



The Law Society



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN LAW: TOOLKIT

www.lawsociety.org.uk

The time is now!



Christina Blacklaws, President of the Law Society of England and Wales

So many lawyers – both men and women – have said this to me in relation to my ‘Women in leadership in Law’ presidential theme. It’s not just an issue for 50% of us but for 100%.

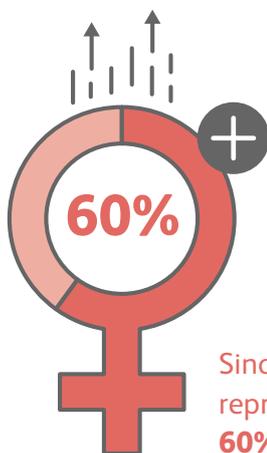
We have all suffered from the unhelpful and limiting pigeon-holing that has been dominant in our profession for so many years and, in some real senses, progress to overcome this has been glacial. Since 1990, women have represented over 60% of new entrants into the profession, as of 2017 are the majority of practising solicitors, and yet comprise only 28% of partners in private practise.

The issues go way beyond the ‘maternity penalty’ as women without children or caring responsibilities have also found their careers have been impeded by bias (unconscious or otherwise), fewer opportunities for good quality client work, promotion and reward. Our profession’s statistics around Gender Pay Gap reporting make uncomfortable reading.

It’s not just an issue for 50% of us but for 100%.

Indeed, gender equality and gender balance have become more of a generational issue as younger men cry out to be able to spend time with their children without that being a career limiting move and young women are fed up with unhelpful assumptions and bias. The challenge of intersectionality in the workplace also adds to the barriers faced by BAME, LGBT+, and disabled women.

So we decided to do something about it and to embark on an ambitious project to ‘move the needle’. We already have some fantastic female leaders in the legal sector, and we want to empower all women to be change-makers, to lead as women and to enable everyone to have more flexibility. We want to help bring about true equality for all within our profession, to understand the barriers and create real opportunities to address them in an action-orientated and collaborative way. This involves all of us.



Since 1990, women have represented more than **60% of new entrants into the legal profession**



50.1% As of 2017, the **majority of practising solicitors are women**



Women only comprise **28% of partners in private practice**

A huge body of research evidences that equality is good for business and tackling these issues will positively affect all of society. However, we know that more dialogue, clear commitment, and tangible actions are needed to achieve full gender equality. We need a cultural shift in the legal sector, and for that we need your help.

We hope this toolkit will offer an opportunity for activism, to enable women in law to be change-makers and leaders and to engage men in a positive, supportive way.

The toolkit offers some brief reference to the evidence we have collected so far, the key topics identified for the roundtable discussions and the activities for individuals and/or the group to take forward. A separate guide is also available for roundtable facilitators.

What happens next?

The qualitative information submitted by the facilitators following your roundtable and impact assessment from the calls to action will feed into our larger research. Men's roundtables will take place in the autumn/winter 2018. This research will combine the quantitative data which we collected in the 2017/2018 international survey, as well as our international literature review. Ultimately, the findings will culminate in a final report scheduled for publication in summer 2019 to mark the 100th anniversary of women in the law.

We want to make 2019 a year of great progress for women in the law and we need your help and commitment to make this happen. Please be part of the solution.

For more information, questions or suggestions please write to president@lawsociety.org.uk



Women in leadership in Law

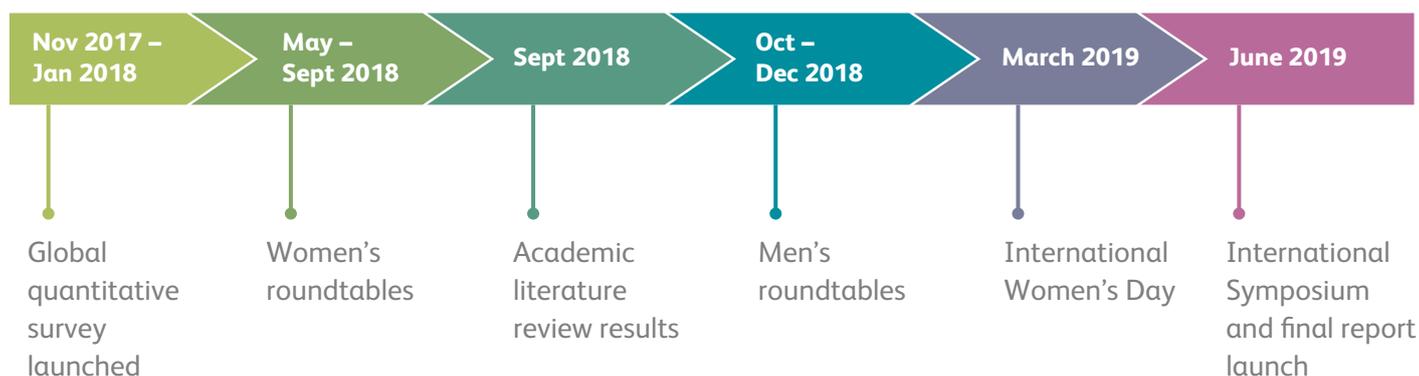
We are approaching the first 100 years since women were allowed to practise as solicitors, and the 40-year anniversary of the UN Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. In this year, the Law Society has chosen to focus on the empowerment and leadership of women in the profession, where more work still needs to be done to achieve gender equality.

