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'Inclusion for All' (IFA), Gowling's comprehensive five-year Diversity Equality & Inclusion (DE&I) strategy

'Inclusion for All' (IFA), is our comprehensive five-year Diversity Equality & Inclusion (DE&I) strategy, focused on ensuring all our people feel included and that they have a part to play in making Gowling WLG truly diverse and inclusive. While continuing to deliver on firmwide initiatives, IFA introduced a new requirement for teams, whether legal or business service-focused, to create an annual DE&I action plan, detailing the key contributions they will make to our overarching success.

IFA has revolutionised the firm's approach to DE&I, by changing perceptions that DE&I is only the responsibility of a select few. Setting the strategy formed step one, but to be successful we needed to ensure everyone was onboard and not only supportive of our approach but engaged in taking action.

In summer 2021, we started to socialise the new strategy with our Board to ensure buy-in, then briefed all Team Leaders, explaining to each the requirements of them and their teams.

For IFA to be a success, the team action plans needed to reflect any identified areas of concern/development. To ensure teams were aware of the areas requiring improvement, and where they were already excelling, we developed a maturity model to map teams across five levels - Foundation, Emerging, Embracing, Integrating and Excelling. We fed key data points into the model:

- **Team survey** – to gather inclusion sentiment within teams.
- **Demographic data** – on gender, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation.
- **Engagement data** – including employee network members, event participation, DE&I hours recorded and registered Inclusion Allies.

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A roll out plan was developed to ensure we engaged with every team at the firm. This is now an annual process, whereby data is collated in each November, surveys are issued in January and then teams are given their year-on-year results to inform the creation of action plans for the following year. We are now approaching Year 4 of IFA. The DE&I team invests significant time with legal and business services teams annually to support this approach; helping them understand their data, guiding them on what types of actions they might want to put in place to address areas of concern and running focus groups to encourage conversation.

As part of the development of IFA, a number of clear data elements were agreed that we could measure success by. These include the survey results, demographics and engagement data – and we have three years of progress to reflect on.

Representation has improved since 2021:

- Female partners increased by 9% to 35% in 2024.
- Ethnic minority partners increased by 5.15% to 10.95% in 2024.
- Ethnic minority representation firmwide increased by 2.4% to 22% in 2024.

In our engagement data we've seen increases across the board with 36.2% of people joining an employee network, 23% of people recording DE&I hours and 18.2% of people registered as 'inclusion allies'. Favourable responses to our IFA survey have consistently increased across all 13 questions.

This doesn't consider the other ways we can measure success that are harder to quantify. We've seen an increase in activity and conversation on DE&I, more volunteers to support our firm-wide work and innovative ideas to bring DE&I to life.

IPFA is committed to driving and supporting change with respect to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the infrastructure and energy industry. In support of this we will be holding events, sharing thought leadership and conducting interviews with leading figures in our global network who are championing and taking action through DEI initiatives.