



IMPACT REPORT

2022-23



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

PRIME Work Experience

All our member firms share our goal of embedding social mobility within the legal profession and ensuring that the path ultimately to partnership is accessible to all of those who have the talent and desire to achieve it.

It is only through working together that our industry can change. We are proud of the collaborative approach of all our members. To harness this, we have started a programme of webinars for member firms. Presented by individual firms and partner organisations, they give members the opportunity to learn from each other, share best practice, celebrate successes and discuss challenges as well as solutions.

Following completion of our annual member firm survey, we are able to report on the collective impact of PRIME work experience programmes over the last 12 months. The statistics shown in this report relate to the 49 member firms that completed our survey. We will be looking for all member firms to complete this next year.

Impact Snapshot

From the 85% of member firms that completed the survey.

94%

Of member firms offered an element of their work experience programme in person. This was up from 66% in 2021-22.

2,987

Students took part in PRIME work experience. This is 601 more than in 2021-22.

17

Member firms paid their students for taking part in work experience. This is six more than in 2021-22.

Involving Clients

Whilst meeting the nine PRIME Commitments, each of our members structure their work experience programmes in their own way. This allows members to showcase the areas of law that they specialise in as well as giving students the opportunity to meet and work with colleagues from across the firm.

To complement internal sessions, more and more firms are involving clients in their work experience programmes – such experiences are often regarded by students as one of their highlights. This year we have seen member firms include a range of activities, from client carousels to whole days spent with clients at their offices.

To build on this, we have revised our approach to working with in-house teams on work experience programmes. We are now inviting them to become more actively involved, having identified that there are those that wish to go beyond partnering with a PRIME member law firm to deliver work experience, and wish to become PRIME members themselves. In speaking with such teams, there are opportunities for a reciprocal approach where their students would be hosted by a roster law firm for a day. This cross-working and collaboration allows students to experience the law profession more holistically. Get in touch with us to discuss involving your clients with your work experience programme.

In-Person Work Experience

One of the lasting effects of the pandemic has been that many businesses, law firms included, still operate a hybrid working pattern. It is to be expected therefore that some of our member firms will also deliver their PRIME work experience programmes in this way.

The gold standard will always be to have students in the office for a full week (or equivalent hours), so we are delighted that 72% of our member firms are now doing this. More importantly, **94% offered an element of their work experience programme in person.** This is up from 66% last year.

A virtual work experience may not replicate the magic for a young person of walking into a law firm for the first time and it is hard to quantify what impact such experiences have with respect to raising their aspirations and building their confidence. So, if a member firm adopts a hybrid approach, we continue to ask them to ensure that the in-person element remains front and centre. You can find more guidance on our [website](#).

Eligibility

Last year we reviewed and updated our eligibility criteria, 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.

Our survey this year has shown that, alongside the more familiar criteria such as being in receipt of free school meals and growing up in a household where no parent or guardian attended university, our members are also recruiting an increasing number of students who meet some of our other eligibility criteria, such as being care experienced or having come to the UK as a refugee or asylum seeker. Most notably are those with caring responsibilities. At one member firm, 27% of their PRIME students had met this eligibility criteria.

In response to this, we recently ran an online seminar with Causeway Education, helping our member firms to empower these talented and deserving young people to access legal work experience and other outreach opportunities. If you missed this session, the recording can be found in the member resources on our [website](#).





Reach

The data behind the Social Mobility Commission's [State of the Nation 2023 Report](#) showed very clear inequalities continue to persist across the country.

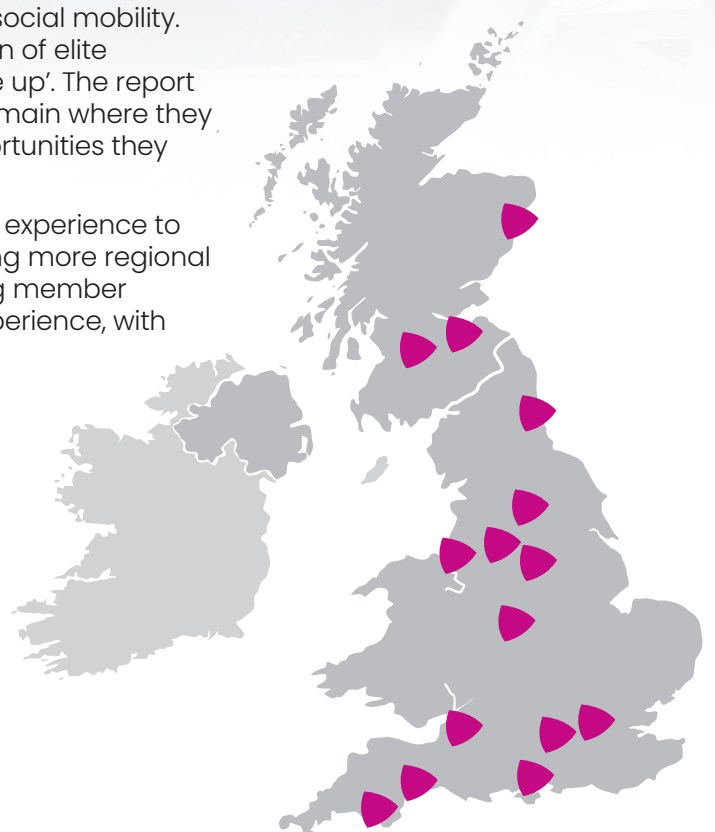
The findings illustrated the nuance and complexity of social mobility. For example, the impact of geography and the location of elite professions, resulting in the need to 'move out to move up'. The report highlighted the importance of people being able to remain where they grew up, if they want to, with access to the same opportunities they would get elsewhere.

