

# International Women's Day 2025: Accelerate Action

## Introduction

Saturday, 8 March 2025 will mark the 114<sup>th</sup> International Women's Day (**IWD**). What started in the aftermath of 1,500 women marching through New York City demanding shorter working hours, better pay and the right to vote, is now an internationally recognised day to mark the progress made on women's rights and gender parity.

The theme of IWD 2025 is to "Accelerate Action", calling for increased momentum and urgency in addressing the barriers women face both personally and professionally. In this blog, BDBF associate, [Julia Gargan](#) considers the focus on the need to Accelerate Action in the professional world to ensure gender equality in the workplace to inspire others because, ultimately, we need to '*see it to believe it*'.

## The current landscape of women in leadership positions

A recent [Financial Times' article](#) reported that two of the world's largest professional services firms, EY and PwC, are on track to miss their 2025 targets for female partner representation in the UK, and that all the Big Four are struggling to boost the proportion of women in their upper ranks. The article noted that '*raising the gender balance of partnerships towards parity has proved to be a **slow process***' and, as is often said, this is because building the pipeline

*'takes time'*. Given that the drive for gender equality in the workplace is not a new phenomenon and the importance of gender equality and the benefits of a diverse workforce are well known, this begs the question of *how long* building the pipeline is really going to take? How can we accelerate action on this to avoid the pipeline becoming a convenient excuse for the lack of progress?

## **A reason to #AccelerateAction – the importance of female role models**

A 2022 LinkedIn Study found that 57% of women believe that having a relatable role model is crucial to achieving career success and 70% agreed that it is easier to be *"like someone you can see."* Female leaders in the workplace don't just improve a company's bottom line, but they normalise career paths for more junior colleagues, empowering them to take risks by showing them that their career goals are attainable. Female leaders encourage a shift in mindset about what is possible and how to achieve this. They can alleviate the impact of unconscious bias on the role women play in society and the workforce.

## **How can companies Accelerate Action?**

A key way to Accelerate Action, therefore, is to ensure that women are present and visible in corporate leadership. This may be done by setting gender targets, creating clear pathways for women to executive positions and by establishing mentorship schemes and equitable recruitment practices. These policies need to be backed by accountability where targets are not met and a drive to tackle the structural inequalities that hold women back, for example, unequal pay and family leave

policies. In this vein, the Government plans to require larger employers to publish annual “equality action plans” explaining the steps being taken to address the organisation’s gender pay gap and to support workers going through the menopause.

## **How can the law #AccelerateAction?**

At BDBF we hope to play our part in accelerating action by advising on the legal protections in place for employees and partners in the workplace and the enforcement of these. Be that through advising our employer clients on compliance with discrimination laws, and diversity or family leave policies or by advising employees and partners on their rights when returning from family leave, or where they have experienced gender-based discrimination or harassment.

## **Conclusion**

You can read more about the women’s movement and the various International Women’s Day events on the [IWD website](#).

***BDBF is a leading law firm based at Bank in the City of London specialising in employment law. If you would like to discuss this blog or an employment related issue, please get in touch with Julia Gargan at [juliagargan@bdbf.co.uk](mailto:juliagargan@bdbf.co.uk), your usual BDBF contact or email [info@bdbf.co.uk](mailto:info@bdbf.co.uk).***