

Introducing Women Who Will: The Class of 2026



I see technological advances as the greatest opportunity the legal profession has had in decades. We have a real responsibility to embrace and understand both the challenges and opportunities presented to us.

Elizabeth Barrett
General Counsel,
Howden Group

i Women Who Will IN-HOUSE

The women recognised in the in-house category are redefining what it means to be a modern legal leader. They lead functions that operate as genuine strategic partners to their organisations, while championing inclusion, wellbeing and innovation from within.

Elizabeth Barrett

*UK & Ireland General Counsel,
Howden Group*

Elizabeth Barrett is UK & Ireland General Counsel at Howden Group, where she has earned a reputation as one of the most innovative and forward-thinking legal leaders in the industry. Her work has fundamentally changed how an in-house legal function operates – not as a reactive support unit, but as a proactive, technology-enabled strategic partner embedded in the business.

Elizabeth has been central to the development of Howden's Legal Target Operating Model for the UK & Ireland, bringing structured, research-driven thinking to team design, sourcing strategy, automation, and legal technology. Her benchmarking, automation maturity analysis and CLM vendor evaluation work has been recognised as among the most sophisticated produced by any in-house legal function – notable not just for its quality, but for its practical ambition. Elizabeth does not treat transformation as an abstract goal: she builds repeatable, scalable systems that reduce friction for the business while keeping rigorous risk oversight in place. This has enabled the business to make considerable savings and most importantly free up hours of legal counsel's time, enabling the team to focus on more complex areas where they can add value.

Beyond her professional achievements, Elizabeth's sense of service extends far beyond the office. She is a proud FANY, volunteering with the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry – one of the UK's oldest and most respected voluntary organisations – where she is trained as a Trauma Risk Incident Manager (TRiM), a specialist peer support role helping individuals process traumatic experiences. It is a role that reflects the depth of care and responsibility she brings to everything she does.

Elizabeth is also a passionate classic car enthusiast and gives her time to the Sporting Bears Motor Club, which raises money for children's charities by offering young people rides in dream cars.

And as the founder of the Alcohol Free Employee Resource Group, she has created a vital space for those who choose not to drink, championing genuine inclusion and wellbeing in the workplace. In an industry where drinking seems to be the norm, Elizabeth has worked tirelessly to increase awareness and create safe spaces for anyone who chooses not to drink – for whatever reason.

A compassionate, values-driven leader who combines commercial pragmatism with authentic care and kindness for the people around her, Elizabeth represents exactly what the legal profession needs more of: a woman who does not just talk about change, she quietly and consistently builds it.



Gillie Abbotts-Jones
*Senior Legal Director,
Diageo*

Gillie is Senior Legal Director, Digital, AI and Data Privacy at Diageo. She is a dual-qualified lawyer with more than 15 years' experience advising businesses on AI governance, data privacy, intellectual property, regulatory compliance, commercial law and emerging technologies.

Before joining Diageo, Gillie held senior legal leadership roles at WPP, including General Counsel at both T&Pm Group and Kantar. She advised boards and executive teams on AI, data privacy and cyber security, IP, digital transformation and commercial risk. Her work included leading generative AI product counselling, building a global legal team of 40 lawyers and supporting WPP's £3.2 billion sale of Kantar to Bain Capital.

Earlier in her career, Gillie held senior private practice roles focused on IP litigation, media, data protection, commercial disputes and cross-border matters.



I'm grateful for this recognition. I believe that progress in our profession is built through both excellence and generosity. My advice to women coming through is to back your judgement, keep learning, and look for the people who will challenge, support and open doors for you. Then do the same for others. The more we make space for different voices and experiences, the stronger our advice, our teams and our profession become.

She also completed an LLM in Intellectual Property Law and Human Rights. She has consistently supported greater representation and career development within the legal and technology sectors, using both structured mentoring and day-to-day sponsorship to help colleagues build confidence, capability and visibility. Her sense of professional responsibility also extends beyond her commercial roles, including voluntary legal work with access-to-justice organisations and community advice services, as well as serving as a Non-Executive Director for community-focused projects.

Gillie brings practical commercial judgement and a people-focused leadership style. She is known for supporting responsible innovation, developing others and helping organisations make confident decisions in fast-moving, technology-led environments.



