



The WILL Survey Findings Report

September 2016

Prepared by:
Dr Alexandra Budjanovcanin

School of Management and Business
Kings College London

Executive Summary

1. The WILL survey is part of a study conducted jointly between King's College London and the organising committee of the WILL professional network for pre-partnership women in Law, seeking to explore the experiences and perceptions of female lawyers in London, specifically in relation to their careers and career progression. Women were recruited to the study via the WILL professional network.
2. The driver for the study is the observed disparity between the numbers of men and women at the top of the legal profession. A Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) survey recently found that while females make up approximately half of qualified lawyers, only roughly a quarter of partners in large UK firms are women.
3. The sample of 327 women is mostly comprised of lawyers working at 'associate' level or positions below partner/general counsel level in legal and other organisations in London. Most of these women work in private practice, although a small proportion of the sample represent lawyers working in-house.
4. Mirroring observed trends in the legal profession, the gender diversity reported at the higher echelons of private practice within this sample is limited. These respondents report a small proportion of female lawyers at partner level within their employing organisations. Over a quarter of respondents to the survey reported no female partners at all in their Department/Practice Area.
5. Respondents to the survey report a number of diversity practices in place at their employing organisation. However, their reported prevalence varies markedly across the sample; parental leave and work-life balance practices are most likely to be in place. The practice of linking diversity-promoting activities to performance/reward is the least likely.
6. Respondents' perceptions of their organisations' commitment to specific diversity practices are mixed. Where practices are in place, the perceived level of commitment to them is not overly high for any of the practices, however for women's career development practices and process transparency, it is noticeably lower. The sample reported their organisations as being least committed to the practice of linking diversity-promoting activities to performance/reward.
7. Findings suggest that within this sample, individuals' feelings towards their career, colleagues and organisation are generally positive. Respondents report fairly high career satisfaction and organisational and team commitment.

8. Despite these positive attitudes a substantial proportion (42.8%) are nonetheless uncertain about whether they want to continue working in the legal profession. This is noteworthy as reasons could include not being able to foresee a future for themselves in the profession due to working conditions/structural constraints within it. This would need further exploration.
9. Further findings in relation to future intentions reveal the potential for movement within the profession in the next five years. Many respondents are either considering changing their current situation (organisation or setting) or certain about doing so.
10. Career-related attitudes, such as organisational and management commitment, career satisfaction and occupational regret, all play a role in understanding future movement intentions. This is important for organisations, given the findings of the survey that such attitudes are linked to factors within the control of organisations, such as promotion opportunities, the organisational culture and the visibility of successful female role models.
11. Findings show that the most popular reasons for moving in-house from private practice are linked to work-life balance, yet despite that in-house lawyers in this sample continue to work relatively long hours and many report variability in those hours. In addition, the nature of the work and a perceived lack of promotion prospects play a role in driving individuals to move in-house.
12. Examining the career-related attitudes and behavioural intentions of this sample reveals that these are linked to a number of themes including:
 - The glass ceiling effect
 - Role models (the 'pipeline problem')
 - Individuals' career aspirations
 - Individual personality differences

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Glossary of terms

Achievement aspiration. An individual's aspirations for senior level positions

Achieving personal and professional success. The perceived feasibility of achieving success in both professional and non-work roles

Career identity salience. The importance of an individual's profession to their identity

Career satisfaction. The extent to which individuals feel satisfied with the progress of their career to date

Employability. The extent to which an individual believes they can achieve equivalent or better employment elsewhere

Glass ceiling. The (often invisible) barriers/ obstacles women face in terms of their career development

Lifestyle orientation. The importance that individuals place on achieving a balance between work and other aspects of their life

Management commitment. An individual's psychological attachment to their management team

Occupational regret. An enduring state of wishing that one had never entered one's current occupation

Organisational commitment. An individual's psychological attachment to an organisation

Proactive personality. An individual tendency to actively take decisions, plan ahead and prepare rather than react

Promotion perceptions. The extent to which individuals feel they can progress in their employing organisation

Sisterhood. The existence of senior women in an organisation who champion and mentor more junior women in that organisation

Sub-sample. For the purpose of this report, the term 'sub-sample' is used to denote a part of the whole sample, namely respondents that work in-house or those who work in private practice

Supportive work-life client culture. The supportiveness of clients for work-life balance

Supportive work-life organisational culture. The supportiveness of an organisation for work-life balance

Team commitment. An individual's psychological attachment to their immediate team

Work centrality. The centrality of work compared with other aspects of an individual's life

1. Introduction and background to project

The WILL survey is part of a study seeking to understand more about female lawyers' experiences of their profession. Specifically, it focuses on career progression and women's mobility within the legal profession. Statistics clearly illustrate that despite women comprising the majority of entrants into the profession for more than 20 years¹, there remains continuing stark disparity in the numbers of men and women in the higher ranks of the profession. Women in Law London (WILL) commissioned the study in collaboration with King's College London, which focuses on this fundamental issue and sought to establish from its members why this might be the case.

The research presented in this report addresses the aim of understanding more about the attitudes and perceptions of women currently practicing in law and how these affect their future intentions for their careers (including movement within and out of the profession). The study explores a range of issues in trying to understand the reasons why female lawyers intend to move organisation, setting and even out of the profession. These include the glass ceiling, a scarcity of female role models in the profession, as well as individual aspirations and individual personality differences. The study also considers career-related attitudes in trying to understand drivers of female lawyers' decisions.

The survey forms the first part of a wider study. A qualitative study will be conducted in future with the aim of exploring in greater depth some of the issues arising from the survey.

The research has been conducted jointly with King's College London (Dr Alexandra Budjanovcanin) and the organising committee of the WILL professional network (Sascha Grimm, Suzanne Szczetnikowicz, Sophie Bragg, Ellen Hughes-Jones, Francis Stocks, Lynne Wells and Fatema Orjela).

¹ Institute for Employment Studies (1995). *Women in the Labour Market: Two Decades of Change and Continuity*. [online] Institute for Employment Studies, p.xviii+32. Available at: <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/women-labour-market> [Accessed 13 Sep. 2016].

1.1 About the WILL survey

The WILL survey, an online questionnaire, was developed collaboratively between WILL and King's College London. It contains questions that seek to explore a range of issues that are thought to be relevant to female lawyers' careers.

Data were collected during summer 2015. All members of the Women in Law London (WILL) professional network were invited to participate in the study. Members of the WILL network are, for the most part, currently practising women lawyers at pre-partnership level (or pre-top level ranks in-house). In total, 327 useable responses to the survey were received. This represents a response rate of 19%.

Respondents to the survey were predominantly asked the same set of questions. However, where differences were identified between the ways in which private practice and in-house lawyers work (e.g. in how hours are recorded), questioning was amended accordingly.

It is important to note that the data are cross-sectional (all data were collected at the same point in time), which means associations between variables can be identified but causation cannot. Further longitudinal data would be required to confirm the sequence of events between variables.

Further details about the survey process are provided in Appendix 1.

1.2 About the WILL Report

The presentation of findings in this report starts with background demographic and employment-related data about the sample. Where relevant, comparisons are made across settings (private practice and in-house). Findings relating to individuals' perceptions of their organisation's approach to diversity are then presented followed by career-related attitudes and female lawyers' future intentions. The final section summarises the report findings.

Where possible, the statistical analysis has been kept simple and limited to the presentation of frequency counts and percentages or means. Where more complex analysis has been conducted, the statistical results, along with explanations for interpreting those, are provided in the appendices.

1.3 About the sample

The data below presents the characteristics of the sample.

- The average age of the whole sample is 33 years (with a range from 23 to 60 years).
- The majority of the sample are from a white ethnic background (87.8%) with the next biggest ethnic group being Asian (5.2%).

