

# PRIME IMPACT REPORT

2021-22



Together with our member firms, we are working to improve access to, and socio-economic diversity within, the legal profession.

## PRIME Work Experience

**Our goal is to embed social mobility within the legal profession and to ensure that the path ultimately to partnership is accessible to all of those who have the talent and desire to achieve it. We know that our industry can only change if we all work together.**

This is what makes PRIME so powerful – the coming together of law firms from across the country in a shared commitment to giving young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds the chance to gain an insight into the legal profession, through work experience.

Following completion of our annual member firm survey, we are able to report on the collective impact of PRIME work experience programmes. The statistics shown in this report relate to the 48 member firms that completed our survey. We will be looking for all member firms to complete this next year.

### Impact Snapshot

From the 48 out of 62 member firms that completed the survey.

**66%** Of member firms offered an element of their work experience programme in person

**2,386** Students took part in PRIME work experience

**11** Member firms paid their students for taking part in work experience



## Partners

**Many PRIME programmes wouldn't be possible without the support of our [partner organisations](#).**

In 2021-22, our member firms worked with **18 partners** to deliver their powerful and impactful programmes. There were additional links with schools, Universities and local councils.

## Returning to the office

**During the height of the pandemic, we were encouraged to see so many of our member firms quickly move their programmes online, ensuring that students didn't miss out on the opportunity to take part in work experience.**

As we emerge from the pandemic, and with 2021-22 having returned to some semblance of 'normality', many of our member firms have been able to re-establish their in-person work experience schemes, offering students the opportunity to walk into a law firm and experience in-person what a career in law might look like. Of those offering work experience, **46% hosted students in their offices for the full scheme** again; 27% adopted a hybrid approach and 27% kept their programmes online for now. Those adopting a hybrid approach often did so to reflect how their firms are now working. Four firms were unable to run programmes this year but are planning to do so next year.

## Eligibility

**This year, as in the previous three, PRIME member firms have recruited students who, alongside attending a state school since age 11 and growing up in a household where no parent or guardian attended University, meet one or more of a number of additional measures.**

Of these, the highest proportion of students meet the criteria of being in receipt of free school meals.

Following a review of our eligibility criteria, we have recently updated these, ensuring that we are using those measures that most accurately identify students who would benefit most from the work experience programmes run by our member firms. You can see our updated eligibility criteria on our [website](#).



# Reach

**A 2020 report by the Social Mobility Commission, “The Long Shadow of Deprivation”, highlighted the difference in social mobility opportunities within local areas. One of the recommended interventions was expanded access to work experience targeted at the most disadvantaged.**

It is imperative therefore that we are able to offer work experience to students across the UK and ROI. PRIME are working to bring more regional firms on board and our existing member firms are widening the areas where they offer work experience.

**In 2021-22, in-office placements were offered to students in the following areas:**

- Aberdeen
- Birmingham
- Bristol
- Cambridge
- Edinburgh
- Exeter
- Glasgow
- Leeds
- Liverpool
- London
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Reading
- Sheffield
- Southampton

Additionally, those member firms offering virtual work experience were able to widen the reach of their impact further.



## Financial assistance

**Our member firms pledge to support their PRIME students by providing financial assistance so they can attend work experience. For example, member firms are asked to provide refreshments and reimburse travel expenses.**

On top of this, **11 member firms are now also offering payment to their PRIME students**, responding to the fact that some young people might have to forego essential vacation and regular after school work in order to attend a work experience scheme. In many instances this would prevent students from attending the work experience.

We welcome this initiative and ask our member firms, where possible, to provide students with payment thus removing this barrier for young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

“Students, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, would typically have to forgo paid part-time work to complete legal work experience. As an employer passionate about social mobility, we felt best practice is to pay students for their participation in the programme.”

**Ella Adlard**, Early Talent Acquisition Advisor at CMS





## Maintaining contact

**We know that the more touchpoints a student has with a firm, the more likely they are to pursue a career in law.**

All PRIME member firms commit to providing a way for PRIME students to maintain contact with them after they leave. For some of our member firms, their PRIME work experience forms part of a longer two or three year programme, offering longer term support and guidance to students. For others, this year they have maintained contact through mentoring programmes, reunion events, networking opportunities and emails.

## Progression

**PRIME's goal is to embed social mobility within the legal profession. Widening access to work experience is just one of the first steps required for this. We cannot yet point to swathes of individuals who have trodden the path to partnership, as a result of PRIME, because the journey is a long one.**

This year however, we can see that the next steps are being taken. We know that at least 71 past PRIME students have been offered vacation scheme places, training contracts or apprenticeships at PRIME member firms this year.

Some member firms have highlighted limitations with their applicant tracking systems that prevented previous PRIME students from being accurately tracked and are looking to change this. The more data member firms are able to collect in relation to student outcomes, the easier it will be to demonstrate the impact of their work experience programmes.

## Apprenticeships

**For many students wishing to pursue a legal career, the university route may not be feasible or desirable. Apprenticeships can therefore be a fantastic alternative, since they involve working and studying concurrently.**

We understand that at least 36 of our member firms now offer apprenticeship opportunities.

These include both legal apprenticeships and apprenticeship opportunities within business services departments.



# PRIME Students

"I have gained an invaluable insight into life as a corporate lawyer. I was able to engage in workshops which developed my knowledge of the law in practice and build my network with a variety of professionals, including in-house lawyers, my mentor and my peers."

**PRIME work experience student at Herbert Smith Freehills in 2022.**

"This event has opened my eyes to the different pathways into law and the extra curricular steps I have to take in order to put myself at the best possible starting position for my journey into law."

**PRIME work experience student at HFW in 2022.**

"My highlight was getting to argue a case."

**PRIME work experience student at Brodies in 2022.**



**PRIME**

Thank you  
to all our  
member firms

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