Sarah Bains

*Senior Employment Lawyer,
Government Legal Department*

Sarah Bains works as a Senior Employment Lawyer at the Government Legal Department, a job she started in July 2019 in London, United Kingdom. She is a skilled lawyer with a focus on employment and discrimination law, handling both legal disputes and other legal tasks. Before this job, she spent nearly seven years at Pattinson and Brewer, where she was an Employment and Discrimination Solicitor from November 2014 to June 2019, and a Trainee Solicitor from October 2012 to October 2014. Earlier in her career, she was a Case Studies Officer at the TUC, a Communications and Stakeholder Manager (Consultant) at the Department for Communities and Local Government, and a Parliamentary Researcher for a Member of Parliament at the House of Commons. Her professional abilities include negotiation, legal proceedings, dealing with employers, and managing labor relations.



Jennifer Bowers
*Deputy General Counsel,
The Francis Crick Institute*

Jennifer Bowers works as the Deputy General Counsel at The Francis Crick Institute, a position she has held since January 2025. She is a qualified solicitor and experienced business leader with extensive UK and international business experience gained across magic circle private practice, FTSE100 and FTSE250 companies, and early-stage businesses. Throughout her career she has held roles at Allen & Overy and Linklaters, senior positions at Tesco and Ascential plc, and most recently served as General Counsel and Company Secretary at Koa Health. She is recognised for her pragmatic, risk-sensitive approach, and brings a consistently positive outlook to all she does. She effectively balances providing immediate legal support for business needs with strategic planning, leading and nurturing talent, and project implementation. Dedicated to making a difference for the organisations, colleagues, and communities she serves, she thrives in generous, kind, and intellectually stimulating environments.





Kate Chandley

Chief Compliance and Sustainability Officer, Hays PLC

Kate Chandley is a senior legal, compliance and sustainability leader with extensive experience advising boards and executive teams in global organisations. She is currently Chief Compliance and Sustainability Officer at Hays PLC, a FTSE 250 professional services business, where she leads a global team responsible for ethics, compliance, and sustainability.

Kate began her career in private practice at Linklaters LLP and RPC before transitioning into senior in house roles across a diverse range of sectors, including construction, luxury hospitality, aviation and global people sourcing and recruitment, where she built and led enterprise wide compliance frameworks and advised on governance, culture and ethical decision making.

At Hays, Kate is responsible for the design and delivery of the Group's global compliance and ESG programme. She is passionate about embedding integrity not only through policies and controls, but through leadership



I'm delighted to have been recognised as part of the 2026 *Women Who Will* cohort. I believe integrity is built in the moments when doing the right thing is hard, inconvenient, or unpopular. Creating cultures where people feel safe to speak up, and leaders take responsibility for the outcomes, is how trust, resilience and long term success are truly achieved.

behaviours, psychological safety and everyday decision making, ensuring ethics and sustainability are seen as opportunities for differentiation and growth.

Kate's career has been shaped by a strong belief that integrity is a leadership discipline. She is driven by the conviction that doing the right thing, particularly when it is difficult or uncomfortable, is essential to building trust with colleagues, customers, shareholders, and wider society. Her work focuses on creating environments where people feel safe to speak up, leaders are accountable for outcomes, and organisations grow sustainably over the long term.

A committed advocate for inclusive leadership and modern governance, Kate is recognised for translating regulatory expectations into practical, human centred solutions that deliver real impact. She is proud to lead teams that challenge the status quo, champion transparency, and help organisations navigate complexity with confidence and fairness.



Gifty Okonkwo

*Senior Legal Counsel,
Xero*

Gifty Okonkwo is a Senior Legal Counsel at Xero, a global cloud accounting software company, where she provides legal advice and support. She is passionate about commercial law and pro bono work and has received awards for her excellence and leadership in both fields.

In her current role, she has worked with various teams and stakeholders across the organisation, delivering high-quality legal solutions and guidance for complex and diverse matters. She has contributed to the negotiation and drafting of contracts, policies, and compliance documents, as well as the resolution of disputes and litigation.

She has also leveraged her skills and expertise to support the East Greenwich Legal Advice Clinic, where she serves as a board member and a pro bono adviser. She enjoys bringing her diverse perspectives and experiences to the team.