ETHNIC BACKGROUND:

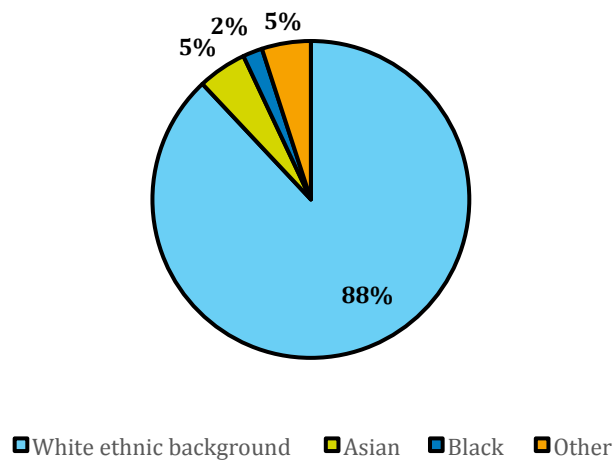
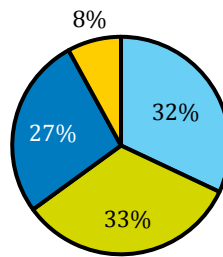


Figure 1. Ethnic background of sample

- Most of the sample reported being married (69.7%) and having no dependents (69.4%). When split by sub-sample, the in-house respondents have a somewhat smaller proportion of married lawyers (44.7%) and a higher proportion of women lawyers reporting no dependents (78.9%).
- Within the whole sample, for those who reported having dependents, this equated to 19.9% of the sample having dependent children of pre-school age, 12.5% have dependent children of school age and a further 4.6% of respondents have elderly care or other responsibilities.
- A fairly even split was observed in the whole sample with regards to respondents' financial contribution to their household; approximately a third of women are sole earners in their household (31.8%), with a further third being the main earner (33.6%). Almost 27% are joint earners and a further 8% are contributory earners in their household. This trend is broadly mirrored among the private practice sub-sample, however, the in-house sub-sample has a higher proportion of sole earners (55.3%).

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO HOUSEHOLD/ EARNER STATUS:



- Sole earner - earns 100% of household income
- Main earner - earns more than 50% of household income
- Joint earner - earns about 50% of household income
- Contributory earner - earns less than 50% of household income

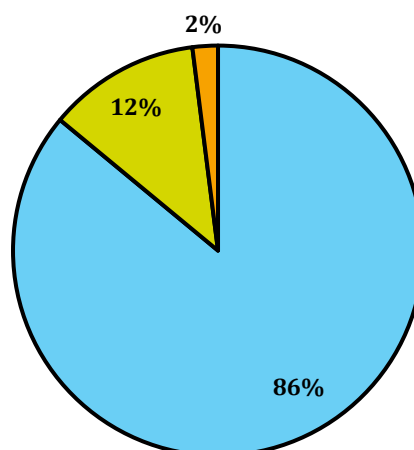
Figure 2. Financial contribution to household/earner status

1.4 About the sample work setting

Participants were asked about the setting in which they work.

- The majority of respondents to the survey (86.2%) work in private practice. Almost 12% work in-house with a further 2.1% reporting their work setting as 'other'.

WORK SETTING:



- Private practice
- In-house
- Other

Figure 3. Work setting of respondents

Respondents were asked about their current position. Figure 4 below presents the distribution of roles held by the female lawyers in the private practice sub-sample.

- The majority of respondents (66.3%) were at ‘Associate’ level in the private practice sub-sample, while in the in-house sub-sample the majority (57.9%) held the position of Legal Counsel.

WORK ROLE OF THOSE IN PRIVATE PRACTICE:

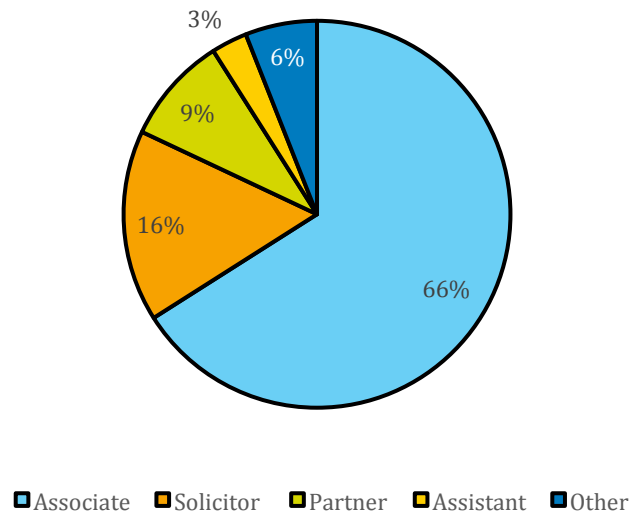


Figure 4. Private practice respondents: work role

- The average number of years PQE (post-qualification experience) of the whole sample is 6.7. In the whole sample, and both sub-samples, most respondents fall into the 1-5 year PQE bracket (whole sample: 42.5%; private practice: 42.6%; in-house: 40%).

Private practice

- The largest proportion of respondents in private practice work in mid-sized (20.3%) or large (19.6%) commercial law firms. A significant proportion also work in silver circle (16%) and American – Top 20 global law firms (13.5%).

Table 1. Private practice respondents: Work setting

Type of law firm	n	%
Mid-sized commercial	57	20.3
Large commercial	55	19.6
Silver circle	45	16.0
American - top 20 global	38	13.5
Niche	35	12.5
Magic circle	16	5.7
Smaller commercial	14	5.0
American - other	11	3.9
Regional	10	3.6

In-house

- The majority of in-house respondents work in a setting 'other' than those listed in the survey. Of the remainder, an equal proportion works in a FTSE 100 and investment-banking organisation (13.2%).
- The majority (86.8%) of in-house respondents report having worked in private practice previously. Of those who have previously worked in private practice, their length of service in-house ranges from less than a year to 18 years.

Table 2. In-house respondents: Work setting

		n	%
<i>Type of organisation</i>	Other	24	63.2
	FTSE 100	5	13.2
	Investment banking	5	13.2
	Not-for-profit	4	10.5
<hr/>			
<i>Previously worked in Private Practice</i>	Yes	33	86.8

Further information on the sample and sample work setting is presented in Appendix 2.

1.5 Working hours

Respondents were asked different questions about their working hours depending on whether they work in private practice or in-house (in private practice there is usually a focus on target hours which is not commonly directly applicable to in-house roles so the questions were varied to ensure relevance).

Table 3 below presents information about billable hours of private practice respondents. *Note*, these figures report billable as opposed to actual hours and therefore actual hours worked will be higher.

- Respondents report an average of 35 billable hours worked per week. The majority of this sub-sample (40.6%) report fewer than 30 billable hours per week, 36.5% report between 30 and 40 billable hours per week and a further 22.9% report more than 40 hours per week.
- Respondents report an average of 1503 target hours per year, with the highest proportion of the sample (40.1%) reporting between 1300 and 1599 target hours per year. This is closely followed by 32% of the sample that report target hours of between 1600 and 1899.

- Achieved billable hours in the last financial year equates to a mean of 1443.

Table 3. Private Practice Respondents: Billable hours

		n	%
<i>Number of billable hours per week^a</i>			
	Up to 30 hours	101	40.6
	31-40 hours	91	36.5
	41+	57	22.9
<i>Mean number of billable hours per week</i>			
	35.35		
<i>Target hours per year^b</i>			
	1000 - 1299	40	20.8
	1300 - 1599	77	40.1
	1600 - 1899	62	32.3
	1900 - 2199	12	6.3
	2200 - 2499	1	0.5
<i>Mean target hours per year</i>			
	1503		
<i>Billable hours achieved in last financial year</i>			
	1443		

^a The number of useable responses equated to 88% of the private practice respondents- unusable responses are those for which a range was given or which were left unanswered.

^b The number of useable responses equated to 68% of the private practice respondents - unusable responses are those for which a range was given or which were left unanswered.

Table 4 below presents information about the working hours of in-house respondents.

- In-house respondents report working an average of 45 hours a week, with almost 3% working fewer than 30 hours, 26% working between 31 and 40 hours and the majority (71%) working more than 40 hours.

Table 4. In-house respondents: Working hours

		n	%
<i>Hours worked per week</i>			
	Up to 30 hours	1	2.6
	31-40 hours	10	26.3
	41+	27	71.1
<i>Mean number of hours per week</i>			
	45.26		

Asked about the variability of their weekly hours, over a third of in-house respondents (37%) stated that they do vary noticeably. This is compared to 68% of private practice respondents. This difference is statistically significant.²

Table 5. Variability of hours

	Private practice		In-house	
	n	%	n	%
<i>Hours vary noticeably week to week</i>	191	68.1	14	36.8

² At a very basic level, statistical significance indicates whether a result is worthy of note. Essentially, when a result is significant one can be fairly confident that it is not simply a random finding and that within similar contexts and with similar people the result would be replicated.

2. Diversity

One of the drivers for the study is the observed disparity in the numbers of men and women in the higher ranks of the legal profession and particularly in private practice. A set of questions in the survey addressed the issue of diversity; respondents were asked about the number of female partners in their organisations, as well as their perceptions of their organisations' approach to diversity. It is important to note that these responses are participants' estimations and may not exactly mirror actual figures within law firms. However, individuals' perceptions of these workplace characteristics are important because these shape attitudes and associated behaviours.