Many recent, robust reports from organisations such as McKinsey¹, and the SRA², confirm the compelling business benefits for equal treatment and gender balance in the workplace. Equally, they evidence that we are significantly adrift of achieving this.

Our project will collate current qualitative and quantitative data on women in the legal profession and the judiciary. We have already completed an international survey which received almost 8,000 responses, and an academic literature review to learn from our colleagues across the globe. We will gather further qualitative data from:

- Over 100 roundtables across England and Wales for women to:
 - a) Discuss how to overcome the barriers to achieving leadership
 - b) Commit to achieving positive change and transformation in the profession
- Roundtables for male champions of change who want to support our efforts
- International women's roundtables with other jurisdictions

A final report will include the outcomes of the roundtable commitments, which will be launched at our International Symposium in June 2019.



¹ <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/women-in-the-workplace>

² <http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/diversity-data-2018.page>, www.sra.org.uk/documents/SRA/research/risk-business-case-diversity.pdf

I was the first woman Senior Partner and Global Co-Chair of DLA Piper. The Women in leadership in Law project is important to me because I aspire for women in leadership in the law becoming the norm in our profession, not the exception; particularly now that half the profession is female.

Janet Legrand QC (Hon), Senior Elected Board Member, DLA Piper

We work collaboratively and across all communities so that LGBT+, race and ethnicity, age, disability and gender are not dealt with in isolation, and include women with protected characteristics in all conversations to capture their experiences and keep them central to problem solving.

One of our primary aims from the roundtables is to empower women to leadership roles so the first series is being held exclusively for women. However, we will also host a series of roundtables for men towards the end of 2018, to engage in a tangible way with male champions for change who can support and further these efforts.

The toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide all roundtable attendees with background to the 'Women in leadership in Law' project, to further its reach and our collective impact.

The research questions will identify the challenges faced in your organisations as well as the possible solutions to counteract them. Each tool will support members in identifying key actions to tackle some of the main issues highlighted by our survey as being critical to improving diversity within the profession.



Women in the Law 2018

The largest international survey conducted on the topic of women in the law

As part of our continued work to **improve gender equality in the legal profession**, the Law Society conducted a survey between November 2017 and January 2018 to better understand key issues that affect women working in law. This follows our 2012 survey from which we draw comparisons, improvements and areas of concern.



7,781

responses were collected

(5,758 women, 554 men, 20 other, and 1,449 unknown).

Almost 5% of the respondents identified as LGBT+, 13% identified as BAME and 4% identified as disabled.

We've made some progress over the last five years, but **perception is skewed**

Half of respondents said they thought there had been progress on gender equality over the last five years but there was a **large difference in perception by gender** with 74% of men reporting progress in gender equality compared to 48% of women.



Unconscious bias was perceived to be the main barrier to career progression in 2018

Respondents have become more aware of the role unconscious bias plays in **preventing many women from reaching senior positions within the legal profession.**

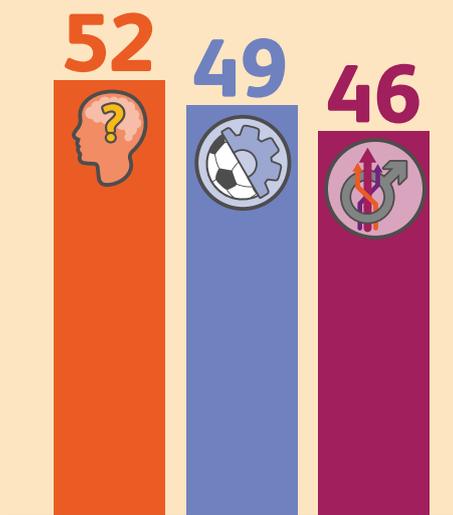
(Up from third reason cited in 2012)

