

Gender Equality Charter

Results of 2023 Survey of GEC Signatories
Summary

- The New Zealand Law Society Te Kāhui Ture o Aotearoa implemented the Gender Equality Charter (GEC) in 2018. To date, the GEC has been adopted by 161 legal workplaces across New Zealand. The number of currently active signatories is 143.
- One of the conditions of the GEC is that participants complete a baseline survey of gender equality (GE) activities at their workplace upon signing and agree to complete follow-up surveys on a bi-annual basis.
- This report compares the results of the 2023 survey with the 2018 Baseline survey results and the 2021 survey, which enables the Law Society to gauge progress by participants towards the commitments under the GEC.

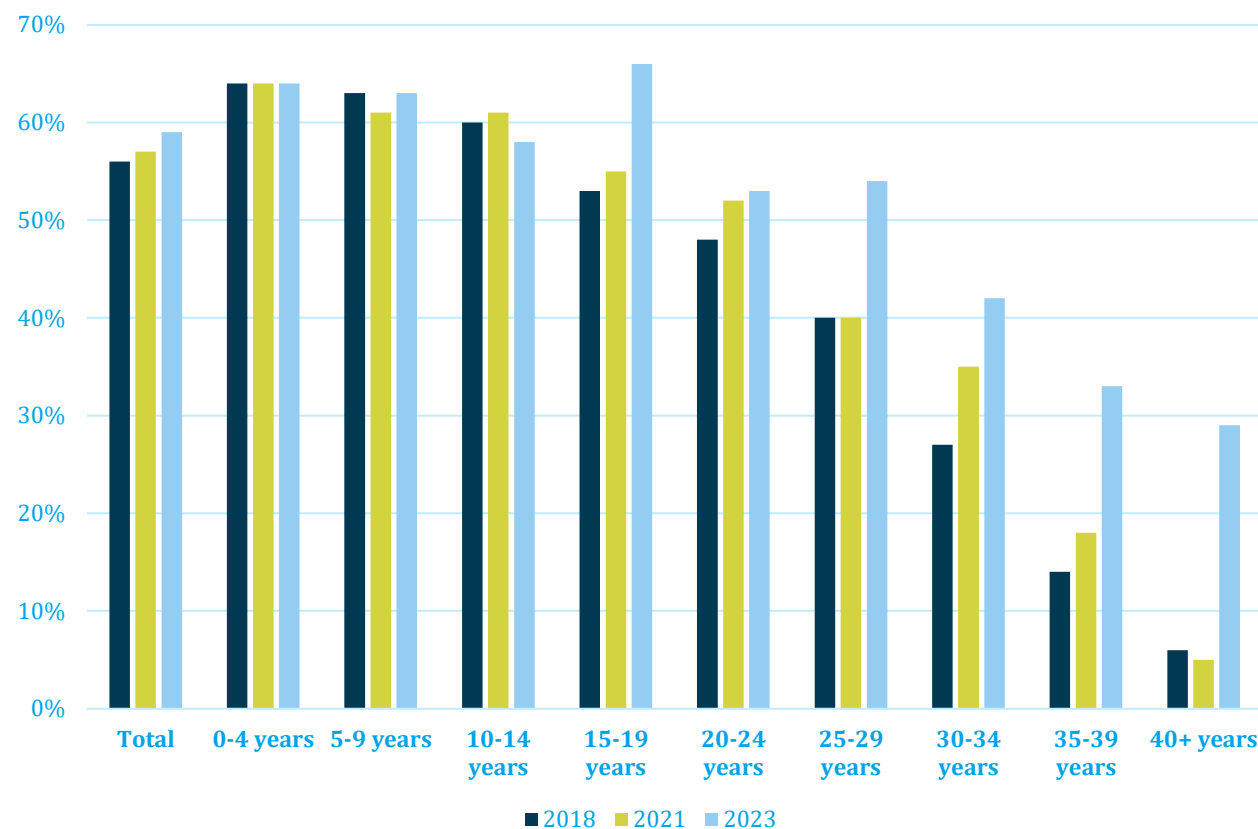
2023 Survey Methodology

- As of June 2023, 158 legal workplaces had become signatories to the GEC. Of these, 110 qualified to participate in the 2023 follow-up survey; qualified GEC signatories are those that had been signatories for two or more years at the time the survey was conducted. The 2023 sample error is $\pm 7\%$.
- The survey was conducted between 8 August and 2 October 2023. All qualified GEC signatories were sent an invitation. 94 responded, for a response rate of 85%.
- The 2018 Baseline survey was administered by the Law Society. The 2021 and 2023 follow-up surveys were conducted by independent research consultant Essence Research.
- Note on rounding: All numbers are shown rounded to zero decimal places. Hence, specified totals are not always exactly equal to the sum of the specified sub-totals. Rounding effects are seldom more than 1%.