Findings show that more can be done to promote gender diversity in the employing organisations of the sample. The presence of diversity promoting practices is patchy across the organisations of responding lawyers, and where these practices are in place, many female lawyers do not feel that their organisation demonstrates active commitment to them.

2.1 Private practice gender diversity

Respondents in private practice were asked to estimate the number of female partners within different parts of their firm. Responses suggest that the gender diversity in law firms, as reported by this sample, is limited.

London office

Asked about the number of female partners in their London office:

- Circa 5% of respondents reported having *no* female partners in their London office.
- A sizeable proportion of respondents (27.7%) were unable to estimate the number of female partners in their London office.
- Of those that were, the highest proportion of respondents (20.9%) reported having up to 5 female partners in their London office, followed by the next biggest proportion (16.5%) who reported between 6 and 10 female partners. This is notable because the majority of respondents to the survey reported having between 51-100 partners in total in their London office.
- Asked about the nature of female lawyers' partnership in their organisations, only a small proportion (14%) of respondents were able to confirm that more than 50% were equity as opposed to salaried. However, the majority (50.4%) did not know the answer to this question.

Department/Practice area

Asked about the number of female partners in their department/practice area:

- Just less than 28% of respondents reported having no female partners in their department/practice area.
- The majority of respondents (63.4%) reported that within their Department/Practice area there were up to 5 female partners.

Table 6. Private practice respondents: number of female partners

		n	%
<i>Female partners in London office</i>			
	Unknown	77	27.7
	0	13	4.7
	Up to 5	58	20.9
	6-10	46	16.5
	11-15	23	8.3
	16-20	25	9.0
	21-30	18	6.5
	31-50	17	6.1
	51-100	1	0.4
	101-200	0	0
	201-300	0	0
	301-400	0	0
	401-500	0	0
	502-600	0	0
	601-700	0	0
	700+	0	0
<i>Female partners in London office that are equity as opposed to salaried</i>			
	Unknown	139	50.4
	0	28	10.1
	Up to 5%	23	8.3
	6-10%	11	4.0
	11-25%	19	6.9
	26-50%	17	6.2
	51-75%	7	2.5
	75+	32	11.6
<i>Female partners in department/practice area</i>			
	Unknown	1	0.4
	0	77	27.6
	Up to 5	177	63.4
	6-10	22	7.9
	11-15	2	0.7
	16-20	0	0
	21-30	0	0
	31-50	0	0
	51-100	0	0
	101-200	0	0
	201-300	0	0
	301-400	0	0
	401-500	0	0
	502-600	0	0
	601-700	0	0
	700+	0	0

2.2 Employing organisation's approach to diversity

The diversity practices in place within organisations can serve to facilitate women's career progression and provide a more positive working environment, reflecting principles of fairness and equity. As such, understanding women's perceptions of their organisations' approach to diversity may help to explain their attitudes towards that organisation.

Respondents were asked about the existence of diversity practices within their employing organisation as well as how seriously they believe their organisation treats the implementation of those practices³. Table 7 below presents the responses provided by respondents.

- Of the practices listed, the most prevalent in this sample's organisations were parental leave (80.1%), work-life balance initiatives (72.2%), developing and supporting staff networks (65.4%) and mentoring, coaching and sponsorship (61.2%). The least prevalent practice was linking diversity to performance/reward (12.5%).
- The scores for participants' perceptions of active commitment to each of the listed practices were highest for parental leave practices (3.48) and developing and supporting staff networks (3.25). However, reports of active commitment to a number of the listed practices were noticeably lower, including commitment to transparency (2.50), commitment to career development for women (2.47) and commitment to linking diversity with performance/rewards (2.39).
- A variable was created from the items included about individuals' perceptions of their organisation's commitment to the various diversity practices: '*commitment to diversity*', which is a composite of the commitment items and provides a sense of the overall commitment shown to diversity practices in their organisation. The average score for this sample was not particularly high at 2.95. When split by sub-sample, there was little difference between settings on the mean for this variable.

³ Respondents were asked to score the extent to which they agree with the statement that their 'organisation demonstrates active commitment' to a list of different diversity practices. This was measured on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 7. Prevalence of diversity practices and perceptions of commitment to practices

	Practice is in place	n	%	Active commitment to practice ¹
<i>Parental leave</i>	Yes	262	80.1	3.48
	No	18	5.5	
	I don't know	47	14.4	
<i>Work-life balance initiatives</i>	Yes	236	72.2	2.94
	No	67	20.5	
	I don't know	24	7.3	
<i>Developing and supporting staff networks</i>	Yes	214	65.4	3.25
	No	86	26.3	
	I don't know	27	8.3	
<i>Mentoring, coaching, sponsorship</i>	Yes	200	61.2	3.14
	No	86	26.3	
	I don't know	41	12.5	
<i>Diversity training</i>	Yes	183	56.0	3.20
	No	93	28.4	
	I don't know	51	15.6	
<i>Transparency</i>	Yes	114	34.9	2.50
	No	149	45.6	
	I don't know	64	19.6	
<i>Career development</i>	Yes	89	27.2	2.47
	No	186	56.9	
	I don't know	52	15.9	
<i>Linking diversity to performance/ reward</i>	Yes	41	12.5	2.39
	No	198	60.6	
	I don't know	88	26.9	

¹ Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

Asked to provide comments about their employing organisation does particularly well in relation to promoting diversity, respondents reported the following:

- Flexible working arrangements
- Women's networks – firm and departmental and cross-hierarchical
- Mentoring/coaching (especially in relation to gender issues e.g. maternity coaching for those returning from maternity leave)
- Targets for promoting women into partnership or other senior roles (one respondent reported that a woman on maternity leave had been put forward for promotion)
- Female role models in senior positions

3. Career-related attitudes and behavioural intentions

A number of career-related attitudes were measured which might be able to explain respondents' intentions to alter their current work situation. In addition to attitudes, a number of questions were asked which aim to reveal female lawyers' intentions with regards to movement within and out of the profession in the near future.

Findings show that female lawyers within this sample are generally positive about their careers, their colleagues and their respective organisations. However, mean scores for the career-related attitudes could be higher and questions related to respondents' intention to quit the profession show that there is some desire within this sample for moving out of the profession. Further findings relating to career movement suggest that over the coming five-year period, there is a wish by some participants to move within the profession (either to a different organisation or to a different setting) and that this desire is closely matched to their expectations that such a move will occur.

3.1 Career-related attitudes

Respondents were asked questions about the extent of regret they feel about choosing a profession in law, as well as their satisfaction with their career currently. They were also asked about commitment to their organisation, management and team⁴.

Table 8 below presents the mean scores for the whole sample as well as for the sub-samples on these attitudinal variables.

- The level of occupational regret reported by this sample is at the mid-point (2.50) of the scale.
- Career satisfaction is moderately high for this sample (3.53). The private practice sub-sample reports marginally higher career satisfaction (3.54) than its in-house counterparts (3.46).
- Within this sample, organisational commitment is moderately high (3.31). The private practice sub-sample scored similarly (3.32) and organisational commitment was slightly lower for the in-house sub-sample (3.12).

⁴ Respondents were asked a number of questions to tap into these attitudes on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which were then used to create composite measures representing these attitudinal variables.

- The mean score for management commitment for the whole sample was moderately high at 3.19. When split by sub-sample however, commitment to management was lower for the in-house sub-sample (2.97) than for the private practice sub-sample (3.22).
- Similarly, team commitment, while quite high for the overall sample (3.68) was lower within the in-house sub-sample (3.55) than in the private practice sub-sample (3.69).

Table 8. Career-related attitudes of the sample

	All respondents	Private Practice	In-house
	Mean	Mean	Mean
<i>Occupational regret</i>	2.50	2.49	2.50
<i>Career satisfaction</i>	3.53	3.54	3.46
<i>Organisational commitment</i>	3.31	3.32	3.12
<i>Management commitment</i>	3.19	3.22	2.97
<i>Team commitment</i>	3.68	3.69	3.55

3.2 Career-related behavioural intentions

Respondents were asked questions about their intentions to move both within and outside of the profession. Tables 9 and 10 present the percentages for the whole sample as well as for each sub-sample (private practice and in-house) and separate the responses about *desired* movement and *expected* movement.

Responding to statements about *desired* movement in the next 5 years:

- Approximately 25% report that they *definitely* want to be working in the same law firm. Approximately 38% report that they *possibly* want to be working in the same law firm.
- A sizeable proportion of the sample (46.2%) report that they *possibly* want to be working in-house, with a further 19.6% who report *definitely* wanting to be working in-house.
- Of the whole sample, 42.8% responded that they *possibly* want to be working outside of the legal profession. A further 9.2% reported *definitely* wanting to be working outside of the profession.