This is also reflected in the scoring of the **least consistently enforced policies in the workplace:**

Only 11% reported **unconscious bias training** being consistently carried out in their organisation

11%

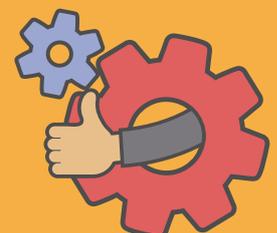
Top reasons reported



- Unconscious bias (52%)
- Unacceptable work/life balance demanded to reach senior levels (49%)
- Traditional networks/routes to promotion are male orientated (46%)

On a more positive note

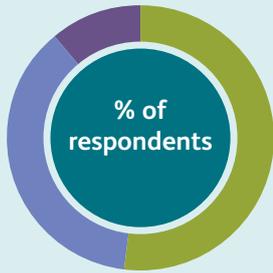
41% felt that they benefit from **regular performance and development reviews**; and **43%** reported having **diversity and inclusion training consistently enforced**



More people than ever think **flexible working really works for everyone**

91%

of respondents felt that a **flexible working culture is critical to improving diversity** in the legal profession (86% in 2012)



52% of respondents work in organisations where a **flexible working policy is consistently enforced**

37% work in organisations where there's **provision**, but not consistently enforced

11% work in organisations with **no provision** for flexible working

Both men and women share this opinion (88% and 93% in favour respectively)



Given the introduction of the new **Gender Pay Gap** reporting requirements, the 2017/18 survey also contained specific questions on this topic:



60%

of the 6,533 individuals responding to this section of the survey reported they were **aware of a gender pay gap within their organisation**

Worryingly, of these **only 16%** reported **visible steps being taken** to address the gender pay gap within their organisation.



What works: best practice highlighted by the survey

Some of the initiatives respondents said have worked in supporting women in the legal profession



Access to and mainstreaming of flexible working, for women and men and at all grades



Networking opportunities at a local, city or regional level or through national networks

Mentoring and sponsorship including from senior staff, peers and reverse mentoring

Engaging men in the equality debate, to raise awareness of the issues, and to encourage shared parental leave and flexible working to enable men to participate more in family life



Promotion and celebration / increased visibility of leading women in law: in the judiciary, in executive office, in firms and organisations



Role modelling family friendly working practices, including through speaking at informal and formal events

Research questions for discussion

Have you faced challenges in any of the following areas, if so what solutions have you identified or used to address them?:

1 Unconscious bias

The Law Society's survey identified unconscious bias as the main barrier hindering the progression of women in the legal profession. Worryingly, only 11% reported any visible steps being taken to address these areas.

**Has your organisation implemented any specific action to tackle bias?
Are you seeing any visible result?**



2 Gender pay gap

The new government reporting revealed a significant gender pay gap in the legal profession. Worryingly, only 16% of those perceiving a pay gap reported any visible steps being taken to address these areas.

Has your organisation identified any tangible solutions?



3 Flexible working

A substantial majority (91%) of survey respondents agreed that a flexible working culture is critical to improving diversity in the legal profession.

**Do you agree?
Has your organisation implemented flexible working?
If so, are you facing any challenges?**



4 Best practice

Finally, some of the best practice examples that emerged from the survey were mentoring (including reverse mentoring), sponsorship, role modelling and involving more men in the equality debate.

**Does this resonate with you?
Are any best practices being implemented in your organisation?**



How have you measured success in each area?

Toolkit

Each tool focuses on a specific area where real change can be made, including the context and business case for doing so. Crucially, each tool also contains a list of activities and calls to action which each roundtable group can use to effect change in their workplace or community.

All tools are broad enough for use by law firms, in-house communities, courts, chambers and legal businesses, and the terms used throughout reflect this inclusivity.

As a group, you may choose to focus on progressing one or multiple tools according to your interest and resources. If you would like to focus on an entirely different issue, please do still provide us with your insights to help us identify other key trends.

1 Unconscious bias

Unconscious bias was identified by our 2018 survey respondents as the most significant barrier preventing many women from reaching senior positions. This tool offers training and guidance on what you can do to minimise the impact of unconscious bias.