Profile of 2023 Survey Respondents

- 94 out of 110 eligible GEC workplaces took part in the 2023 survey - a response rate of 85%.
- The profile of workplace types in the 2023 survey is very similar to that established in the 2018 Baseline and 2021 surveys (75% were law firms and the remaining 25% spread primarily among in-house legal teams and solo practitioners).
- The proportion of all GEC workplace lawyers who are female has increased slightly from 56% in the 2018 Baseline to 59% in 2023.

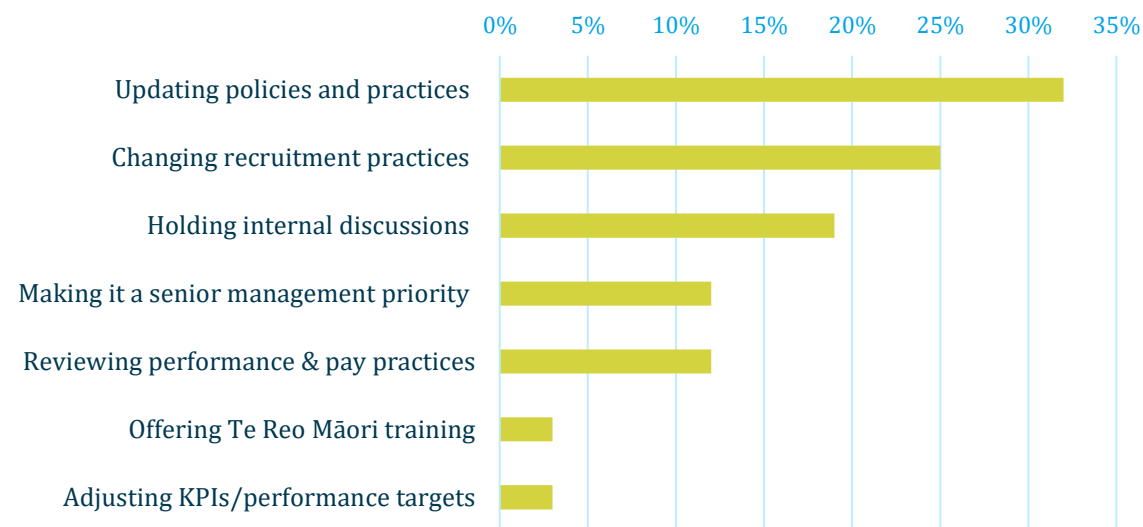
% of GEC workplace lawyers who are female – by PQE



GEC Commitment 1: Implement unconscious bias training for all lawyers and key staff and take action to address identified bias.

- 54% of survey respondents indicated that their workplace had conducted unconscious bias training in the past two years, a significant increase from 29% in the 2018 Baseline but a decline from 64% in 2021.
- When asked why they had not conducted training for all lawyers in the past two years, the most common responses were:
 - It is scheduled or planned for a later date (50%)
 - It is only undertaken for newly joined lawyers (25%)
 - Most staff have already been trained (20%)

% of GEC workplaces indicating other ways they are addressing unconscious bias



GEC Commitment 2: Conduct annual gender pay audits and take action to close any gender pay gap.

- The incidence of gender pay audits in 2023 remains at a similar level as 2021 with 62% of all GEC workplaces and 72% of GEC law firms indicating that they have conducted a pay audit, significantly above the 35% and 39% respectively in the 2018 Baseline.
- 70% of GEC workplaces reported that there was either no gender pay gap in their organisation or the question was not applicable (e.g., they are a sole practitioner). This compares favourably with 2021, when that percentage was 52%.
- In GEC workplaces that reported that a gender pay gap exists, the most frequently adopted actions to address the gap were consideration of gender equality at salary reviews (21%) and undertaking policy/strategy reviews (15%).
- Only 39% of responding GEC workplaces indicated that they found pay equity reviews to be “very” or “quite” straightforward and easy to do. However, 63% found them to be “extremely” or “basically” worthwhile.