Table 9. Career-related behavioural intentions of the sample (five years) – *Desired* movement

In 5 years time I <i>want</i> to be:		All respondents ¹		Private practice		In-house	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Working in the same organisation</i>	Yes	81	24.8	72	25.5	6	15.8
	No	94	28.7	79	28	15	39.5
	Possibly	123	37.6	106	37.6	14	36.8
	I don't know	29	8.9	25	8.9	3	7.9
<i>Working in-house</i>	Yes	64	19.6	39	13.8	24	63.2
	No	90	27.5	86	30.5	2	5.3
	Possibly	151	46.2	136	48.2	12	31.6
	I don't know	22	6.7	21	7.4	0	0.0
<i>Working outside the legal profession</i>	Yes	30	9.2	23	8.2	7	18.4
	No	133	40.7	121	42.9	12	31.6
	Possibly	140	42.8	117	41.5	16	42.1
	I don't know	24	7.3	21	7.4	3	7.9

¹ The category 'All respondents' is made up of private practice and in-house respondents, as well as respondents who indicated working in 'another' setting

Responding to statements about *expected* movement in the next 5 years:

- Approximately 24% of respondents report that they *definitely* expect to be working in the same law firm. A further 38.2% report that they *possibly* expect to be working in the same law firm.
- Just over half of the sample (50.8%) report that they *possibly* expect to be working in-house, with a further 11% reporting that they *definitely* expect to be working in-house. The split according to sub-samples is presented in the table below.
- Of the whole sample, 50.8% responded that they *definitely* did not expect to be working outside of the legal profession.

Table 10. Career-related behavioural intentions of the sample (five years) – *Expected* movement

In 5 years time I <i>expect</i> to be:		All respondents ¹		Private practice		In-house	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Working in the same organisation</i>	Yes	78	23.9	71	25.2	5	13.2
	No	87	26.6	72	25.5	15	39.5
	Possibly	125	38.2	106	37.6	14	36.8
	I don't know	37	11.3	33	11.7	4	10.5
<i>Working in-house</i>	Yes	36	11.0	17	6.0	19	50.0
	No	99	30.3	95	33.7	2	5.3
	Possibly	166	50.8	149	52.8	13	34.2
	I don't know	26	8.0	21	7.4	4	10.5
<i>Working outside the legal profession</i>	Yes	8	2.4	4	1.4	3	7.9
	No	166	50.8	146	51.8	19	50
	Possibly	125	38.2	110	39.0	11	28.9
	I don't know	28	8.6	22	7.8	5	13.2

¹ The category 'All respondents' is made up of private practice and in-house respondents, as well as respondents who indicated working in 'another' setting

Respondents were also asked about their current intention to quit the profession. Table 11 presents the means for this variable. The mean score for the whole sample is 2.65 –lower than the mid-point on the scale⁵. Intention to quit was slightly greater among the private practice sub-sample (2.68) than the in-house (2.49).

Table 11. Intention to quit profession

	All respondents	Private Practice	In-house
<i>Intention to quit profession</i>	2.65	2.68	2.49

⁵ Respondents were asked a number of questions to measure their intention to quit the profession using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree).

4. Explaining career-related attitudes and behaviours

In exploring the potential drivers of individuals' career-related attitudes and future behavioural intentions, a number of different explanations were explored (referred to as "explanatory themes"). Some of these are linked to organisational factors such as perceptions of diversity within the employing organisation, while others are linked to individual factors such as personal aspirations. It is important to note that since cross-sectional data were collected, it is only possible to show association rather than causation⁶.

This section first addresses the themes individually, then incorporates them into more complex analysis in order to establish how they are associated with female lawyers' attitudes and behavioural intentions.

In exploring what drives career-related attitudes in this sample, some of the most important predictors include perceived promotion opportunities, the degree to which individuals' employing organisations have a supportive a work-life culture, the prevalence of female role models in those organisations, as well as the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as employable.

In exploring what drives career-related behavioural intentions in this sample, some of the most important predictors include career-related attitudes (occupational regret, career satisfaction and organisational commitment) and individuals' achievement aspirations. Also important are perceptions of promotion opportunities in their organisation and the belief that success is achievable in both personal and professional spheres.

4.1 Explanatory themes

The different themes are grouped according to different classes of explanation, which are outlined below. For each theme, mean scores⁷ are provided for the whole sample as well as the sub-samples.

The Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling refers to the obstacles women face in their career development. Apart from leadership stereotypes, women's underrepresentation has been linked to, often subtle, biases and conflicting role expectations within organisations. In relation to the latter, respondents were asked about the

⁶ Cross-sectional data are collected at a particular moment in time, rather than over a period of time. Further research would be needed to clarify the direction of the associations found.

⁷ All scores were measured on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

feasibility of being successful in both their professional and non-work roles – ‘*achieving personal and professional success*’. In relation to other obstacles, respondents were asked about the extent to which they feel they can progress in their employing organisation – ‘*promotion perceptions*’, their views of the supportiveness of the organisational and client culture for work-life balance – ‘*supportive work-life organisational culture*’, and ‘*supportive work-life client culture*’. The measure ‘*commitment to diversity*’, which was created from the data provided about individuals’ perceptions of their organisation’s commitment to various diversity practices (see section 2.2), is also included in the analysis. Mean scores for each of these variables are presented in Table 12 below.

- *Achieving personal and professional success*. Women reported a score below the mid-point of the scale (2.67) for this measure. This suggests that these women do not perceive it easily possible to succeed in both their career and other important aspects of their lives (such as having a family or looking after dependent relatives) without some kind of sacrifice in the legal profession.
- *Promotion perceptions*. Women reported the promotion opportunities within their employing organisation at just below the mid-point of the scale (2.73). Split by subsample, the private practice respondents reported higher (2.76) perceived promotion perceptions than those in-house (2.43). This difference is statistically significant.
- *Supportive work-life balance culture*. A score at the mid-point was reported for this variable, which measures the extent to which organisations facilitate work-life balance (3.05). Split by sub-sample, respondents in private practice reported a lower score (2.99) than respondents in-house (3.35). This difference is statistically significant.
- *Supportive work-life client culture*. The extent to which clients facilitate work-life balance was also measured for the private practice sub-sample and was similar to the score for organisational culture (2.95).
- *Organisational commitment to diversity*. The score for this measure, which provides a sense of the overall commitment shown to diversity practices in this sample’s organisations, was not particularly high at 2.95.

Table 12. Glass ceiling themes: mean scores for the sample

	All respondents	Private Practice	In- House
	Mean	Mean	Mean
Glass ceiling			
<i>Achieving personal and professional success</i>	2.67	2.67	2.72
<i>Promotion perceptions (within employing organisation)</i>	2.73	2.76	2.43 ²
<i>Supportive work-life organisational culture</i>	3.05	2.99	3.35 ²
<i>Supportive client culture</i>	2.95	2.95	n/a
<i>Organisational commitment to diversity</i>	2.95	2.93	2.96

² Mean differences are significant at 5% level of significance

Some obstacles to progression are perceived by this group, including the culture and career opportunities within their organisation, and competing role (work and non-work) expectations.

The pipeline problem

Since relatively fewer women manage to attain top positions in organisations, few role models exist to whom other women can aspire or draw on for mentoring and support – both of which have been demonstrated to facilitate career progression. Thus, respondents were asked about their perceptions of the existence of more senior women in their organisation who champion those lower down the organisation - ‘*sisterhood*’. Mean scores for this variable are presented in Table 13 below.

- *Sisterhood*. Scores for ‘*sisterhood*’ were not especially high (just below the mid-point of the scale – 2.94). This suggests a lack of senior females that enable the progress or raise the profile of other women in their organisation.

Table 13. Pipeline problem theme: mean scores for the sample

	All respondents	Private Practice	In- House
	Mean	Mean	Mean
The pipeline problem			
<i>Sisterhood</i>	2.94	2.93	2.92

Opting out

Women have different aspirations and make their career-related choices according to these, thus it is feasible to assume that some women will voluntarily opt out of the race to senior positions. As such, respondents were asked about their aspirations for senior level positions – ‘*achievement orientation*’; their aspirations for work-life balance – ‘*lifestyle orientation*’; the importance of their profession to their identity – ‘*career identity salience*’; as well as the centrality of work compared with other aspects of their lives ‘*work centrality*’. Mean scores for each of these variables are presented in Table 14 below.

