

Allen & Overy introduce measures to retain female workers

The international law firm have introduced formal arrangements for full equity partners to work part-time.

The aim of these arrangements is to retain more of their female employees through partnerships. Currently, Allen & Overy's flexible working policies offers career breaks for associates, part-time working, job sharing, home working, term-time working, increased paternity leave and emergency childcare. These practices helped the law firm achieve first place in the FT Innovative Lawyer Awards in 2006 for the way they support working parents, and it was commended in the same category again in 2008.

The newly introduced partnerships will be available to partners from either sex across the globe, and gives them the opportunity to adjust the amount of time they work.

Under these new arrangements, partners can work a minimum week of four days and will be entitled to a maximum 52 days extra leave annually. Furthermore, remuneration will be paid pro rata in relation to the amount of time worked. The exact structure of these arrangements will be agreed to suit each individual partner's needs whilst accommodating client commitments.

David Morley, Senior Partner, comments: "The introduction of part-time equity partnership provides greater career flexibility and removes some of the existing obstacles to promotion faced in particular by women.

"It's no longer realistic to provide just one option and say 'take it or leave it'. If you are going to make any real change you have to address the options available to people at all stages of their career

from associate through to equity partner to help balance their professional and personal aspirations. We don't pretend this is a cure-all but it's a serious attempt to take positive steps and to send a strong signal of our intent to retain talent in our business.”

For the past 18 months Allen & Overy have been in consultation with its partnership to develop these flexible working arrangements. It has been introduced to improve staff retention and grow the partnership pool.