In addition to her legal expertise, Gifty is a skilled and experienced speaker. She enjoys facilitating workshops, hosting events, and delivering impactful keynote speeches. She has received excellent feedback for engaging diverse audiences, conveying complex topics with clarity, and inspiring action. She brings energy, professionalism, and adaptability to every speaking engagement, ensuring that the message resonates and leaves a lasting impression.



Ashleigh Hegarty
*Chief Legal Officer,
 Charlotte Tilbury*

Ashleigh is Chief Legal Officer at Charlotte Tilbury, a leading global luxury beauty brand founded in 2013 by renowned celebrity makeup artist Charlotte Tilbury MBE. Ashleigh sits on the Global Executive Leadership Team at Charlotte Tilbury and leads and is responsible for its Global Legal, Compliance, Risk and Insurance functions.

She joined the brand as General Counsel & Company Secretary in 2016 and as its first in-house lawyer. Over the last ten years, Ashleigh has built a global Legal & Compliance function from the ground up, with teams in London, New York and China.

Ashleigh has seen Charlotte Tilbury through two fundraises and a majority sale to Puig Brands SA in 2020. Leading through change and transformation is never easy but it is clear Ashleigh thrives when embracing a challenge and this is something she has excelled at throughout her career.

Before joining Charlotte Tilbury, Ashleigh held senior in-house legal positions at Selfridges Group and Domino's Pizza UK & IRL plc. She started her career in private practice, at Shoosmiths, where she trained and qualified into Corporate M&A and having spent four years at the firm, Ashleigh went on client secondment to Volkswagen Group in the UK where she got her first taste for in-house life. She has never looked back and spent the past 14 years in various in-house legal roles supporting and scaling both global FMCG and retail brands.



I am honoured to receive this award and recognition. Advocating for women in leadership is something I feel extremely passionate about, alongside supporting those that may not have had the same access to opportunities as others. Different people start from different circumstances and, for me, inclusive support means recognising and breaking barriers for all. Thank you to Obelisk Support for championing this important initiative of “Women Who Will” and the Next 100 Years project.

Ashleigh makes it her goal in all businesses that she has worked in to ensure the Legal department is seen as an invaluable strategic business partner that is brought into the loop, and on the journey with the business, from day one. She coaches her teams to engineer a “yes” to any potential business opportunity or challenge, rather than to respond with a “no”. Ashleigh’s objective has always been to ensure Legal are shaping business decisions not stopping them.

Outside of the office, Ashleigh acts as a coach and mentor for other inspiring future leaders and also spends time in schools speaking to aspirational students about their future - sharing her personal journey and experience in the hope it will help and support others.

Ashleigh also sits on the advisory board of the Luxury Law Alliance and has won various awards over the years, both personally and on behalf of the team she has developed and grown.

Ashleigh is passionate about diverse workplaces and pushes boundaries to ensure there are no glass ceilings. She is a strong advocate for women in leadership and is extremely passionate about supporting those that may have not had the same access to opportunities as others. Ensuring people from all socioeconomic backgrounds have equal access to opportunities. Different people start from different circumstances and, for Ashleigh, inclusive support means recognising and breaking barriers for all.



Lisa Jones

Former Chief Counsel EMEA, Cushman & Wakefield

Lisa is a General Counsel with 17 years experience in-house and in private practice. Most recently as former Chief Counsel EMEA for Cushman & Wakefield, a NYSE listed global commercial real estate brokerage and consultant professional services company. As a member of the Executive Leadership team she drove legal strategy for the EMEA region, aligning governance and compliance with global business objectives. Here she was selected for the Cushman & Wakefield Executive Leadership Program 2024-2026 alongside leaders from across the global business. Lisa is known for providing commercial solutions which mitigate enterprise risk and enable transformative organisational change.

Prior to this Lisa specialised in Professional Disputes and Regulatory at international law firms Clyde & Co and RPC. She focused on complex commercial disputes, defendant professional and regulatory liability, insurance policy coverage and defence issues. During her time at RPC she spent 12 months on secondment to the global insurers QBE. Here she joined the IFA/Brokers Claims



I am honoured to be a part of the Women Who Will 2026 cohort. I am grateful for every leader and colleague who has led the way and supported me as I have progressed in my career, especially during the early years of motherhood. As a leader I endeavour to be open about the challenges, and enable the possibilities, to women starting on their own journeys.