2 Gender Pay Gap (GPG)

With the governmental focus and new reporting requirements, the GPG tool will help you to identify key areas for improvement in your place of work.



3 Women's history

With two key milestones in women's history being reached in 2018 (100 years since the first group of women acquired the right to vote) and in 2019 (100 years since women were first allowed to practise law), we invite you to share your stories of success and achievement to highlight the contributions of women in law and to offer visible role models to current and future generations.



4 Male champions for change

Gender equality affects everyone, and champions can come from every sector of the law including men. We hope that this tool will help roundtable participants to engage with their male colleagues, peers and contacts to create effective change for everyone.



5 Global sisterhood

We hope that drawing and lending strength to the international community will result in increased collaboration across jurisdictions to secure gender equality for all, everywhere.



Tool 1: Unconscious bias

In our 2017/18 survey, unconscious bias was the most commonly selected reason (52%) to explain why disproportionately few women have reached senior positions in law, and policies to address it were the least consistently enforced with only 11% reporting training on the issue.

52%



perceived **unconscious bias** as the main barrier to career progression

Only 11% reported **unconscious bias** training being consistently carried out in their organisation



What is unconscious bias?

All human beings – women and men – are biased; we are hardwired to make implicit associations which force us to automatically characterise people and make judgments about them based on those characteristics. But whilst this enables quick decision making, it is also the foundation of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

All human beings – women and men – are biased.

Unconscious bias is not just individual, it works at an organisational level, and includes:

- a collective 'unconscious' way of doing things
- patterns of behaviour becoming normal.

This has a huge influence on organisational decisions, choices and accepted behaviour impacting every level. We also have our own biases, which could potentially impact our career aspirations.

For unconscious bias training to be successful it requires committed momentum to sustain it. Failing to do so is a collective unconscious choice to maintain old values and patterns of behaviour.

What can be done to level the playing field?

To deal effectively with unconscious bias, it is important that all organisations understand that:

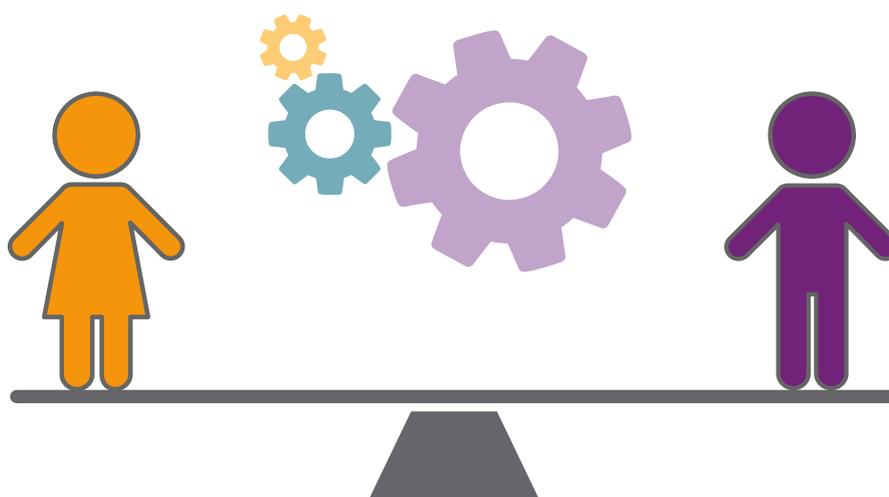
- we are all biased
- bias may be subconscious
- bias can impact decisions made throughout an organisation
- addressing bias will require active cultural change
- active steps are needed to confront and counteract unconscious bias.

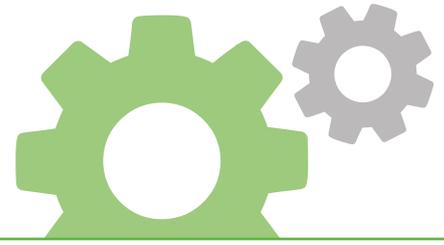
To ensure women are treated as fairly as their male counterparts, we need to understand that unconscious bias impacts on every single stage of the employee's lifecycle including:

- recruitment
- work allocation
- opportunities for professional development
- performance reviews
- promotions
- selection for partnership or equivalent.

Spotting and addressing unconscious bias within an organisation can be very difficult. Just as individuals may need someone else to help them see when they are being unfair due to unconscious bias, an organisation needs to gain an objective view of persistent behaviours and ways of working that might indicate bias at work.