- *Achievement aspiration.* The scores for achievement aspirations reported by this sample were moderately high at 3.48.
- *Lifestyle orientation.* The other aspiration measured was for achieving a healthy balance between work and non-work life. The sample reported a quite high score for this variable (4.06), suggesting that obtaining a successful balance is a priority.
- *Career identity salience.* Where the salience of a particular identity is high, it predicts behaviours in line with that identity. The salience of career identity in this sample is moderately high (3.46).
- *Work centrality.* A score above the mid-point of the scale was reported by respondents for work centrality, which measures the extent to which individuals perceive their work to be as important as other aspects of their lives.

Table 14. Opting out themes: mean scores for the sample

	All respondents Mean	Private Practice Mean	In- House Mean
Opting out			
<i>Achievement Aspirations</i>	3.48	3.47	3.51
<i>Lifestyle orientation</i>	4.06	4.10	4.02
<i>Career identity salience</i>	3.46	3.44	3.60
<i>Work centrality</i>	3.12	3.10	3.22

The findings indicate that women are not ‘opting out’ given the high aspirations to reach senior positions and the important role that work plays in their lives. However, this is set alongside an ambition to integrate work with other aspects of life (lifestyle orientation) and potentially signals a conflict for these women, which could influence attitudes or movement within the profession. Mean scores for each of these variables are presented in Table 15 below.

Psychological

Psychological factors may play a role in predicting movement within women’s careers. The personality factor ‘*proactivity*’ describes individuals who take active control of decisions in their lives and this includes individuals more willing to take opportunities that arise. ‘*Employability*’ was also measured, and refers to the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as able to acquire equivalent or better employment elsewhere.

- *Proactive personality.* The overall score for proactive personality within the whole sample was moderately high (3.40). Proactivity can explain how active individuals are in shaping their careers and in this sample the in-house respondents appears to be more proactive (3.65) in seeking out

opportunities than private practice respondents (3.36). This difference is statistically significant.

- *Employability.* The sample score for employability was relatively high (3.67). In-house respondents report lower employability than private practice respondents (3.56 and 3.70 respectively). This difference is statistically significant.

Table 15. Psychological themes: mean scores for the sample

Psychological	All respondents	Private Practice	In- House
	Mean	Mean	Mean
<i>Proactive personality</i>	3.40	3.36	3.65 ²
<i>Employability</i>	3.67	3.70	3.56 ²

² Mean differences are significant at 5% level of significance

The findings show that while this sample of female lawyers is proactive in their careers, there are differences between those in private practice and those working in-house, with the latter being more proactive but feeling less employable.

4.2 What explains female lawyers' career-related attitudes?

This question is answered using more complex analysis to predict career-related attitudes (occupational regret, career satisfaction, organisational commitment, management commitment)⁸. The analysis reports on the whole sample (both private practice and in-house respondents).

Table 16 presents the best predictors of career-related attitudes from the explanatory themes identified in the previous section⁹. The table presents the associations graphically, however full numerical results are available in Appendix 3.

⁸ The analysis used is hierarchical regression analysis, which is presented & explained in full in Appendix 3. As an initial step, bivariate analysis was conducted, which examines the correlations between pairs of variables. The full matrix showing correlations between explanatory theme variables and career-related attitudes is also presented and explained in Appendix 3.

⁹ Where themes are not included in the table, these did not emerge in the analysis as significant predictors of career-related attitudes.

Table 16. Best predictors of career-related attitudes in the sample

	Occupational regret	Career satisfaction	Organisational commitment	Management commitment	Team commitment
Demographic variables					
Age	-	-	↓	-	-
Organisational tenure	↓	-	↑	↑	↑
Glass ceiling					
Achieving personal and professional success	↓	-	-	-	-
Promotion perceptions	-	↑	↑	-	-
Supportive work-life organisational culture	-	-	↑	↑	↑
Pipeline					
Sisterhood	-	↑	↑	↑	↑
Opting out					
Achievement Aspirations	↓	-	-	-	↑
Career identity salience	-	-	↑	-	-
Work centrality	↓	↑	-	↑	-
Psychological					
Proactive personality	↓	-	-	-	-
Employability	↓	↑	-	-	-

Key to Symbols

- No association
- ↓ Less strong negative association
- ↓ Moderately strong negative association
- ↓ Strong negative association
- ↑ Less strong positive association
- ↑ Moderately strong positive association
- ↑ Strong positive association

4.21 Occupational regret

In summary, female lawyers who report occupational regret tend to:

- Have *shorter* tenure in their organisation
- Be *less* likely to believe that women can achieve both personal and professional success in the legal profession
- Be *less* achievement oriented
- Perceive work as a *less* central element of their lives
- Be *less* proactive
- Perceive themselves as *less* employable

4.22 Career satisfaction

In summary, female lawyers who report career satisfaction tend to:

- Be *more* likely to believe that their organisation provides good opportunities for promotion
- Report *more* female champions among the higher ranks of their organisation who can be a role model for and mentor them
- Perceive work as a *more* central element of their lives
- Perceive themselves as *more* employable

4.23 Organisational commitment

In summary, female lawyers who report organisational commitment tend to:

- Be *younger*
- Have *longer* tenure in their organisation
- Be *more* likely to believe that their organisation provides good opportunities for promotion
- Be *more* likely to report that their organisation has a culture that supports work-life balance
- Report *more* female champions among the higher ranks of their organisation who can be a role model for and mentor them
- Be *more* likely to perceive their profession as central to their identity

4.24 Management commitment

In summary, female lawyers who report commitment to the management in their organisation tend to:

- Have *longer* tenure in their organisation
- Be *more* likely to report that their organisation has a culture that supports work-life balance
- Report *more* female champions among the higher ranks of their organisation who can be a role model for and mentor them
- Perceive work as a *more* central element of their lives

4.25 Team commitment

In summary, female lawyers who report team commitment tend to:

- Have *longer* tenure at their organisation
- Be *more* likely to report that their organisation has a culture that supports work-life balance
- Report *more* female champions among the higher ranks of their organisation who can be a role model for and mentor them
- Be *more* achievement oriented

4.3 What explains female lawyers' career-related behavioural intentions?

As in the previous section, this question is answered using more complex analysis to predict behavioural intentions of the sample (i.e. to be working in-house, to stay with the current organisation or to move out of the profession). Again, the analysis is run for the whole sample.

Table 17 presents the best predictors of career-related behavioural intentions from the explanatory themes and career-related attitudes identified in the previous sections. The table presents the associations graphically, however full numerical results are available in Appendix 3.

Table 17. Best predictors of career-related behavioural intentions among female lawyers¹⁰

	Desire to be working in current organisation in five years time	Desire to be working in-house in five years time	Current desire to quit the profession
Demographic variables			
<i>Organisational tenure</i>	-	-	↓
Career-related attitudes			
<i>Occupational regret</i>	-	↑	↑↑
<i>Career satisfaction</i>	-	-	↓
<i>Organisational commitment</i>	↑	-	↓
Glass ceiling			
<i>Achieving personal and professional success</i>	↓	-	-
<i>Promotion perceptions</i>	↑	-	-
Opting out			
<i>Achievement Aspirations</i>	↑	-	↓↓
<i>Career identity salience</i>	-	↓	-
<i>Work centrality</i>	-	-	↓

All betas significant at 5% level of significance or above.

Key to Symbols

- No association
- ↓ Less strong negative association
- ↓ Moderately strong negative association
- ↓↓ Strong negative association
- ↑ Less strong positive association
- ↑ Moderately strong positive association
- ↑↑ Strong positive association

4.31 Intention to be working in the same organisation in five years time

In summary, female lawyers who report intentions to be working in the same organisation in five years time tend to:

- Be *more* committed to their organisation
- Be *more* achievement oriented
- Be *less* likely to believe that women can achieve both personal and professional success in the legal profession
- Be *more* likely to believe that their organisation provides good opportunities for promotion

¹⁰ Where themes are not included in the table, these did not emerge in the analysis as significant predictors of career-related behavioural intentions.

4.32 Intention to be working in-house in five years time

In summary, female lawyers who report wishing to be working in-house in five years time tend to:

- Have *more* occupational regret
- Be *less* likely to perceive their profession as central to their identity

Movement between settings in the legal profession is one option for female lawyers who want to change their current situation, but not leave the legal profession altogether. The survey therefore also specifically asked *in-house* respondents that had previously worked in private practice about their move to a different setting and motivations associated with that. Table 18 below presents these, with the most popular reasons for this shift in-house being linked to:

- A desire for regular working hours
- A desire for work-life balance
- The role or content of the work
- A lack of promotion opportunities

Interestingly, while one of the foremost motives for moving in-house from private practice was for 'more regular working hours', a significant proportion of in-house respondents (37%) state that they currently experience variability in their working hours (see section 1.5).