Team and reviewed and assessed claims against professional indemnity policies.

Lisa is committed to inclusion and mentorship in her work and leadership roles. She has benefitted from many female role models ahead of her who showed her, through their day-to-day actions, how to blend career with motherhood and family life. She now endeavours to always be open about the challenges, and enable the possibilities, to women starting out on their own journeys.

Outside of work Lisa enjoys spending time with her husband and two children. They love to travel as a family - maximising school holidays as much as possible! Most recently she has spent a lot of time facilitating her childrens' love of Arsenal football club!

It is an honour for Lisa to be included as a "Women Who Will" which she considers to be an important movement, recognising the pioneers of women in law as well as inspiring future generations of female legal leaders.



Electra Japonas

*Chief Product Officer, SimpleDocs,
Founder, oneNDA*

Electra Japonas is the Chief Product Officer at SimpleDocs where she leads the product vision behind the company's AI-powered contract tools. She works at the intersection of legal expertise and product design, helping shape how AI can be applied to real-world legal workflows like contract review, clause drafting, and playbook automation.

As the Founder of oneNDA, the global standard for NDAs, Electra brings a deep focus on standardization and usability to her work, pushing for tools that are not just smart, but genuinely adoptable.

Before joining the organisation in 2024 following its acquisition of oneNDA, she was CEO and Founder of legal operations firm TLB, and held senior legal roles at the European Space Agency, Disney, BAT, and EY. She is a dual-qualified Solicitor (England & Wales) and Cyprus Attorney.



Belén Llamas

General Counsel and Company Secretary, Gatwick Airport

Born in Spain and shaped by an international career, Belén Llamas is a senior legal leader with over a decade of experience leading legal functions in complex, highly regulated infrastructure environments. She is currently General Counsel and Company Secretary at Gatwick Airport, where she oversees the legal, ethics and data protection functions for the UK's second busiest airport. A member of Gatwick's Executive Committee, she works closely with the board, shareholders and executive leadership team to support the airport's long term strategy and future growth.

Belén has been part of the VINCI Airports network for 14 years, beginning her career at its Paris headquarters as an in house lawyer working on the structuring and delivery of complex infrastructure and concession projects across multiple jurisdictions. She later progressed into senior leadership roles within the portfolio, developing deep expertise in regulated environments and large scale airport project delivery.

Prior to joining Gatwick, Belén served as General Counsel in Chile at the launch of the Santiago de Chile International Airport concession, playing a key role in establishing the concession and supporting the construction and delivery of a new international terminal during a period of major expansion. She subsequently led legal strategy in Cambodia during a pivotal phase for the business, advising on corporate development, regulatory engagement and key strategic decision



I believe legal leadership is at its best when it is agile and strategic - driving impact through collaboration and creating space for people to grow with confidence.

making. These experiences underpin a pragmatic leadership style grounded in adaptability, collaboration and strong commercial judgement.

Qualified as a lawyer in Spain and France, Belén recently passed the Solicitors Qualifying Examination in England and Wales. With a background in Economics, a Master's in Economic Regulation and fluency in English, French and Spanish, she brings a truly international and outward looking perspective to legal leadership.

Beyond her professional role, Belén is deeply committed to promoting diversity, inclusion and women's leadership. She is the executive sponsor of Gatwick Pride, Gatwick Airport's business group supporting LGBTQ+ inclusion, and actively champions inclusive leadership across the organisation. She is a strong advocate for building diverse, modern and agile legal teams, believing that representation and inclusion are essential to better decision making and performance. Passionate about mentorship and women's empowerment, Belén is committed to supporting emerging talent and enabling others to progress with confidence. She leads with empathy, pragmatism and high standards, fostering environments where people feel supported, valued and able to thrive.

As a Women Who Will, Belén is part of a new generation of leaders driving a more inclusive, influential and impactful legal profession.



Nicola Lucas

*General Counsel and
Company Secretary, New Look*

Nicola Lucas is General Counsel and Company Secretary of New Look, one of the UK's leading womenswear retailers. An accomplished in-house lawyer with a decade of senior leadership experience, she leads the Group's legal, data privacy, and company secretarial functions providing strategic counsel at the highest levels of the business.