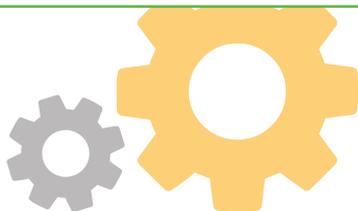
Ensuring that leaders and managers are aware of their own bias and that of the organisation can help to promote a more inclusive culture that sets the foundation for change.





Calls to action

- 1. Commit to ask your leadership team what steps can be taken to ensure that unconscious bias is actively prevented** across your organisation. For example:
 - implement unconscious bias training for everybody within the organisation, starting with managers³
 - appoint unconscious bias champions to proactively raise awareness, talk about the impact of unconscious bias and encourage everyone to attend training
 - use blind and/or contextual recruitment measures for all internal and external vacancies⁴
 - introduce work allocation policies or allocation of work being undertaken for all staff to eliminate bias⁵
 - ensure that directory submissions are diverse and inclusive to reflect the diversity of your organisation.
- 2. Commit to start a conversation with your leadership team on the impact that unconscious bias can have** on appraisal/performance reviews and when opportunities or promotions are being addressed within the organisation.
- 3. Commit to ensure that equal numbers of male and female candidates** are considered for every opportunity.
- 4. Commit to installing mixed boards and panels** throughout your organisation when making decisions relating to recruitment, assessment, shortlists and promotions to consider gender, race, age, background, ability and ethnicity.



³ The Law Society's free '*Understanding Bias*' training is available to everyone by accessing the Professional Development Centre: https://tls.csod.com/LMS/catalog/Welcome.aspx?tab_page_id=67&tab_id=20000482

⁴ Guide accessible here: www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/documents/using-blind-contextual-processes-for-recruitment-trainee-solicitors-wales-january-2016.

⁵ <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/practice/womens-day-work-allocation-prevents-unconscious-bias/5060136.article>

Tool 2: Gender pay gap



60%

of individuals surveyed were **aware of a gender pay gap within their organisation**



Only 16% reported **visible steps being taken to address the gender pay gap** within their organisation.



Given the introduction of new reporting requirements, this tool focuses on Gender Pay Gap (GPG), i.e. the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce, rather than equal pay, which deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs or work of equal value.

The Law Society has published an Equal Pay toolkit including guidance and templates designed to support partners, human resources professionals and anyone involved with the management of a law firm, to ensure full compliance with equal pay legislation.⁶

Though the Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to pay people performing equal work unequally because they are a man or a woman, our survey findings and the new GPG reports are showing that women are still significantly disadvantaged in relation to bonuses and other performance related benefits, which is an area where GPG and equal pay overlap. We believe that focusing on reducing your GPG will also help address some of the issues identified around equal pay.

GPG reporting legislation in the UK requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year to make visible to what extent there is a pay gap between male and female employees and by how much. GPG results are publicly available, and employers should consider establishing new policies or taking quicker action in respect of existing policies to reduce and ultimately eliminate their GPG.

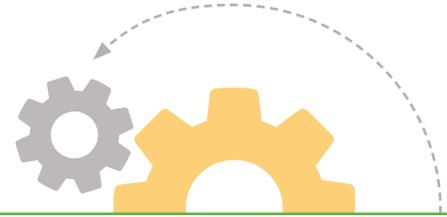
Information in relation to law firms is starting to build a clear picture showing that the GPG for legal businesses is substantial.⁷ Concerns have been raised on equity partners not being included in the reporting requirements, suggesting that the legislation has not gone far enough to build a true picture of the pay gap

Why is this an important issue?

- women now make up a larger percentage of practising solicitors at 50.1%
- GPG data is available to everyone and it will impact career choices
- employers risk losing the time and money invested in staff if they choose to leave because steps are not taken to eliminate the GPG
- organisations which attain gender equality can use this in their marketing strategies
- it is more cost effective to tackle the GPG than to recruit for staff externally
- organisations may risk allegations of unfair/discriminatory pay practices leading to potential equal pay challenges by their staff if they do not address the GPG in a meaningful way
- employers who fail to tackle the GPG may suffer reputational damage
- refusing to commit to reducing the GPG could impact future business.