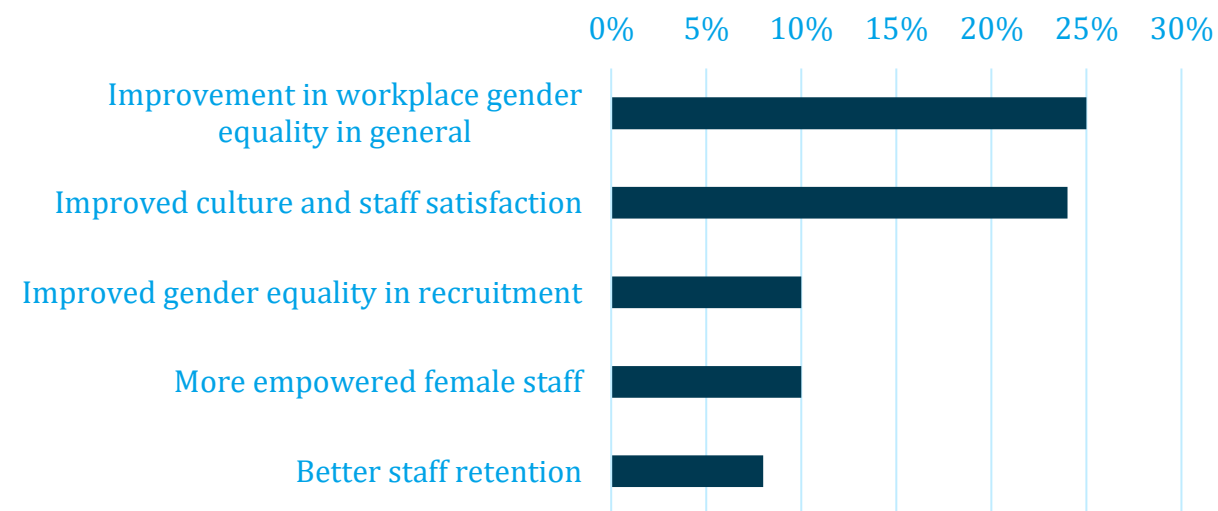
GEC Commitment 3: Offer, encourage and support flexible working to assist all lawyers to balance professional and personal responsibilities.

- Almost all GEC workplaces offer flexible working arrangements to all lawyers - 98% compared to 85% in the 2018 Baseline survey. In terms of the different types of flexible working arrangements:
 - Working remotely is the most common flexible working arrangement, with GEC workplaces reporting that 39% of male lawyers and 29% of female lawyers utilised it.
 - Working a different number of hours was used much more often by female lawyers (30%) than by male lawyers (13%).
 - Working within different timeframes was utilised equally by male and female lawyers (22% and 21% respectively).
 - Taking additional unpaid leave (14%), purchasing additional leave (5%), and job sharing (2%) are flexible working arrangements that were used more sparingly, with little difference in usage rates by male and female lawyers.

GEC Commitment 4: Regularly review areas of practice such as recruitment, retention and promotion with a gender equality and inclusion lens.

- The most common areas cited as undergoing review were recruitment (77%), retention and promotion (73%), and training and development (61%).
- Some GEC workplaces report taking actions as a result of these reviews. For example:
 - 26% have improved their HR practices
 - 18% implemented family-friendly/flexible working policies
 - 17% implemented GE-focused training

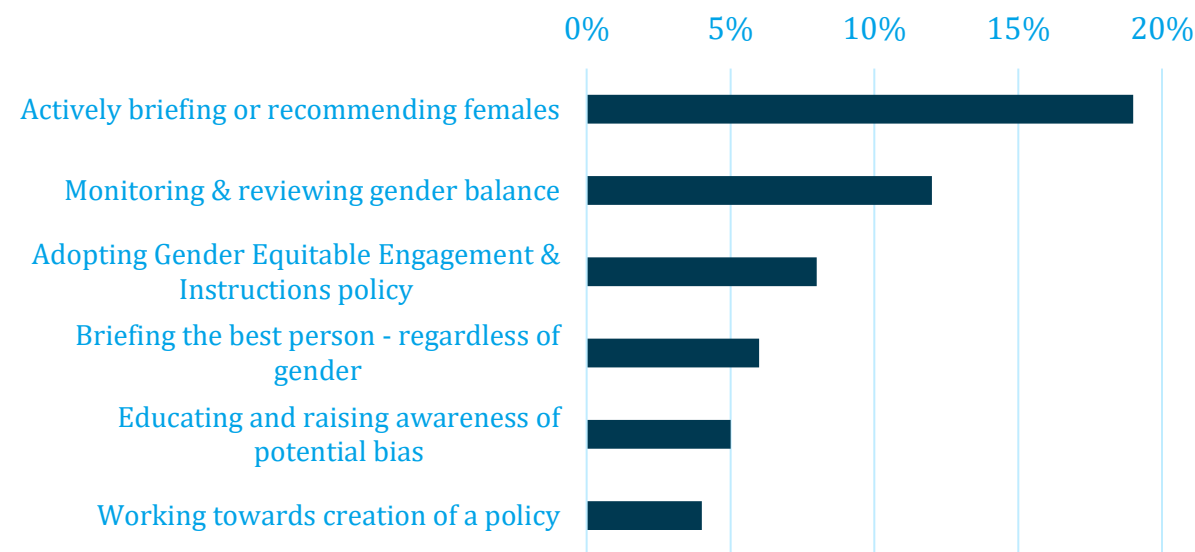
% of GEC workplaces reporting positive impacts from changes due to GE-focused policy reviews