A number of respondents also provided free text comments to explain their move in-house. Reasons cited include a lack of recognition in private practice, greater autonomy in-house and for personal reasons. A number of respondents appeared disillusioned with private practice including the following:

“ I hate the obsession with billing and profit and felt far removed from the work. I didn't like the business development side of it either (networking etc. and trying to get more work from clients/get new clients - it all felt very insincere) ”

“ The only way I could see to the top of private practice was if I was prepared to give up all other areas of my life, and work night and day (and weekends), for at least five years, with limited partnership prospects at the end. I also didn't think partnership looked like an attractive proposition anyway so it seemed rather a pointless exercise to do so. Working in-house I can see a chance of still being successful and achieving a senior role, whilst having a family. That was not feasible in corporate private practice ”

“ (Moved for) the promise of nicer people ”

Table 18. In-house respondents: reasons for moving in-house

	n	%
<i>For more regular working hours</i>	20	60.6
<i>For better work-life balance</i>	19	57.6
<i>Because work (substance) in-house was preferred</i>	15	45.5
<i>Because role in-house was preferred</i>	15	45.5
<i>Because of a lack of promotion to partnership in private practice</i>	7	21.2
<i>Because of a lack of clear promotion track in private practice</i>	7	21.2
<i>Because recruited by a client</i>	6	18.2
<i>Because of better promotion prospects in-house</i>	4	12.1
<i>Because of better remuneration / salary benefits in-house</i>	3	9.1
<i>Because made redundant in private practice</i>	3	9.1
<i>Other</i>	8	24.2

4.33 Intention to quit the profession

In summary, female lawyers who report intentions to quit the profession tend to:

- Have *shorter* tenure at their organisation
- Have *more* regret about their occupational choice
- Be *less* satisfied with their careers
- Have *less* commitment to their employing organisation
- Be *less* achievement oriented
- Perceive work as a *less* central element of their lives

5. Summary and overview

This report has presented the general findings of the WILL survey (2015). The survey identifies a number of issues faced by women in the profession and will hopefully act as a catalyst to further explore and start addressing the obstacles to their career progression. It is important to note that this was a self-selecting sample of women and it is not clear how representative their views are of the whole profession – both outside of the WILL network and outside of the London area.

This summary will address some of the main themes to emerge from the survey.

5.1 Commitment to diversity

There were notable findings related to gender diversity practices in the organisations of this sample – both in terms of the prevalence of practices in organisations and the commitment to those practices.

In particular, the practice of linking diversity-promoting activities to reward/performance is not only lacking, but where it is implemented, respondents report below average commitment to it by their employing organisations. This is potentially problematic for improving gender diversity because organisational cultures are reinforced by rewarding behaviours that are in line with the desired climate. A further concern linked to gender diversity practices is the low scores reported on both career development practices for women and transparency (e.g. in promotion and appointment practices). Where problems of women's progression persist, these findings are of particular concern and may serve to bolster any negative perceptions women have of their profession's approach to gender diversity.

5.2 Explanatory themes – organisational perspective

Of the explanatory themes that were considered, a number of these were linked to organisational factors, that is, factors potentially within the control of organisations. These are considered below.

5.2.1 The pipeline issue

The pipeline issue emerged as an important predictor of attitudes. Although 'sisterhood', and the role modelling and mentoring that this provides to individuals, is associated with positive outcomes such as career satisfaction, and management, team and organisational commitment, the reported prevalence of 'sisterhood' in this sample is not high. The findings suggest that not enough is being done to publicise the women that are making it to the higher echelons of the legal profession, which is noteworthy because it is a problem that

perpetuates itself. A supporting finding is the relatively high proportion of respondents who reported not knowing the number of female partners in their London office. Given its association with positive work attitudes, improving the visibility of and access to successful senior women should be paramount.

Free comments from respondents reinforce the worth that female lawyers within this sample attach to having access to and visibility of more senior women lawyers in the profession:

“From my experience at my own firm, it seems smaller team structures with female managers pave the way for easier progression of female colleagues in terms of senior promotion. There is a great atmosphere of collegiality and support here, which may be inspired by the smaller team structures. Again, my type of work may be more female-orientated but it seems there is a very positive atmosphere for female lawyers in my firm, which is extremely refreshing as opposed to my previous workplace ”

5.2.2 The glass ceiling issue

The glass ceiling explanatory theme also emerged as an important organisational factor in understanding what potentially drives career-related attitudes. A supportive organisational culture for work-life balance is linked to greater organisational and management commitment and is essential, given that the findings indicate that this set of lawyers tend not to believe it is possible to achieve success both personally and professionally in the legal profession (and that this is linked to occupational regret and a lesser desire to stay with their organisation).

Despite being a practice prevalent among the organisations of this sample, the score for commitment to work-life balance practices is low. This gap between prevalence and commitment is elucidated in the comments of respondents below:

“I am increasingly frustrated by the disparity between the noises of support for women made by large law firms and the lack of action on the ground, and support any attempts to highlight the issues being faced by women (and particularly mothers) in city law firms ”

“Despite promoting work/life balance, employees are recognised for making themselves available outside working hours, and refused recognition when they are unable to do so for family commitments ”

Providing a supportive culture for work-life balance sends a signal to employees about the extent to which their organisation cares about their wellbeing and explains why organisations that are perceived as supportive will receive payback in the form of committed employees. Committed employees are more likely to remain with an organisation and less likely to wish to leave the profession. While the latter may not be of concern to organisations that may be happy to retain only those that wish to stay, employees often find themselves unable to leave their organisation/profession for a variety of reasons. Therefore, those who are effectively 'locked in' may not necessarily perform to their best. Given the findings relating to the potential drivers of commitment, organisations do have some control over actions they can take to improve commitment.

Interestingly, in the free comments section at the end of the survey, it was highlighted that work-life balance is not a woman-only issue in the legal profession, and that it may take a different form for men:

“It is not necessarily choosing between having the family and making partner but having a relationship with the family”

“Everyone has to sacrifice personal/social life if they want a career”

“I really think the aim should be to rebalance life and career for everyone's benefit not just women's”

Individuals who have moved in-house from private practice highlighted the wish to improve work-life balance as a key reason for their move. While the organisational culture for work-life balance reported by those in-house was better than for those in private practice, their reported working hours nonetheless demonstrate the long hours culture that seems to pervade the profession, regardless of setting. Another rationale for moving setting was for more regular working hours, yet a substantial proportion of the in-house sub-sample report variability in their weekly working hours.

A further barrier to women's progression explored in the survey was the opportunities for promotion within their employing organisations. These were perceived to be to relatively low, and in particular for the in-house respondents. This is problematic when set against the other finding of the survey that the achievement aspirations of this sample are quite high. This mismatch between aspirations and the environment to realise those could be storing up issues in the longer term, given that promotion perceptions emerged as linked to career satisfaction and organisational commitment.

5.3 Explanatory themes – individual perspective

Of the explanatory themes that were considered, a number of these were linked to individual factors. These are considered below.

5.3.1 Opting out

The findings of the survey seem to suggest that on the whole the female lawyers of this sample are not ‘opting out’. That is, there are quite high achievement aspirations (for senior level positions) reported by this group and for many, their career is an important part of how they define themselves. However, these findings are set against a high importance placed on achieving balance in their lives. Those with high achievement aspirations tend to want to stay in their current organisation and stay in the profession, which may be encouraging for organisations.

For individuals wishing to either remain in or move in-house in the near future, the findings show an association with a lower career-identity salience. That is, the career is a less important aspect of their identity for these people. This may indicate a lesser need to be in a traditional legal setting of private practice as a result. For individuals whose profession is a key aspect of their identity, it seems that working in private practice is a much more conducive setting for demonstrating the importance of that professional identity.

5.3.2 Psychological

The psychological factors tend to play a greater role in understanding attitudes than behavioural intentions. Where lawyers in this sample feel less employable and are less proactive, occupational regret is higher and may signal discontent with the occupational choice, driven by an individual’s felt inability to change their situation.

5.4 Movement within the profession

While movement within a profession is normal and expected, it is important to understand the difference between functional and dysfunctional movement and non-movement. The findings in relation to future intentions (excluding those that represent movement out of the profession) do not present an alarming picture, but given the regression findings which reveal that promotion perceptions are integral to an individual’s wish to remain with their organisation, this is an important finding for management within organisations. Helping women lawyers see their possible future with that organisation will encourage them to demonstrate loyalty.