Throughout her career, Nicola has demonstrated leadership during periods of significant change and challenge. Joining New Look in 2020, she played a pivotal role in guiding the business through the unprecedented disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, navigating complex commercial, regulatory, and litigation matters while helping to safeguard the organisation's long-term success. Recent work with New Look includes supporting the business with its digital transformation program.

Prior to New Look, Nicola served as Head of Legal and Company Secretary at The Deltic Group (formerly Luminar Leisure plc), then the UK's largest nightclub operator. During the pandemic, she worked closely with the Board on the successful sale of the business, helping secure its future during one of the most challenging periods the hospitality sector has faced. Nicola was previously shortlisted for General Counsel of the Year at The Lawyer Awards in 2022 for her work in these roles.

A passionate advocate for diversity, inclusion, and social mobility, Nicola is dedicated to creating



I am honoured to be included in this year's Women Who Will cohort, alongside an amazing group of inspiring women, as well as those who have come before us. We all have the ability to make change, no matter how small, and to help ensure that future generations are never limited by gender in any way.

pathways for others to succeed. Nicola is the Director sponsor for New Look's ED&I agenda, providing visible leadership and oversight of the company's inclusion agenda, championing initiatives that foster a culture where colleagues from all backgrounds can thrive, feel represented, and reach their full potential while being themselves. She actively mentors junior lawyers and is particularly interested in modernising the social norms of the workplace for all working to create family-friendly working environments while balancing a career. Nicola believes that leadership is measured not by personal achievement, but by the opportunities created for others and the positive impact left behind.

Beyond her role at New Look, Nicola is committed to supporting organisations in the third sector. Over the past decade, she has held several trustee and non-executive director positions including Trustee of One YMCA, Independent Non-Executive Director of the Hertfordshire Football Association, and most recently, Non-Executive Director of Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (formerly known as IEMA). She currently serves as a Governor at a local primary school.

Throughout her career, Nicola has combined legal expertise with commercial judgement, strategic thinking and a collaborative leadership style. She has built a reputation for guiding organisations through complex challenges and periods of transformation, while remaining committed to creating opportunities for others to succeed.



Mel Nebhrajani CB

*Director General,
Government Legal Department*

Mel was called to the Bar in 1994, practising in Chancery chambers where she specialised in property, charity and trusts work. Since 1999 she has worked in what is now the Government Legal Department (GLD). She was appointed Director General in 2021 and now leads GLD's Litigation with Justice and Security Group. This includes the Litigation Directorate and the Statutory Instruments Hub, as well as the legal teams advising the Cabinet Office, Home Office, Northern Ireland Office, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Defence.

Over her career, Mel has worked on some of the leading issues of the day including the Human Rights Act, the Devolution settlements, the Freedom of Information Act and the legal response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mel is committed to improving Diversity and Inclusion in the profession and has led initiatives to widen access to the profession and support the progression of those from under-represented groups. She mentors and supports colleagues, particularly returners from maternity leave and career breaks, and those from minorities who face particular barriers in the workplace.

Mel has 4 children aged 16 to 23. She is a Non-Executive Director for a number of charities and educational institutions. She was highly commended in the Asian Women of Achievement Awards 2020, appointed Companion of the Bath in the 2021 New Year's Honours List and is on The 100 Women in Westminster list for 2026.



It is such an honour to be included in the Women who Will Class of 2026 and to be in such impressive company. We have come a long way in the law but there is still so much more to do before we can say we have secured and embedded equality. Leadership means taking risks and not walking past what needs doing. I am proud to be in the company of Women who Will. We are not walking past and, together, we will do even more.





Natalie Salunke

*Fractional General Counsel,
Salunke Solutions Ltd*

Natalie Salunke is a fractional General Counsel who has been leading legal teams since 2012. She works with high-growth, technology-led businesses to provide strategic legal leadership at critical moments, helping organisations scale with confidence while navigating complexity.

As the “Mary Poppins of law” Natalie is known for stepping into fast-moving environments and bringing clarity, structure and calm to both legal and commercial challenges. She partners closely with founders, executive teams and boards across fintech, SaaS, emerging technology and travel, advising on international expansion, regulatory strategy and complex commercial arrangements, as well as designing legal functions that are embedded, agile and aligned to the business.