⁶ The Equal Pay Toolkit is accessible here: <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/News/documents/equal-pay-toolkit-interactive-november-2015/>

⁷ For the latest updates see <https://www.thelawyer.com/tag/gender-pay-gap/>



Calls to action

1. **Commit to support implementation of a specific GPG priority area in your organisation.**

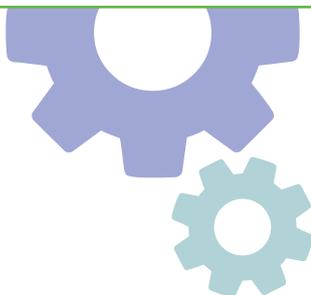
If there isn't a GPG plan for your organisation (including because it was not mandatory for your organisation to report), offer to follow up with relevant areas of the business to ensure that tackling GPG is a priority and to support implementation.⁸ Priorities may include:

- implementation of **flexible and agile working** and include staff input on what would work for them⁹
- reviewing policies on **shared parental leave, maternity leave, paternity leave and supporting working carers**
- introducing initiatives focused on **women returning to work**
- reviewing policies and procedures for **recruitment shortlists and interview panels**
- reviewing your **pay and reward structures**, with a particular focus on performance related bonuses, to ensure transparency and compliance with equal pay legislation.

2. **Commit to starting a conversation with your leadership team about sponsorship** to actively support more junior staff to progress in their career, for example, assess whether both male and female candidates are considered for every opportunity and source other candidates if not.

3. **Commit to establishing a working group to ensure accountability** within the business that reports progress to the Board or the partnership on a regular basis. This is a very effective way of maintaining momentum and ensuring transparency and accountability.¹⁰

4. **Commit to identifying senior male and female role models** in your business who can establish a formal role in progressing this work.



⁸ Should you wish to access further support and information, Business in the Community has developed four useful tools to help businesses implement actions around GPG:

1. Measuring Your Gender Pay Gap and Regulations: https://gender.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/final_gender_pay_gap_regulations_toolkit.pdf

2. Understanding Your Gender Pay Gap: https://gender.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/bitc_toolkit_2_understanding_your_pay_gap.pdf

3. Communicating your Gender Pay Gap: https://gender.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/bitc_toolkit_3_communicating_your_pay_gap_final_1.pdf

4. Tackling Your Gender Pay Gap: https://gender.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/bitc_toolkit_4_tackling_your_gender_pay_gap.pdf

⁹ Guide to working anywhere <http://www.polycom.com/content/dam/polycom/common/documents/guides/global-anywhere-working-guide-enus.pdf>

¹⁰ The Law Society's Gender Equality Adviser can help you explore how to set up a GPG working group. Please contact: alex.storer@lawsociety.org.uk

Tool 3: The history of women in law

Does your organisation know who its first female trainee, pupil, clerk, partner, senior manager, department head, general counsel etc. was?

Who were/are the women of influence (especially the 'firsts') who have shaped your organisation?

In less than 100 years women have transformed the legal landscape. Although once excluded from qualifying as solicitors or being called to the Bar, on account of not being 'persons', since the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919, women now make up over half of the practising solicitors in the UK.

Why is commemorating this history important?

Only with a proper understanding of history can we truly understand women's contemporary place in the world. Recognising the trailblazers who fought for inclusion, and overcoming the obstacles that they faced, will help to ensure a strong and equal future for women, by increasing the visibility of successful women in law, and creating positive role models.

That's why the Law Society has partnered with the First 100 Years project, to chart the journey of women in law since 1919 to inform and inspire future generations.

We are calling on in-house teams, firms, chambers and courts to answer the questions below about the female firsts significant to your organisation. The data collected will help us to create a visual representation of the progress of women in law 1919-2019. Ultimately, we aim to use the information to better understand the journey of women in law and to publish our findings to commemorate the centenary of women's inclusion in the legal profession.

We will be sharing all findings with the First 100 Years project and we want to create an archive and to publish a book to celebrate the centenary.

By answering these questions, individuals and organisations will come to better understand their own history and be able to recognise and celebrate important women who may have been overlooked until now. Some of the answers to these questions may be impossible to find, but that is revealing of how women's stories and successes have been historically undervalued.



Exploring your history

Some firms have published their firm's history, which is a good starting point. Often there is a retired partner that has taken an interest in recording the history of the firm and has a lot of information – find out who the individual might be and request to be introduced.

All questions are optional, feel free to answer as many as you would like. Share with us the evidence or your success, including press related articles and newspaper cuttings, documentation, images and anything else that you would like to be captured!

