



The Law  
Society

# WOMEN IN LAW PLEDGE:

a commitment for gender equality across the legal profession

**This Pledge is a commitment by signatories to work together to harness the power of gender equality to transform the business of law.**

Organisations that sign up to this Pledge are committing to do all that is in their power to build a more equal and fair profession. A balanced workforce is good for business and workplace culture; and is increasingly important for clients.

Given the profile of the legal profession<sup>1</sup>, the intended outcome of this Pledge is to achieve gender equality in senior ranks of the profession and amongst those with a leadership role. More broadly, the Pledge reflects an aspiration to see gender balance at all levels across the legal profession, to tackle the gender pay gap and other inequalities that still affect all women in law today, especially those facing multiple layers<sup>2</sup> of discrimination, e.g. gender and ethnicity or disability, etc.

## THE PLEDGE



- Commits organisations to supporting the progression of all women<sup>3</sup> into senior roles in the legal profession by focusing on retention of all women and enabling progression into partnership, silk and/or judicial appointment and other leadership roles;
- Recognises the diversity of the sector and that organisations will have different starting points, and should therefore set action plans, objectives and targets that are right for them;
- Requires organisations to publish their action plans and publicly report on progress to deliver against their objectives and targets to support the transparency and accountability needed to drive change.

## My organisation pledges to promote gender equality by:

1. Having one named member of our senior leadership team/management committee who is accountable for gender diversity and inclusion;
2. Setting specific gender targets at leadership level and at other levels as appropriate;
3. Considering the differential outcomes for different groups of women at all levels of the organisation e.g. their background, identity and range of experiences;
4. Developing an action plan to achieve gender equality in our senior management and leadership teams;
5. Committing at senior level to tackle sex discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace;
6. Committing to tackle workplace culture and bias that may result in differential outcomes in the workplace;
7. Making public our pledge and publishing our targets and action plan;
8. Ensuring specific aspects of pay, reward and recognition of the senior leadership team are linked to delivery against these gender equality targets as applicable.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Law Society: Women represent over 60% of entrants to the legal profession since 1990, and make up over 50% of practising solicitors, yet less than 30% of partners in private practice are women (source: Law Society Annual Statistics). Bar Council: There has been approximate gender parity at pupillage for the last ten years, yet only 38% of barristers are women whilst just 16% of practising Queen's Counsel are women. (Bar Council, April 2019). CILEx: 75% of CILEx members are women.

<sup>2</sup> This is often referred to as intersectionality, which looks at how other characteristics overlap with gender and impact on the experience of different subgroups, e.g. ethnic minority women, disabled women, women with caring responsibilities, etc.

<sup>3</sup> With full regard to their background, identity and range of experiences, including but not limited to: age, gender identity, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, socio-economic background and caring responsibilities.

<sup>4</sup> Pledge 8 may be deleted for self-employed barristers in chambers.