

3VB Pledge to Promote Gender Diversity - progress to March 2024

3VB currently (Mar 2024) has 30 female Members of Chambers. This is an increase of 2 since April 2023. There are 4 female Associate Members. 3VB has 4 pupils, three of whom are female.

Signing the Women in Law Pledge is a part of 3VB's rolling annual Equality & Diversity Action Plan. 3VB has appointed two Members of Chambers as Gender Diversity & Equality Representatives. The Gender Diversity and Equality Representatives are members of both the 3VB Management Board and the Equality & Diversity Committee.

The current Gender Diversity and Equality Representatives are Lisa Lacob and Liisa Lahti. The Chair of 3VB's Equality & Diversity Committee is Nicholas Craig QC.

GENDER DIVERSITY TARGETS

In parallel with signing the Women in Law Pledge, every April 3VB sets annual targets and reports on progress to meet those targets, which it will report to the Bar Council. The targets and progress against those targets to March 2024 are set out as follows:

	Category	Target	Progress against Targets
1		To continue to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of unassigned work between female and male Members of Chambers	The chair of the EDC together with the Senior Practice Managers (SPMs) and Chambers Director (CD), continue to review in detail the distribution of unassigned work on a quarterly basis to ensure that it is distributed fairly and equitably. Their key observations are reported to the GD Reps, the E&D Committee and to the Mgmt. Board.
2	Practice development	To develop an appropriate method for measuring any gender earnings differentials within Chambers, together with an action plan to monitor and manage any gender earnings differential on an ongoing basis*	This is considered by the chair of the EDC and the CD and SPMs, (helped by draft guidance provided by the Bar Council's EDSM Committee). Every year, earnings data is analysed to ascertain (a) whether there are any discrepancies between the average earnings of male and female MOCs in the last year and (b) whether there have been any changes over the past 3 years. The data to August 2023 appears to show that there remains a difference in earnings between male and female MoCs. In every one of these groups (except for the J16-20 group), one or more of the women MoCs have taken maternity leave in the past 3-4 years. The consequence of this is it takes some time to build up practice again. This is also seen in the figures for male MOCs who have or are taking Paternity Leave in the past 3-4 years. Also, several women members are primary carers who have indicated at various times, for example, that they do not wish to be considered for certain types of work or wish to work 'reduced' hours. These factors affect the average and median figures for female members in each group and go some way to providing an explanation for the difference in earnings. The Head of the EDC was able to further interrogate case-specific reasons for the differences (which are confidential to members) and is satisfied that there are further reasons for them which are justifiable from an E&D perspective. The data continues to be reviewed quarterly and reported to Chambers' E&D Committee.
3		To continue to ensure that female Members of Chambers are fairly represented on panels of speakers at Chambers' in-house or external Chambers' sponsored marketing events	For 23/24, there were over 155 virtual and in person events. Of these, 88 were attended by female members.
4	Retention	To ensure that the retention rate of female Members of Chambers remains consistent with the retention rate of male Members of Chambers**	Over the last 3 years no female members have resigned or retired from chambers.
5	Training and awareness	All Members of Chambers, staff and associate members shall be trained appropriately in: a) Gender equality, diversity and inclusion and awareness; and b) What constitutes sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying	All members and staff are required to attend at least one E&D training course per calendar year. These will be provided by the BC. In 23/24 there were 6 E&D courses on, Unconscious bias, Work Distribution and Monitoring, Fair Recruitment, Bullying & inappropriate behaviour, and Introduction to/Advanced E&D. Not all members and staff attended an E&D Course in 23/24. The target will remain for 24/25 and the EDC will consider how it can encourage/improve member attendance at E&D courses.
6	Silks	At least three female Silks	

			We have achieved this target (our new target is 5 female silks by December 2025)
7	Chambers management	30% of the voting members of the Management Board to be female	Currently at 30% (26.6% in 2023).
8		At least one female representative for each of the Chamber's business practice groups	Out of 11 practice groups in Chambers, we have 21 heads and co-heads, of which 7 are female (there were 8 female heads/co-heads in 2023).
9		The gender split of representatives on all Chambers' committees shall reflect the gender split of Members of Chambers	Female members represent 31% of chambers membership. At committee level it is: MB: 27% EDC: 55.6% CSR: 50% BDC: 28.6% PC: 35.7% Tenancy Committee: 20%

Supplementary Outcome:

A revised Parental Leave policy was approved by the EDC in October 2022. The amends reflected most of the actions highlighted in a report by one of our previous GD Reps which considered whether the policy Chambers has in place is effective and discussed improvements that could be made to the policy and to its implementation. The policy and our Flexible working Policy will be reviewed by the EDC during 2024.

* In addressing any gender earnings differences, Chambers recognises that in any given year, as self- employed barristers, Members of Chambers (of either gender) may choose to spend time away from their practice and/or work on less remunerative and/or pro bono work, which will negatively impact on their earnings (and therefore, any gender earnings differentials) in that year.

** Measured by reference to Members of Chambers leaving 3VB over the previous 3-year period (not including retirement).

*** Already achieved for the Equality & Diversity Committee.

OTHER PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

3VB is committed to supporting all Members of Chambers with protected characteristics, and when carrying out any comparative reviews within Chambers, to compare the experience/outcomes of female Members of Chambers who are from an underrepresented group or have a disability against those of other female Members of Chambers.

Updated May 2024