

# THE UK IN HOUSE PRO BONO PLEDGE

We recognise the importance and value of legal pro bono work to individuals, employees, our company and most importantly, to wider society. It forms part of the contribution we make as an employer, demonstrating our commitment to be a responsible and caring contributor to society. Our legal team commits to the UK In House Pro Bono Pledge and will fulfil its key undertakings. We hugely look forward to using our skills to improve access to justice for all and to playing our part in making a better world.

## Actions

1. The GC will appoint a Pro Bono Champion(s).
2. The Pro Bono Champion(s) will join the In House Pro Bono Group.
3. The Pro Bono Champion will indicate if they would like to be supported by a designated mentor from the In House Pro Bono Group.
4. The Pro Bono Champion will outline how the pledge statement can apply within the company, particularly providing suggestions about how pro bono will be situated within the wider organisational CSR or ESG strategy.
5. The organisation commits to encourage 25% of the UK-based lawyers to undertake a minimum of one hour of pro bono work in the first year rising to 35% in the second year and 50% in the third year.
6. The legal team will track pro bono work undertaken, on an hourly and project basis.
7. The legal team will ask their key external law firms and chambers to provide details of their pro bono activities and to be clear about their support for pro bono.

The UK In House Pro Bono Pledge is supported by



## ADDITIONAL NOTES

The Pledge is open to the GCs (and in-house legal departments) of all companies, endorsed by the In House Pro Bono Group, the GC100, the National Pro Bono Centre, Advocate, BACFI, LawWorks and TrustLaw with administrative support from the National Pro Bono Centre who will help people sign up and maintain records.

Companies are encouraged to, from the start, track pro bono work being undertaken which ensures you can measure whether the aspirational targets in pledge 5 are being met, and has other collateral benefits like being able to input into the [TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono](#).

Companies which are Pledge signatories can be listed online (if they agree) – via the [IHPBG website](#) and the [NPBC website](#).

Situating pro bono as a way that the legal team can contribute to your organisational CSR or ESG strategy is a fantastic way for the legal team to feel part of the wider aims and strategy of the company. It also enables CSR budget to be released which can be used, for example, to pay for [LawWorks \(the Solicitors' Pro Bono Group\)](#) membership which will support in house lawyers undertaking pro bono and provide training and pro bono opportunities, as well as professional indemnity insurance cover.

In House Counsel can have an influential role in promoting the value and awareness of pro bono throughout the legal community including through their external counsel, which is the reason behind pledge 7.

- By asking external counsel about their commitment to pro bono and their own initiatives, it signals that pro bono is important to their clients, and will hopefully generate further engagement and collaboration.
- As well as asking external law firms about their own pro bono activities, In House Counsel may wish to, for example, seek confirmation from their external counsel as to whether their litigation service providers have sponsored the National Pro Bono Centre through the Commercial Litigators' Forum Directory of Service Providers (where 100% of the donation goes to the NPBC), or whether their external counsel are members of LawWorks or Advocate.).

Recognising the achievements and efforts of your volunteers is important, either through internal mechanisms or through external initiatives such as the Pro Bono Recognition List which will be launched in 2024.

The Pro Bono Guide for In House Teams available on [The Law Society website](#) and the [In House Pro Bono Group](#) website gives additional guidance including:

1. Setting a successful foundation for a pro bono programme
2. Overcoming potential barriers
3. Scoping a pro bono programme
4. Building a pro bono infrastructure
5. Delivering pro bono legal advice

In house barristers are encouraged to sign up to the [Advocate panel](#) as individuals. This means they will then be insured to do pro bono via the BMIF and will receive a roundup of cases relevant to their expertise.