However, another important finding, which is highlighted from the comments left by respondents, is that women may stay with an organisation, even where promotion prospects are low, because they see no other option:

“ I do not currently have children but would like to have them in the next few years. This is one of the reasons why I am staying at my current firm, as I have built up good relationships to enable me to work flexibly and potentially go down to 4 days per week whilst my children are young. As a result, I am likely to stay here longer than may be good for my career, but would be effectively "stuck", given that no law firms advertise part time positions to external applicants, plus when starting a new role you would be under pressure to "prove" yourself in a way that is not necessary in an organisation where you have worked long hours for a number of years. This is exacerbated when the your child rearing years coincide with the "golden" moving years i.e. 2 - 5 years PQE”

This kind of commitment to an organisation, ‘continuance commitment’, highlights the sunk costs that drive individuals to stay where they are and is dysfunctional, as it has been found to have negative consequences, for individuals and their organisations.

One of the main drivers revealed by the regression analysis of movement to an in-house setting is occupational regret. Individuals who come to wish that they had not chosen the law profession may be moving in-house to diminish the undesired effects associated with their job as it currently is (in private practice). This is one way of mitigating the negative attitudes an individual has towards their job and if a more suited environment is found, may be classed as functional movement.

5.5 Movement out of the profession

While the score for intention to quit the profession within this sample is below the average of the scale (2.65 on a 5 point scale), it is important to consider all data. Asked about near future intentions, there is a gap between the desired and the expected intentions in relation to working outside of the profession. That is, even if individuals *wish* to quit the profession, this may not be possible for reasons beyond their control. This is perhaps reflected in only 40% of this sample being definitely sure that they want to be working in the profession in five years time. Analysis not presented in this report shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the three groups (those that responded ‘no’, ‘yes’ and ‘maybe’ to the statement ‘In five years time I want to be working outside the profession’) in terms of their level of occupational regret;

the latter two groups having a significantly higher mean score and this emerges in the regression analysis also.

Other factors that play a role in individuals' intentions to leave the profession should once again be of interest to organisations. These include career satisfaction and organisational commitment – both of which are predicted by, among other things, organisational factors, as noted above. However, it is also important to note that individual psychological factors also play a role in predicting intentions to leave the profession. That is, women lawyers who are less achievement oriented and who don't prioritise work over and above other aspects of their lives are more likely to want to leave the profession regardless of what their organisations do. One respondent made the following comment:

“One thought that often occurs to me is would I be more motivated to progress further in my career if the path was more accessible to women. Perhaps it is not women being unable to progress, but a lack of desire to do so. This is the experience of my lawyer friends and colleagues. My family and friends and social life are more important to me than work right now, but who knows if that will change ”

5.6 Concluding remarks

The WILL survey is an important barometer of the mood of women lawyers in London with respect to their careers, their organisation and their profession, as they relate to gender diversity. In line with the survey findings, while understanding individual motivations is important, the problem will not be solved without challenging the way that law firms are run and challenging the culture within the profession. The survey scratches the surface of gender diversity issues in law and it is hoped that with further qualitative research, these issues can be explored in greater depth.

References

Institute for Employment Studies (1995). *Women in the Labour Market: Two Decades of Change and Continuity*. [online] Institute for Employment Studies, p.xviii+32. Available at: <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/women-labour-market> [Accessed 13 Sep. 2016].

Appendix 1: Data collection & response to the survey

The WILL (online) survey was developed collaboratively between WILL and King's College, London in 2015. Some of the questions are standard, academically validated measures of established psychological constructs. Other questions were developed for the purpose of the WILL survey and with advice from the WILL committee.

Ethical approval for study was granted by a KCL Ethics Panel (ref: MR/14/15-).

An email was drafted and sent from the WILL committee inviting members to participate in the survey and interested individuals were able to access the questionnaire via a link to the online instrument. A reminder email was subsequently sent a fortnight after the initial invitation with the aim of increasing the response rate. Data were analysed and stored by King's College London.

Appendix 2: About the sample and sample work setting

Tables A1-3 presents characteristics of the sample that took part in the survey.

Table A1: Sample demographics

Demographics		All respondents		Private Practice		In- House	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Age</i>	20-29	89	27.3	79	28.1	9	24.3
	30-39	192	58.9	167	59.4	21	56.8
	40-49	36	11.0	27	9.6	7	18.9
	50-59	8	2.4	7	2.5	0	0
	60+	1	0.3	1	0.4	0	0
<i>Mean age</i>		33.34		33.22		33.49	
<i>Ethnicity</i>							
	White (British)	240	73.4	209	74.4	25	65.8
	White (Other)	47	14.4	42	14.9	5	13.2
	Black (British)	6	1.8	5	1.8	1	2.6
	Black (Other)	2	0.6	0	0	2	5.3
	Asian (British)	15	4.6	10	3.6	3	7.9
	Asian (Other)	2	0.6	1	0.4	1	2.6
	Far-East Asian (British)	2	0.6	2	0.7	0	0
	Far-East Asian (Other)	2	0.6	2	0.7	0	0
	Other	11	3.4	10	3.6	1	2.6
<i>Marital status</i>							
	Single (or living as single)	99	30.3	76	27	21	55.3
	Married or cohabiting	228	69.7	206	73	17	44.7
<i>Caring responsibilities</i>							
	Dependent children (pre-school)	65	19.9 ¹	58	20.6 ¹	4	10.5 ¹
	Dependent children (school-aged)	41	12.5	34	12.1	5	13.2
	Elderly, sick or disabled relatives	11	3.4	10	3.6	1	2.6
	Other	4	1.2	4	1.4	0	0
	No	227	69.4	193	68.7	30	78.9
<i>Financial contribution household</i>							
	Sole earner (100%)	104	31.8	81	28.8	21	55.3
	Main earner (More than 50%)	110	33.6	100	35.6	7	18.4
	Joint earner (About 50%)	87	26.6	78	27.8	7	18.4
	Contributory earner (Less than 50%)	26	8.0	22	7.8	3	7.9
<i>Educated in Britain</i>							
	Yes	298	91.1	255	90.7	35	92.1
<i>Post-graduate qualifications</i>							
	PhD	1	0.3 ¹	1	0.4 ¹	0	0 ¹
	Masters	81	24.8	68	24.2	11	28.9
	Diploma	47	14.4	40	14.2	6	15.8
	Certificate	14	4.3	10	3.6	4	10.5
	GDL/LPC	272	83.2	235	83.6	30	78.9
	Other	27	8.3	22	7.8	4	10.5

1. Note that percentages do not equate to 100% because respondents were able to choose more than one option

Table A2: Sample work setting

		All respondents		Private Practice		In- House	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Setting</i>	Private practice	282	86.2	-	-	-	-
	In-house	38	11.6	-	-	-	-
	Other	7	2.1	-	-	-	-
<i>Years PQE</i>	Less than 1 year	29	9.3	27	10.0	2	5.7
	1 - 5 years	133	42.5	115	42.6	14	40.0
	6 - 10 years	103	32.9	90	33.3	12	34.3
	11 - 15 years	23	7.3	18	6.7	3	8.6
	More than 15 years	25	8.0	20	7.4	4	11.4
<i>Mean years PQE</i>		6.71		6.55		7.39	
<i>Number of employers in law (including current)</i>	1	110	33.6	107	38.1	2	5.3
	2	95	29.1	81	28.8	12	31.6
	3	72	22.0	56	19.9	13	34.2
	4	35	10.7	27	9.6	6	15.8
	5	12	3.7	9	3.2	3	7.9
	6	1	0.3	1	0.4	0	0
	7	1	0.3	0	0	1	2.6
	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
	9	1	0.3	0	0	1	2.6
<i>Mean number of employers in law</i>		2.24		2.11		3.16	
<i>Tenure with current employer</i>	Less than 1 year	42	12.8	27	9.6	10	26.3
	1-3 years	129	39.4	107	38.1	20	52.6
	4-6 years	82	25.1	78	27.8	4	10.5
	7-9 years	44	13.5	40	14.2	3	7.9
	10-12 years	6	1.8	6	2.1	0	0
	13-15 years	13	4.0	12	4.3	1	2.6
	16+	11	3.4	11	3.9	0	0
<i>Mean tenure with current employer</i>		4 years 11 months		5 years 3 months		2 years 9 months	

