and its clients, to create an inclusive workplace and build strong reciprocal initiatives which benefit all parties.

The Social Mobility Inclusion team will be led by Head of Resourcing and Social Mobility Tom Lyas, and recruitment for the newly created positions is underway currently.

Tom Lyas, Head of Resourcing and Social Mobility at Browne Jacobson, comments: "At Browne Jacobson, we have always strived to be at the forefront of positive change when it comes to societies biggest issues. Our newly established Social Mobility Inclusion team is our latest commitment to advance that cause, and I couldn't be prouder to have the chance to lead us into this next phase of action.

"Socio-economic diversity is essential to the success of any organisation, and here at Browne Jacobson we've seen how the diversity of our workforce positively impacts the experience we're able to offer our clients, as well as ensuring we're an accurate representation of the societies in which we operate. There is simply nothing to lose and everything to gain by making advancing social mobility within your business a strategic priority."

Declan Vaughan, People Director at Browne Jacobson comments: "Addressing the challenges to social mobility is central to our strategy, values and personality as a firm. We are both proud of what we have achieved so far but also hugely conscious of how much more there is still to do. The creation of a dedicated social mobility inclusion team is, we believe, a clear marker of our intent to play a serious part in creating a fairer and more open society."

This follows the firm being named as 'National (British) Winners of the Equity Trailblazer' by the National British Chamber of Commerce (BCC) Business Awards earlier in the month.

Since 2016, Browne Jacobson has implemented various initiatives including revolutionising its recruitment processes by removing academic barriers, anonymising applications and focusing its outreach work on social mobility 'cold spots'. In 2021, the firm launched FAIRE (Fairer Access into Real Experience) – a unique programme offering in-person and virtual work experience opportunities to candidates specifically from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Its annual FAIRE events have now attracted 30,500+ students from 2000+ schools, and its virtual insight event in 2022 was the largest legal virtual work experience event in the UK, with 3300+ attendees taking part.

The firm also launched a dedicated mentoring scheme for aspiring black lawyers, partnered with Forage to launch an interactive online work experience programme to broaden access for aspiring young lawyers and was chosen to be one of only 13 UK businesses who will form the Social Mobility Commission's (SMC) new Employer Advisory Group.

Recently, the firm signed up to the Women in Law pledge and the Business in the Community Race at Work charter, demonstrating our commitment to gender and race equality across the legal profession. We were also recognised in the 'Race at Work charter report 2023: 5 years on' as one of the best practice firms for the meaningful actions we are taking as part of our commitment to the Race at Work Charter.

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