Alongside her executive work, Natalie plays an active role in governance and the charitable sector. She is a board member of Middlesex County Cricket Club, Acting Chair of the Young Urban Arts Foundation, supporting young people through access to creative opportunities, and serves as Chair of the North Surrey Domestic Abuse Service.



We don't need to fit the mould of what leadership in law has traditionally looked like. The real opportunity is to reshape it - to build environments where people feel seen, supported and able to thrive. When we do that, we don't just succeed individually, we lift others with us.

Natalie is also a Visiting Lecturer at The University of Law and is deeply committed to supporting the next generation of lawyers. A founding member of O Shaped, Natalie is passionate about breaking down barriers within the legal profession and championing a more inclusive, human-centred approach to legal careers.

She mentors founders and other members of the profession both independently and through initiatives such as Lawtech UK and Digital Boost, helping others develop commercial acumen, build confidence and create the opportunities their deserve.

She is also the co-founder of Hera, a community built to create a safe space for women in law to connect, share experiences and uplift one another, grounded in the belief that “we rise together”.

Through her work, Natalie continues to challenge traditional models of leadership, advocating for a more accessible, commercially impactful and people-focused future for the profession.



Mollie Stoker

Group General Counsel and Company Secretary, Ocado

Mollie Stoker is Group General Counsel and Company Secretary at Ocado, where she leads the legal, governance, compliance, regulatory, insurance, data protection, intellectual property, sustainability, and health and safety functions across the Group. She supports a complex international technology business operating at the forefront of automation, robotics, software, and online retail innovation.

With a career spanning multiple senior in-house leadership, corporate development, and General Counsel roles, Mollie has built broad expertise across corporate governance, commercial strategy, corporate development, regulation, risk management, and business transformation. She is recognised for combining strong legal and commercial judgement with a collaborative and pragmatic leadership style, helping organisations navigate growth, innovation, and change in fast-moving environments.

At Ocado, Mollie works closely with executive leadership and cross-functional teams to support strategic decision-making and responsible business growth. She is passionate about building modern legal and governance functions that are embedded within the business, enabling innovation while maintaining strong ethical, regulatory, and organisational standards.



I am delighted to be listed as a Woman Who Will 2026. One of the most rewarding parts of leadership is creating opportunities for others to grow in confidence and ambition. I believe strong leadership is about creating environments where people feel trusted to contribute openly, challenge constructively, and develop with confidence. Those cultures ultimately lead to better decisions, stronger teams, and more sustainable organisations.

Alongside her executive responsibilities, Mollie is actively involved in initiatives focused on sustainability, wellbeing, and the future of the legal profession. She is involved with the GC Sustainability Forum, The General Counsel Wellbeing Network, and the Legal Charter 1.5 GC Forum, reflecting her belief that legal leaders have an important role to play not only in organisational governance and sustainability, but also in supporting healthier and more inclusive leadership cultures within the profession.

Mollie has also been a Trustee of Only A Pavement Away since 2021, the charity that supports people facing homelessness, prison leavers, and veterans into employment within the hospitality sector. The role is of particular personal importance to her and reflects her commitment to social mobility, inclusion, and creating meaningful opportunities for people to rebuild their lives through work.

She is a strong advocate for the progression of women within the legal profession and leadership more broadly and is passionate about creating environments where individuals feel empowered to contribute authentically, challenge constructively, and develop their careers with confidence.



Laura Wattley

Senior Legal Counsel,
E.ON UK

Laura Wattley is a Senior Legal Counsel at E.ON UK, where she leads a team of lawyers supporting the company's multi-million-pound district heating and generation business. Laura plays a key role in shaping and delivering strategic projects central to E.ON's transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy, with her contributions recognised through multiple internal awards for legal leadership and impact.

Laura began her career at international law firm Pinsent Masons before moving in-house. During her time at Carillion, she was selected for the company's prestigious Leadership Programme as the only lawyer in the cohort, completing MBA-accredited modules at distinction level and undertaking cross-functional secondments, including leading the implementation of an early payment facility. These experiences shaped her commercially focused and strategic approach to legal practice.

Laura is passionate about driving continuous improvement and innovation within legal teams. She has led initiatives to enhance the efficiency and accessibility of legal advice, including developing an AI-enabled contract generation and review tool to enable business self-service and to free up legal capacity for higher-value work. Through this, she is helping to redefine the role of in-house legal teams as proactive, strategic partners.