First 100 Years survey

Information for you to let us know:

- When was your organisation established?
- When did you first hire your first female member of staff? What role did she hold?
- What year did your organisation recruit its first female trainee/equivalent?
- What year did your firm have its first female associate/equivalent?
- What year was the first female trainee taken on as an associate? What area did she qualify in?
- What year did you promote the first female to senior associate/equivalent?
- What year did you promote your first female partner/equivalent?
- What year did you recruit in your first female partner?
- What year did you promote a female to head up a practice group/equivalent?
- What year did you promote a female to the management board?
- What year did you have a female managing partner/company secretary/general counsel?
- What year did you have a female senior partner/equivalent?
- Who was your first female business owner and when did this take place?
- What year did you have a female head of office (regional or HQ)?
- What year did one of your female lawyers become a Queen's Counsel/judge/magistrate/commissioner?
- Which of your female legal professionals have received accolades for services to the law? What was the accolade, why did the individual(s) receive them and when?
- Tell us about other female firsts in your organisation if they are not covered by one of the questions above.
- What is your story?



Calls to action

1. **Commit to searching the stories that have been collected on www.first100years.org.uk** and the timeline to look for clues of progress and any names that might relate back to your organisation.
2. **Commit to celebrating your history** as an individual and encourage your company or institution to explore and commemorate its history by sending the details to us.¹¹
3. **Commit to encourage an individual and organisation in your network to share**, celebrate and publish the details of women who have made an impact if you haven't already done so.
4. **Plan, document and share your own celebrations** for women of influence in your organisation.



¹¹ Email insight of your personal or organisational success to the Law Society's Women in leadership in Law Project Coordinator lauren.thornton@lawsociety.org.uk

Tool 4: Male champions for change

Gender should not be a limiting factor for anyone. The Law Society wants to empower everyone to become advocates, influencers, and champions of change to advance equality and to level the playing field for women and men.

In England and Wales, women now make up more than half of our profession – they account for about 47 per cent of the UK's total workforce and over half of solicitors, yet they are still not making it to partner status in equal numbers to men. Our statistics show that out of approximately 30,000 partners in private practice in England and Wales, 72 per cent are men, and only 28 per cent are women.

Proactive steps to address the gender balance in the workplace must be taken for businesses to fully benefit from all their people. For example, studies found that women without sponsorship are less likely to be appointed to top roles than men and more reluctant to try for them, and accessible influential mentorship is required to ensure that limited access to career-relevant experience does not continue to limit women's access to resources throughout their careers.¹²

Benefits of diversity:

- diverse thought and experience brings a wealth of resources, creativity and innovation, which in turn leads to better decision making and avoids 'group think'
- the ability to meet increasing client desire to work with diverse and inclusive teams
- representative workforces within the legal sector are considered important by the public for achieving fair outcomes and improving trust in judicial decisions
- greater gender diversity on senior-executive teams corresponds to a higher performance¹³
- there is a direct correlation between the profitability and diversity of the highest performing organisations¹⁴



The Law Society has a key role to play to boost the pace of change in this journey towards achieving full gender equality. I admire the positive impact this work is already having in focusing our minds and in encouraging an inclusive conversation on the role both men and women must play. I feel very strongly about ensuring this piece of work maintains momentum even after the end of Christina's presidency, as I prepare to succeed her in July 2019.

Simon Davis, Vice President of the Law Society of England and Wales

¹² <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/hrm.21887>

¹³ & ¹⁴ www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Organization/Our%20Insights/Delivering%20through%20diversity/Delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx



Calls to action

1. **Commit to discuss gender equality with your male colleagues, contacts and peers** to reduce the perception that this is a women-only issue.
2. **Commit to encourage participation in the Harvard University gender IQ test** in your organisation, by colleagues, contacts and peers so that individuals can better understand their own gender bias.¹⁵
3. **Commit to establish coaching and mentoring initiatives** in your organisation to empower women to achieve leadership roles.
4. **Commit to encourage your organisation to implement gender equality training** for:
 - a. partners/senior leadership
 - b. managers
 - c. all staff
5. **Commit to encourage male champions for change to make their own concrete, impactful and measurable action to address gender inequality.** Including:
 - discussing a review of working practices with the leadership team to deter gender bias
 - ensuring that equal numbers of both male and female candidates are considered for all significant opportunities
 - sourcing an alternate female colleague/peer for participating in an otherwise non-inclusive roundtable, panel, conference or board meeting
 - refusing to participate in all-male panels, conferences and boards.
6. **Commit to ask a male colleague at a senior level role who has authority to implement changes in your organisation** to commit to attending one of the Law Society's roundtables for men.



