

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS BECOMES FOUNDING SIGNATORY TO THE CHARTER FOR BLACK TALENT IN FINANCE AND THE PROFESSIONS

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Firm news

Herbert Smith Freehills has been announced as one of the founding signatories to a first-of-its-kind initiative, developed to increase representation of Black people in senior positions across legal and other professional services companies in the UK.

Created by barrister Harry Matovu QC, the Charter commits firms to creating and maintaining an environment where Black talent can be identified, developed and promoted for the benefit of individuals and their organisation. It also commits signatories to support the recruitment of Black employees and their development and progression into senior roles by focusing on the entire executive pipeline.

Commenting on Herbert Smith Freehills' commitment to the Charter, Alison Brown, executive partner, says: *"This has been an extraordinary year and one which it has become abundantly clear that action needs to be taken to redress the imbalances that have been allowed to persist in so many business environments. No marketplace can succeed in the long term if it fails to reflect the communities which it serves and the legal sector is no exception. Earlier this year we outlined [ten actions for change](#) to highlight our commitment to create a safe, supportive and respectful environment across the firm and the profession. We are proud to be one of the founding signatories of this Charter and are determined to ensure opportunities to attract and retain talent from Black and minority ethnic groups build an environment where everyone feels valued."*

The Charter outlines eight pledges that signatories to it will adhere to. These include:

- having a member of the senior executive team responsible and accountable for Black representation and inclusion
- creating an environment where Black talent can be identified, nurtured and promoted
- recognising that targets must be measurable and challenging
- requiring external service providers to demonstrate their commitment to promoting Black talent
- demonstrating, within 6 months of signing the Charter, baseline data regarding Black employees
- development of an action plan setting internal targets that achieve a significant increase in recruitment and career progression opportunities
- publication of annual reports to show the steps taken and progress made, and
- ensuring that performance appraisals of the responsible senior executive include an assessment of progress against targets.

Other founding signatories to The Charter for Black Talent in Finance and the Professions are PwC, KPMG, Allen & Overy, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and Barings. The Charter also has the support of the City of London Corporation.

Details of the charter can be found [here](#).

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