Table A3: Private practice respondents: practice area

		n	%
<i>Practice area</i>	Banking and finance	12	4.3
	Capital markets	4	1.4
	Competition/Anti-trust	3	1.1
	Construction	4	1.4
	Corporate/ M&A	29	10.3
	Crime	3	1.1
	Employment	23	8.2
	Environment	9	0.7
	Family	5	3.2
	Funds and Investment Management	1	1.8
	Human rights and immigration	1	0.4
	Insurance	6	2.1
	Intellectual property	10	3.6
	Litigation and dispute resolution	70	24.9
	Pensions	5	1.8
	Personal injury and clinical negligence	8	2.8
	Private client and charities	10	3.6
	Private equity M&A	5	1.8
	Projects and energy	8	2.8
	Property/ Real estate	21	7.5
	Regulatory	4	1.4
	Restructuring and insolvency	9	3.2
	Shipping	3	1.1
	Sports, media and entertainment	3	1.1
	Tax	7	2.5
	Technology, telecoms and outsourcing	7	2.5
	Other	10	3.6

Appendix 3 – Predicting career related attitudes and behaviours

Prior to running more complex analysis (hierarchical linear regression), variables can be correlated in order to show the strength of relationship between just two variables. A ‘positive correlation’ reflects a relationship whereby, if one variable increases, the other variable increases also. A ‘negative correlation’ reflects a relationship whereby, if one variable increases, the other variable decreases. Correlation analysis provides correlation coefficients – statistics that tell us something about the nature of association between the two variables. These coefficients range between -1.00 and +1.00. A coefficient of 0.00 indicates that there is no association between the variables. Positive coefficients indicate positive associations and the further from 0.00, the stronger the positive association is indicated to be. Negative coefficients indicate negative associations and the further from 0.00, the stronger the negative association is indicated to be.

Table A4 below presents the correlation matrix for all the explanatory theme variables and career-related attitudes.

Table A4. Correlation matrix between explanatory theme variables and career-related attitudes

	Occupational regret	Career satisfaction	Organisational commitment	Management commitment	Team commitment
Glass ceiling					
<i>Achieving personal and professional success</i>	-0.37**	0.30**	0.35**	0.13*	0.29**
<i>Promotion perceptions (within employing organisation)</i>	-0.27**	0.42**	0.45**	0.27**	0.34**
<i>Supportive work-life organisational culture</i>	-0.28**	0.26**	0.44**	0.29**	0.36**
<i>Supportive client culture</i>	-0.15**	0.05	0.08	0.00	0.04
<i>Organisational commitment to diversity</i>	-0.21**	0.33**	0.42**	0.25**	0.36**
The pipeline problem					
<i>Sisterhood</i>	-0.34**	0.42**	0.46**	0.39**	0.43**
Opting out					
<i>Achievement Aspirations</i>	-0.37**	0.17**	0.24**	0.22**	0.25**
<i>Lifestyle orientation</i>	0.08	-0.02	-0.09	0.01	-0.07
<i>Career identity salience</i>	-0.25**	0.10	0.24**	0.23**	0.22**
<i>Work centrality</i>	-0.29**	0.16**	0.23**	0.22**	0.17**
Psychological					
<i>Proactive personality</i>	-0.35**	0.29**	0.24**	0.14*	0.12*
<i>Employability</i>	-0.30**	0.39**	0.21**	0.14*	0.22**

** Denotes a statistically significant correlation

More complex regression analysis was carried out to explore potential predictors of career-related attitudes. A regression is essentially a more sophisticated correlation. However, in regression one can look at the relationships between a number of different predictor variables and an outcome variable at the same time. Most importantly, regression models allow you to assess the strength of a relationship between one predictor variable and an outcome variable *after* the relationships of other predictor variables have been taken into account or controlled for. Regressions provide us with two sets of information. Firstly, regressions tell us what percentage of variance in the outcome variable the different predictors within our regression model are able to explain. The more variance the predictor variables can explain, the more predictive the regression model is and the more we know about the possible causes of the outcome variable. Secondly, regressions provide information about the individual relationships between the predictor variables and outcome variable. This is provided by Beta coefficients, which are very similar to correlation coefficients and can be interpreted in the same way.

Regressions can be run across a series of steps (hierarchical regression) as additional sets of variables are added to the regression model. This allows us to find out the 'added value' of predictors above and beyond predictors or control variables already within the regression model. The analysis is structured across two steps: Firstly, all of the demographic variables were examined to see how well they predict behavioural intentions. These were age, marital status, caring responsibilities and financial contribution to household, years PQE and organisational tenure. Secondly, the explanatory theme variables were added to the regression to examine their association with career related attitudes, having previously taken into account the effects of all of the demographic variables.

Tables A5 to A8 below present the regression analysis for each of the career-related attitudinal variables.

Table A5. Best predictors of occupational regret among female lawyers

Demographic variables	Beta
<i>Organisational tenure</i>	-0.35
 <i>Variance accounted for: 7%</i>	
 Glass ceiling variables	
<i>Achieving personal and professional success</i>	-0.16
 Pipeline variables	
 Opting out variables	
<i>Achievement</i>	-0.16
<i>Aspirations</i>	-0.16
<i>Work centrality</i>	-0.16
 Psychological variables	
<i>Proactive personality</i>	-0.16
<i>Employability</i>	-0.13
 <i>Additional variance accounted for: 32%</i>	

All betas significant at 5% level of significance.

Table A6. Best predictors of career satisfaction among female lawyers

Demographic variables	Beta
<i>Variance accounted for: -</i>	
Glass ceiling variables	Beta
<i>Promotion perceptions</i>	0.2
Pipeline variables	
<i>Sisterhood</i>	0.24
Opting out variables	
<i>Work centrality</i>	0.12
Psychological variables	
<i>Employability</i>	0.21
<i>Additional variance accounted for: 33%</i>	

All betas significant at 5% level of significance.

Table A7. Best predictors of organisational commitment among female lawyers

Demographic variables	Beta
Age	-0.31
Organisational tenure	0.41
<i>Variance accounted for: 12%</i>	
Glass ceiling variables	
<i>Promotion perceptions</i>	0.22
<i>Supportive work-life organisational culture</i>	0.24
Pipeline variables	
<i>Sisterhood</i>	0.15
Opting out variables	
<i>Career identity salience</i>	0.11
Psychological variables	-
<i>Additional variance accounted for: 34%</i>	

All betas significant at 5% level of significance.

Table A8. Best predictors of management commitment among female lawyers

Demographic variables	Beta
Organisational tenure	0.21
<i>Variance accounted for: 2%</i>	
Glass ceiling variables	
<i>Supportive work-life organisational culture</i>	0.26
Pipeline variables	
<i>Sisterhood</i>	0.31
Opting out variables	
<i>Work centrality</i>	0.14
Psychological variables	-
<i>Additional variance accounted for: 22%</i>	

All betas significant at 5% level of significance.

Tables A9 to A11 below present the regression analysis for each of the behavioural intention variables.

Table A9. Best predictors of wishes to stay in current organisation among female lawyers

Demographic variables	Beta		
<i>Variance accounted for: -</i>			
		Beta	
	Career-related attitudes		
	Organisational commitment	0.34	*
	Team commitment	0.18	
<i>Additional variance accounted for:</i>			
			Beta
	Glass ceiling variables		
	Achieving personal and professional success		-0.15
	Promotion perceptions		0.17
	Pipeline variables		-
	Opting out variables		
	Achievement		0.21
	Aspirations		
	Psychological variables		-
<i>Additional variance accounted for:</i>			

All betas significant at 5% level of significance.
 * Still significant once subsequent variables added to regression

Table A10. Best predictors of wishes to work in-house among female lawyers

Demographic variables	Beta		
<i>Variance accounted for: 1%</i>			
		Beta	
	Career-related attitudes		
	Occupational regret	0.23	*
<i>Additional variance accounted for: -</i>			
			Beta
	Glass ceiling variables		-
	Pipeline variables		-
	Opting out variables		
	Career identity salience		-0.17
	Psychological variables		
<i>Additional variance accounted for: 18%</i>			

All betas significant at 5% level of significance.
 * Still significant once subsequent variables added to regression

Table A11. Best predictors of intentions to quit the profession among female lawyers

	Beta	
Demographic variables		
Organisational tenure	-0.20	*
Variance accounted for: 2%		
Beta		
Career-related attitudes		
Occupational regret	0.45	*
Career satisfaction	-0.16	*
Organisational commitment	-0.17	*
Additional variance accounted for:		
		Beta
Glass ceiling variables		-
Pipeline variables		-
Opting out variables		
Achievement Aspirations	-0.20	
Work centrality	-0.12	
Psychological variables		-
Additional variance accounted for: 38%		

All betas significant at 5% level of significance.

* Still significant once subsequent variables added to regression