¹⁵ Harvard gender IQ test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/uk/selectatest.jsp>

Tool 5: Global sisterhood

The legal profession is global and there are huge benefits to diversity for all parts of the sector, from innate cultural awareness when working with, or for, international clients, to ease of cross border disputes when working in multi-jurisdictional teams. However, the disproportionately limited number of women in leadership and in decision making positions also prevents the adoption of appropriate policies that are responsive to women's needs.

Confronting gender inequality positively impacts both men and women, allowing them to realise their full potential in society.

There are challenges in operating internationally given the wide range of cultures and positions around the world, so how we determine role models in a culturally-sensitive way is key to generating good will. It is also important to look at the wider societal problems, which are hampering gender equality at a global level and/or in specific regions. This is because the challenges encountered by women in the workplace, specifically in the legal sector, are symptomatic of wider issues.

In a global society, where markets know no geographical boundaries and our members have clients across the world, international relations can play a vital role in effecting global change. Women in England and Wales have very different challenges to those faced by our international colleagues and our vision is for a global sisterhood that can learn from each other.

We commit to supporting our fellow women globally and find new ways of strengthening each other as women.

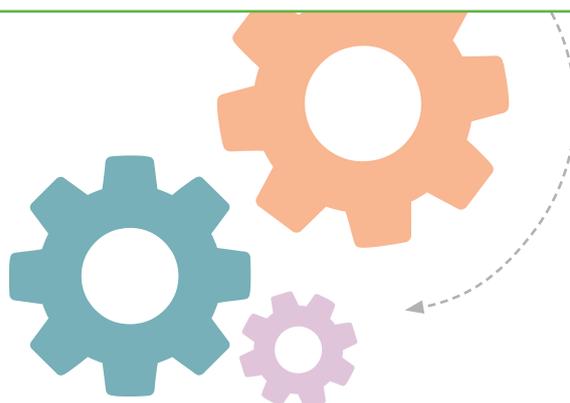
We also stand in solidarity with women to celebrate and engage in meaningful conversation, exchanges, and strategies to build a legal sector that is more inclusive and more equal.





Calls to action

1. **Commit to implement the recommendations of the annual meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women** in your organisation.
2. **Commit to research, systematise, and publish the history of women lawyers** in all the jurisdictions your business operates to promote their visibility and showcase their contribution.
3. **Commit to seek opportunities for cross-border networking and skill sharing with other women** participating in international transactions, conferences and events by allowing the Law Society to partner you with another individual or organisation to foster relationships internationally.¹⁶
4. **Commit to engage with international contacts and clients on this topic** so that they may also participate in it.
5. **Commit to host at least one women focused event a year** with fellow lawyers from around the world, to foster relationships internationally, to share experiences and support one another in removing barriers that prevent women from succeeding.
6. **Commit to host a roundtable with your international colleagues.** If you would like to be supported in this please contact International@lawsociety.org.uk



¹⁶ To participate in the international sisterhood network please contact International@lawsociety.org.uk

What happens next?

After each roundtable, the following steps should be taken:

- The facilitator will circulate notes to all roundtable participants to agree amendments
- Within two weeks of the roundtable, the facilitator will share the notes and call to action commitments with the Law Society

For national roundtables please send all details to:

Lauren Thornton

Project Coordinator

lauren.thornton@lawsociety.org.uk

For international roundtables please send all details to:

Lizzette Robleto de Howarth

International Programmes Manager

lizzette.robletodehowarth@lawsociety.org.uk

and cc lauren.thornton@lawsociety.org.uk

- Three months after the roundtable the facilitators will be contacted by the Law Society to find out about the initial progress made
- Six months after the roundtable the Project Coordinator will contact the facilitators again to collate all progress made by the groups and assess the level of impact made by each group and by individuals in their organisations and wider communities – if you have not provided your updates by this time, please contact the Project Coordinator
- We strongly encourage you to send us a group photo from your meeting and evidence of change in action can also be sent to the Project Coordinator

We hope to evidence that we can make a significant difference through this methodology and the results and the impact assessment will form part of a final report to be produced in March 2019.

Acknowledgements

The Law Society is extremely grateful for the support offered by the International Bar Association (IBA) Women Lawyers' Interest Group and LexisNexis on this project. We look forward to continuing to work closely with these organisations to keep this momentum and maximise our collective impact.

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