It is imperative therefore that we are able to offer work experience to students across the UK. PRIME is continuing work to bring more regional firms on board as members and several of our existing member firms are widening the areas where they offer work experience, with opportunities offered in two new locations this year.

Additionally, those member firms offering work experience with a virtual element were able to widen the reach of their impact further. When students are looking for opportunities on our website, we have added the functionality to allow them to include virtual experiences in their search, wherever they are based in the country.

Cold Spots

Expanding our reach further, many of our member firms have helped with the delivery of our virtual insight sessions to students in cold spot areas of the country, where a lack of opportunities and awareness of certain sectors, together with very little support, can prevent young people from pursuing viable career options. We reached over **400 students in 19 schools**, giving them a better understanding of what a career in law entails and the belief that anyone can pursue this career. We are delighted that we will be continuing this project with EVERFI in 2023-24 and look forward to reaching even more students, with our target being to deliver in 30 schools in cold spot areas. Get in touch if you would like to get involved in this project and help deliver a session to students.



In 2022-23, in-office placements were offered to students in the following areas:

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

Financial Assistance

Our member firms have always pledged to support their PRIME students by providing financial assistance so they can attend work experience. They do this by providing refreshments and covering travel expenses.

Last year, 11 member firms also offered 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 programme. In many instances this would prevent students from attending the work experience.

When we published our impact report last year, we asked our member firms, where possible, to provide students with payment thus removing this barrier for young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

We are delighted that the **number of member firms compensating their students in this way has now risen to 17**. In response to this, we have added the functionality on our website for students to filter work experience opportunities in this way.

Maintaining Contact

The Social Mobility Commission's [Employers' Toolkit](#) offers practical help and ideas for breaking down socio-economic barriers. When discussing maximising engagement, employers are advised to deliver complementary activities such as mentoring and work experience together rather than separately. For those taking their programmes a step further, they suggest providing specific opportunities for participants to maintain engagement.

All of our 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 longer, two or even three-year, programmes, offering longer term support and guidance to students. Others have offered reunion events and networking opportunities and 18 firms have provided their students with mentoring.

Alumini Network

What our survey has shown is that PRIME isn't just the students that do their work experience at your firm.

Each year, between all our members nearly 3,000 students are given the opportunity to take part in work experience programmes across the country. This is a powerful group of students each year who can support each other and learn from each other. To help bring them all together we are going to build a PRIME alumni community and ask that you direct your students towards this.





Progression

Our member firms recognise that widening access to work experience is just one of the first steps in embedding social mobility within the legal profession.

More and more firms are including questions in their recruitment processes that allow them to track whether applicants have been involved in any of their early careers programmes such as PRIME work experience. We are delighted to report that this year, at least 45 past PRIME students have been offered vacation scheme places, training contracts or apprenticeships at PRIME member firms.

We strongly believe that there will be additional students who have undertaken a PRIME work experience placement at one member firm and have gone on to be made a subsequent offer at another member firm. The launch of our alumni database will help us learn more about our PRIME students' journeys after their work experience.

"MacRoberts has been instrumental in shaping my legal career. From a one-week PRIME work experience placement in 2019 to a summer placement in 2022 and now a traineeship offer in 2024, the firm's unwavering support, continuous contact and valuable connections have greatly contributed to my success.

As I proudly graduate from the University of Edinburgh, I am excited to begin the next chapter of my journey, well equipped with the valuable experiences gained through MacRoberts and PRIME."

Former PRIME student at MacRoberts

PRIME Students

"Law before was something that was made out to be quite an inaccessible profession for me and I thought it would be. When I came here... it's really made law quite an appealing profession for me."

PRIME student at Brodies in 2023

"As someone that doesn't have lawyers in my family, I think this placement has been really important to me because it's allowed me to see the real world of law and how I should move through it."

PRIME student at Morton Fraser in 2023

"I have gained a lot of insight into different areas of law that I was not aware of - it has broadened my ideas on which sector of the legal field I would want to do and has overall increased my aspirations to pursue a career in law. So, thank you!"

PRIME student at CMS in 2023



PRIME

Thank you
to all our
member firms

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