

Sidley Austin elevates City associate to oversee diversity efforts

By Ana De Liz | 29 January 2020

Sidley Austin has picked one of its senior associates in London to be the office's first diversity and inclusion consultant.

Alice Morgan has been with the firm since being a trainee, and in 2009 set out as an associate in the corporate reorganisation and insolvency group. As of this month, she became the firm's first diversity and inclusion consultant in the City.

She had been in a similar consultant role since June of last year at the Reignite Academy, and will be working in collaboration with the firm to "foster a more inclusive and diverse legal industry in the City".

Reignite is an initiative founded by Lisa Unwin, Melinda Wallman and Stephanie Dillon in 2018 that aims to put lawyers who have taken a career break back on the City partnership track. Sidley was one of the initial six firms which signed up for the initiative, offering six-month paid internships to lawyers who had taken a career break, with a view to giving them full-time employment at the end.

Besides various initiatives, Sidley Austin has a diversity and inclusion committee, spearheaded by four US partners and a chief diversity officer, Sally Olson, from the firm's Chicago office, as well as a committee on retention and promotion of women, led by women partners from most of its US offices, as well as London and Hong Kong.

"The addition of Alice Morgan to Sidley's diversity and inclusion team reflects our ongoing effort to build on the strength and breadth of Sidley's international diversity and inclusion initiative," said Olson.

"Among her priorities will be to raise awareness of existing diversity offerings, develop new programs and liaise with Sidley clients to share best practices on fostering a culture of inclusion," she added.

Data from The Lawyer US Top 50 report from 2019 shows that women make up 21.6 per cent of all the UK-based partners in the 50 firms. At Sidley's London office, 9 out of the total 46, or 18 per cent, of the partnership are women.