



# The City of London Law Society

## **City Law firms partner with Rt Hon Justine Greening's Social Mobility Pledge to improve access and equal opportunities in the legal sector**

**16<sup>th</sup> February 2021:** Former Education Secretary Justine Greening is working with fifteen City of London Law Society (CLLS) member firms to develop an Opportunity Action plan for the legal sector, aimed at boosting social mobility in the profession.

The partnership will see the firms working closely with a number of universities, including Bradford, Staffordshire, Lincoln, York St John and Liverpool John Moores to create new and wider pathways from higher education into the legal sector.

This collaboration between City of London Law Society member firms and the Social Mobility Pledge will be the Pledge's first sector-wide initiative, creating a framework for leading law firms to work together on solutions that benefit the profession at large, leading to greater understanding and access.

Ms Greening, the first Secretary of State for Education to have attended a comprehensive school and local FE college, co-founded the national Social Mobility Pledge in 2018, alongside entrepreneur and philanthropist David Harrison, to tackle Britain's widespread lack of social mobility.

**Justine Greening said:** *"Many young people are seeing their life prospects drastically downgraded, with jobs and job offers disappearing. Meanwhile, massive demand for reskilling and career shifting support is building up.*

*"Well defined purpose together with a strong culture and leadership have marked out those organisations which have taken the right decisions in response to the crisis, from those which have not. The challenge now, and one that CLLS member firms have stepped up to, is for Britain's businesses and universities to play their role in boosting opportunity and social mobility as part of our national recovery.*

*"I'm looking forward to working with CLLS members on their Opportunity Action Plan. They are committed to making a difference and levelling up Britain. I hope many others will follow their example."*

**Edward Sparrow said:** *"The City of London Law Society and fifteen of our member firms are delighted to be working alongside Rt Hon Justine Greening, Seema Kennedy OBE, and the Social Mobility Pledge on an Opportunity Action plan for the City's legal profession.*

*"By working with University Vice Chancellors and sharing knowledge between law firms, we hope that this partnership will make a real and measurable difference in a post-pandemic world, where the importance of levelling-up access and opportunities will be more important than ever."*

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- **About the CLLS:** The City of London Law Society (CLLS) is the professional representative body for solicitors and law firms in the City. The CLLS represents approximately 17,000 City lawyers through individual and corporate membership, including some of the largest international law firms in the world. [www.citysolicitors.org.uk/cls](http://www.citysolicitors.org.uk/cls)
- CLLS Members committed to this project include:
  - Ashurst LLP
  - Charles Russell Speechlys LLP
  - Clyde & Co LLP
  - CMS
  - DLA Piper (UK) LLP
  - Eversheds Sutherland LLP
  - Fenchurch Law Ltd.
  - Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP
  - Kingsley Napley LLP
  - RPC LLP
  - Simmons & Simmons LLP
  - Simpson Thacher Bartlett LLP
  - Sullivan & Cromwell LLP
  - Trowers & Hamblins LLP
  - Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP
- The project will be led by Seema Kennedy OBE, a former City solicitor and Member of Parliament.

**For more details on the pledge visit [www.socialmobilitypledge.org](http://www.socialmobilitypledge.org)**

The Social Mobility Pledge is a commitment from businesses large and small across Britain to become a Social Mobility Pledge accredited employer, taking the three steps below:

- 1) Partnering directly with schools or colleges to provide coaching through quality careers advice, enrichment experience and/or mentoring to people from disadvantaged backgrounds or circumstances. Businesses can work through the many social mobility charities and organisations, such as Speakers for Schools, Inspiring the Future, the Princes Trust, the Careers and Enterprise Company, that are already there to help businesses and employers do more on the ground.
- 2) Access - providing structured work experience and/or apprenticeship opportunities to people from disadvantaged backgrounds or circumstances
- 3) Recruitment - adopting open employee recruitment practices which promote a level playing field for people from disadvantaged backgrounds or circumstances, such as name blind recruitment or contextual recruitment. Business and employers can sign up today to be a Social Mobility employer at [www.socialmobilitypledge.org.uk](http://www.socialmobilitypledge.org.uk)