Laura strongly believes in inclusive leadership and creating environments where women can thrive at every stage of their careers. She actively mentors emerging female talent and champions initiatives that support women to progress into senior roles.



I'm deeply honoured to be part of the Women Who Will Class of 2026. I believe inclusive leadership is key to enabling women to thrive in the legal profession - by creating environments that support the different stages of women's lives, we can help more women not only remain in the profession, but progress to the most senior levels. I'm committed to championing authentic, inclusive leadership and helping to create those environments.

Laura also co-founded E.ON's Fertility Forum, creating a safe and supportive space for colleagues navigating fertility challenges and played a leading role in developing a pioneering policy offering enhanced support, including unlimited paid leave for fertility treatment. The network has received external recognition, winning Fertility Friendly Employer of the Year 2025 (Fertility Matters at Work Awards) and Internal Support Network of the Year 2026 (Legal 500 ESG Awards). Laura has also spoken at the Houses of Parliament on the importance of fertility-friendly workplace policies, contributing to wider conversations on inclusion and employee wellbeing.

As a part-time working mother, Laura leads by example, demonstrating that career progression and flexible working can go hand in hand. She is passionate about supporting women to navigate the demands of a legal career alongside motherhood and other key stages of women's lives, offering practical guidance and empathetic support.

Outside of her professional role, Laura is Chair and trustee of her local musical theatre society, a registered charity with over 80 members. Under her leadership, the society has a £100,000 annual turnover and delivers four productions each year, including a youth division. It plays an important role in promoting the arts locally, developing talent and fostering a strong sense of community among its members, supporting their mental health and wellbeing. Through this work, she continues to champion inclusion, accessibility and community - values she also brings to her leadership within the legal profession.



Iseult Whelan

*Head of Legal, Europe,
Primark*

Iseult Whelan is the Head of Legal for Europe at Primark, a role she has held since May 2021. She joined Primark in April 2018 as Legal Counsel, a position she held for just over three years before her promotion. Prior to that, she worked as a Solicitor at Vodafone Ireland Limited in Dublin from October 2015 to March 2018. Earlier in her career, she spent around six years at A&L Goodbody, one of Ireland’s leading corporate law firms, progressing from Trainee Solicitor (2009–2011), during which she gained experience across General Corporate, Banking and Financial Services, Commercial

Property, and Commercial Litigation and Dispute Resolution, through to Solicitor (2012–2015) and then Associate (May–October 2015), working across the firm’s Dublin and London offices throughout. She began her legal career as a Law Clerk at Skaletsky & Mannis, P.C. Attorneys at Law in Chicago from September 2006 to July 2007. Ms. Whelan holds a Bachelor of Civil Law (BCL International) from University College Dublin, which she earned with First Class Honours in 2008, and studied Law at DePaul University College of Law in Chicago during 2006–2007.





Luisa Wright

Group General Counsel and Company Secretary, Dunelm Group PLC

Luisa Wright is the Group General Counsel & Company Secretary at Dunelm Group plc, a FTSE-listed homewares retailer, a role she has held since October 2022. She is an executive-level lawyer with significant experience and a proven track record in the gambling, sport, media and technology sectors, specialising in corporate, commercial and regulatory/compliance work. Her board-level corporate expertise has been developed within highly regulated, listed companies.

Prior to joining Dunelm, Luisa served as Group General Counsel & Company Secretary at The Rank Group plc (2018–2022) and at Sportech plc (2011–2017). At Sportech, a global pool betting organisation listed on the London Stock Exchange, she was a member of the Executive and responsible for legal and regulatory

advice to the Board, corporate governance, and stakeholder management. Key achievements included advising on the £83 million sale of the Football Pools business and the successful £97 million VAT reclaim from HMRC relating to the “Spot the Ball” game.

Earlier, she spent over a decade at the international law firm Olswang, where she focused on commercial and regulatory matters for clients across media, technology, sport and gambling, including the RFU, the NFL, Viacom, MTV, attheraces, Gamesys and Ladbrokes, and acted as sector champion for sport.

Luisa studied at the University of Leeds and was educated at Withington Girls’ School.

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To be recognised in this way is incredibly special, and a reminder that real success is not who you become, but who rises because of you.

Amandeep Khasriya
Consultant Solicitor,
Moore Barlow