GEC Commitment 5: Adopt equitable briefing and instruction practices

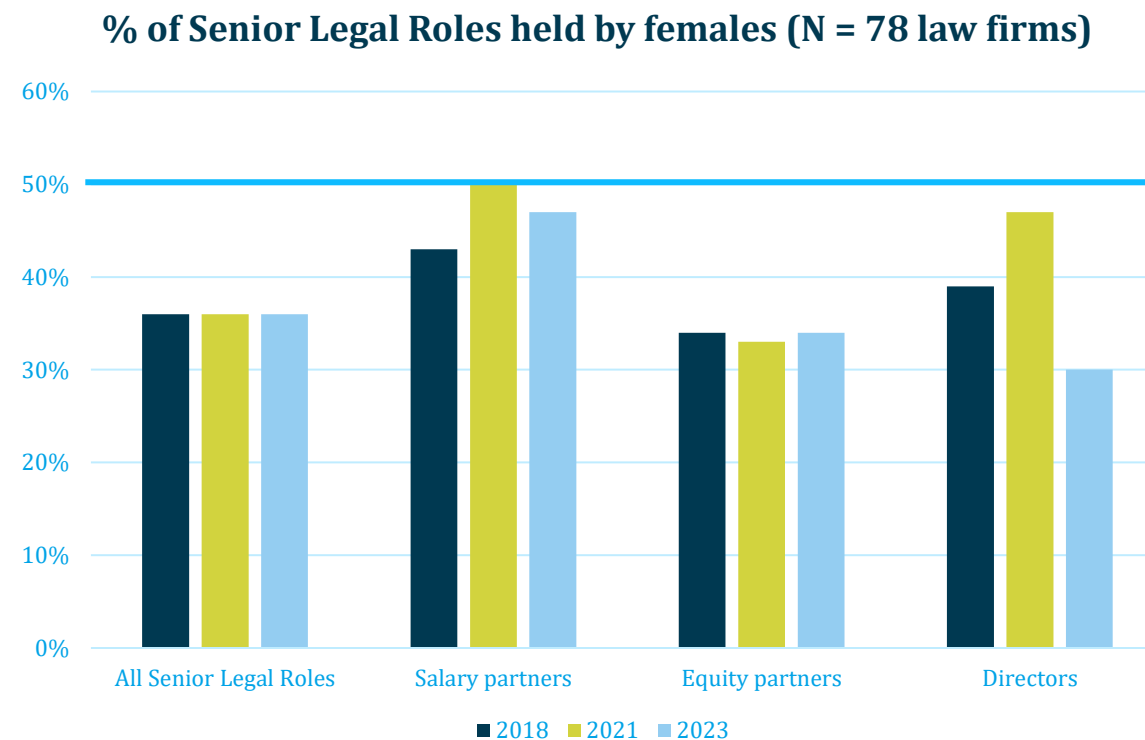
- A new question in 2023 asked GEC workplaces whether they had adopted the optional target of having women lawyers receive at least 50% of external instructions for significant legal matters. Only 21% of GEC workplaces indicated that they had adopted the 50% target, while 49% of respondents indicated that they were unaware whether their organisation had adopted the target. The remaining 30% indicated that they had not adopted the target.
- Among the 15 GEC workplaces that adopted the 50% target, the average percentage achieved was 62%.

% of GEC workplaces indicating use of equitable briefing and instruction practices



GEC Commitment 6: Actively work to increase gender equality and inclusion in senior legal roles

- The 2018 survey of GEC legal workplaces reported 64% of senior legal roles were held by men. This result remains unchanged in 2023 (see breakdown by role in chart).
- One in five GEC workplaces report that they have achieved gender equality (number of females equal to or greater than the number of males) in senior roles, with another 14% indicating that the ratio of females in those roles has increased at their firm.
- In terms of actions being taken to address the gap, some firms report that they are reviewing key policies from a gender equality perspective: promotion (26%), recruitment (11%), and parental leave (10%). All of these are more than twice the percentage of firms reporting similar actions in 2021.



Other Ways to Positively Impact Gender Equality

- Another new question in 2023 asked GEC workplaces to share additional actions and examples that they feel make a positive difference on gender equality. The main activities cited were general support and encouragement (by 34% of respondents), and staff consultation and open discussion (34%).
- Survey respondents were also asked to provide thoughts on what the New Zealand Law Society could do to best improve all aspects of diversity, equality and inclusion in the legal profession. The most common suggestions were:
 - to provide leadership, policy and solutions (31%)
 - training and mentoring opportunities (28%)
 - case studies and best practice examples (19%)