‘50/50 by 2030’

A Longitudinal Study into Gender Disparity in Law:

England and Wales

Initial Findings

November 2021

LexisNexis®
RULE OF LAW FOUNDATION

The project

‘50:50 by 2030’ - a longitudinal study into gender disparity in law.

Aim: to identify the statistical disparity between men and women at senior levels in the legal profession and to identify whether diversity initiatives introduced to address this disparity are having any meaningful impact.

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The survey

A pilot was launched and undertaken in England and Wales throughout 2021.

The IBA has received responses across the four sectors of the legal profession (private practice, in-house legal teams, the public sector and the judiciary).

- 50 law firms
- 11 barristers' chambers
- 16 FTSE 100 companies
- Public sector: HM Revenue & Customs, Serious Fraud Office, Government Legal Department and Crown Prosecution Service
- The Judicial Office

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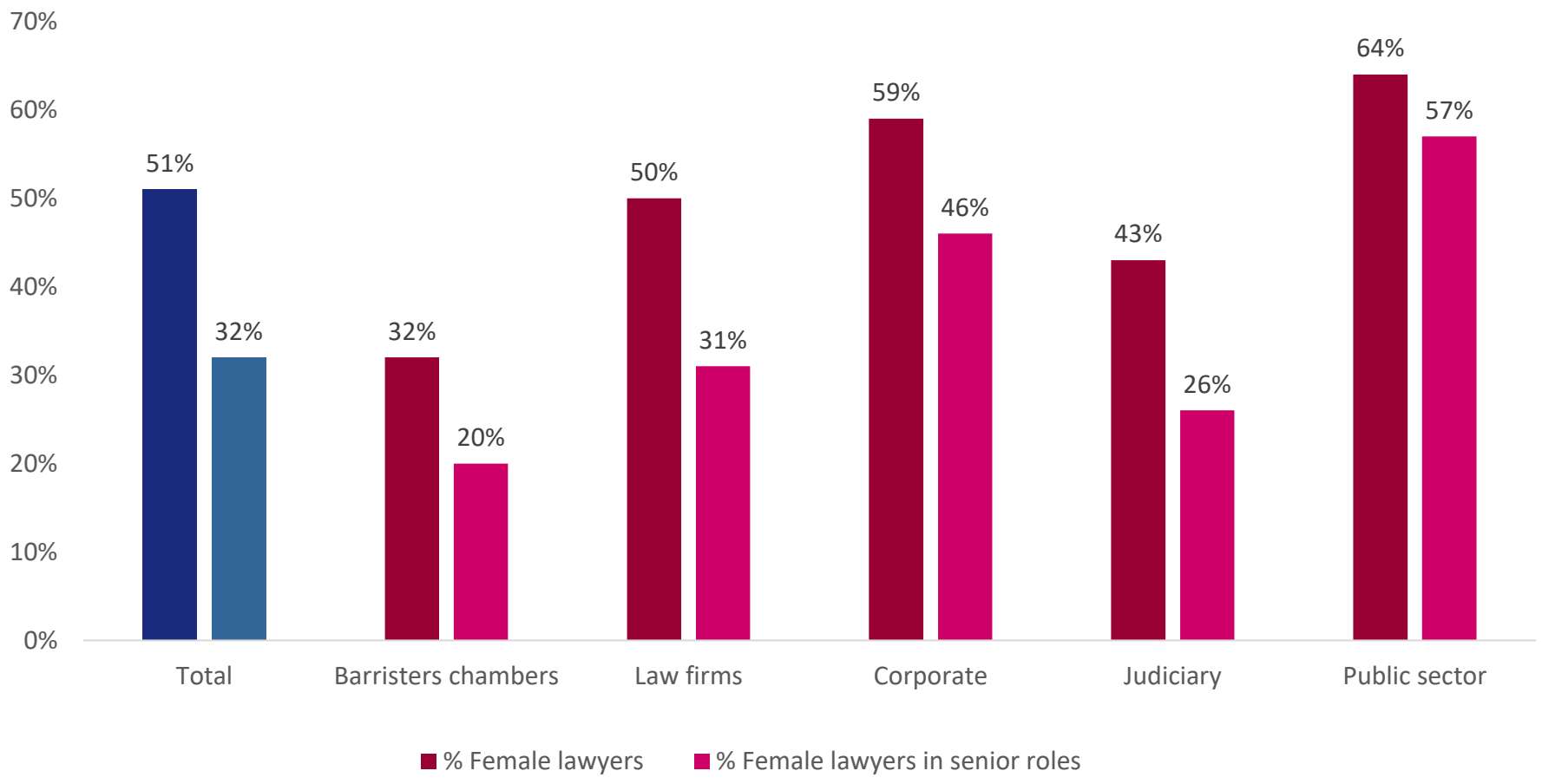
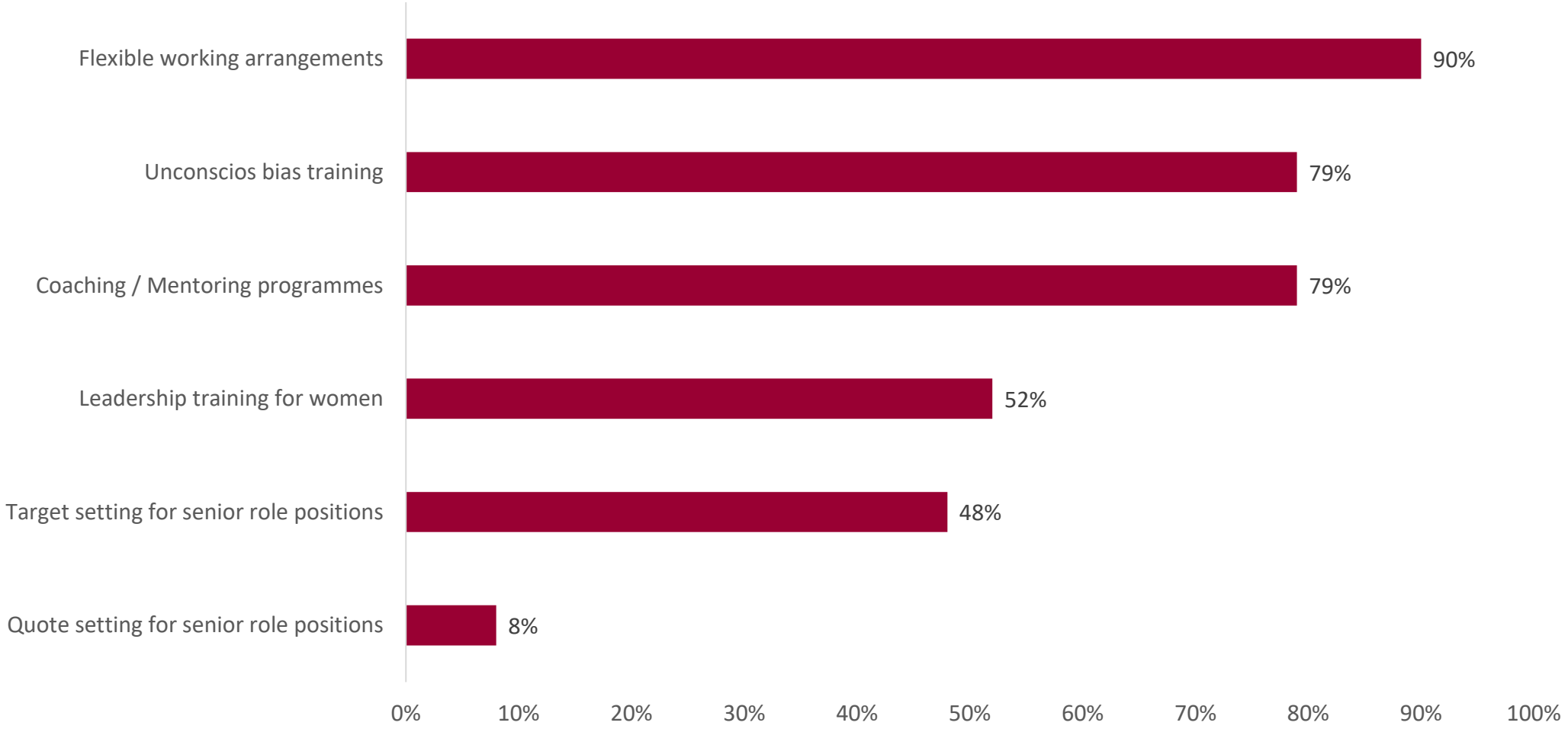
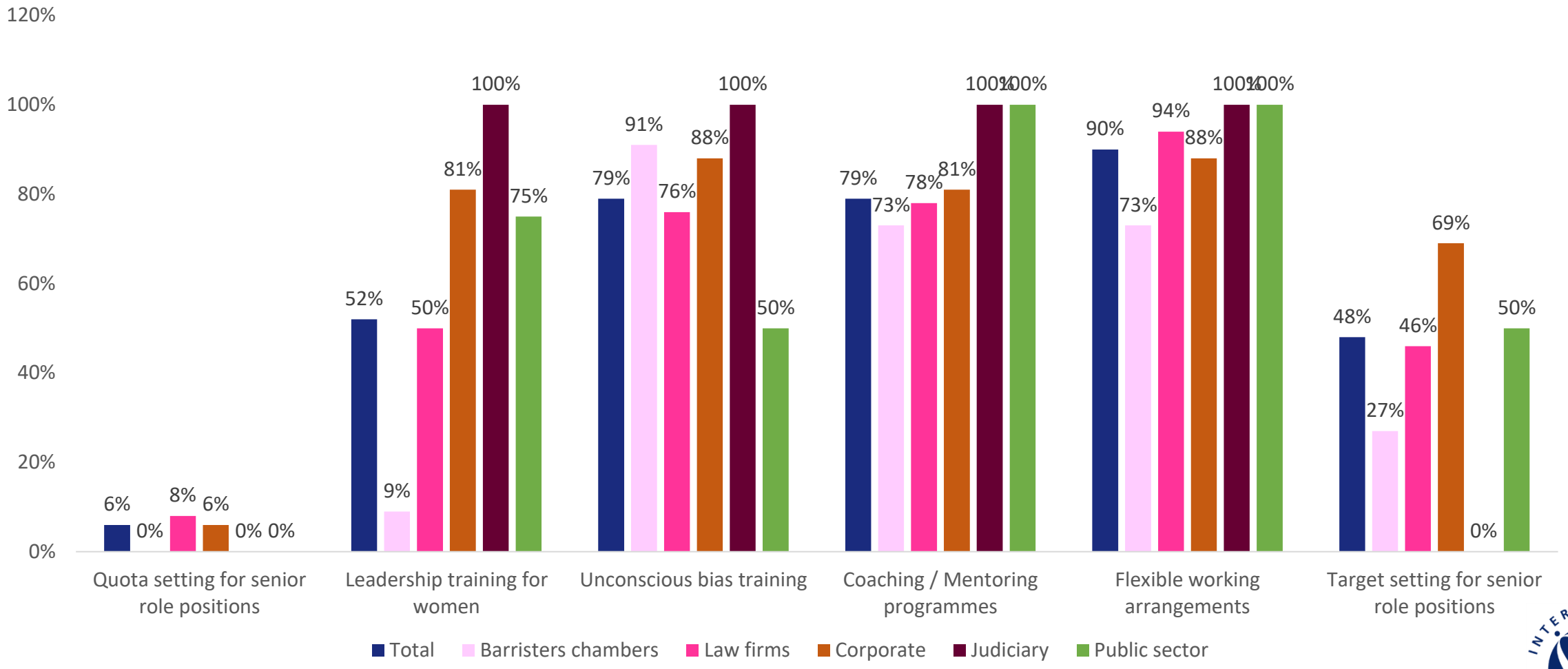
% of female lawyers by sector and seniority



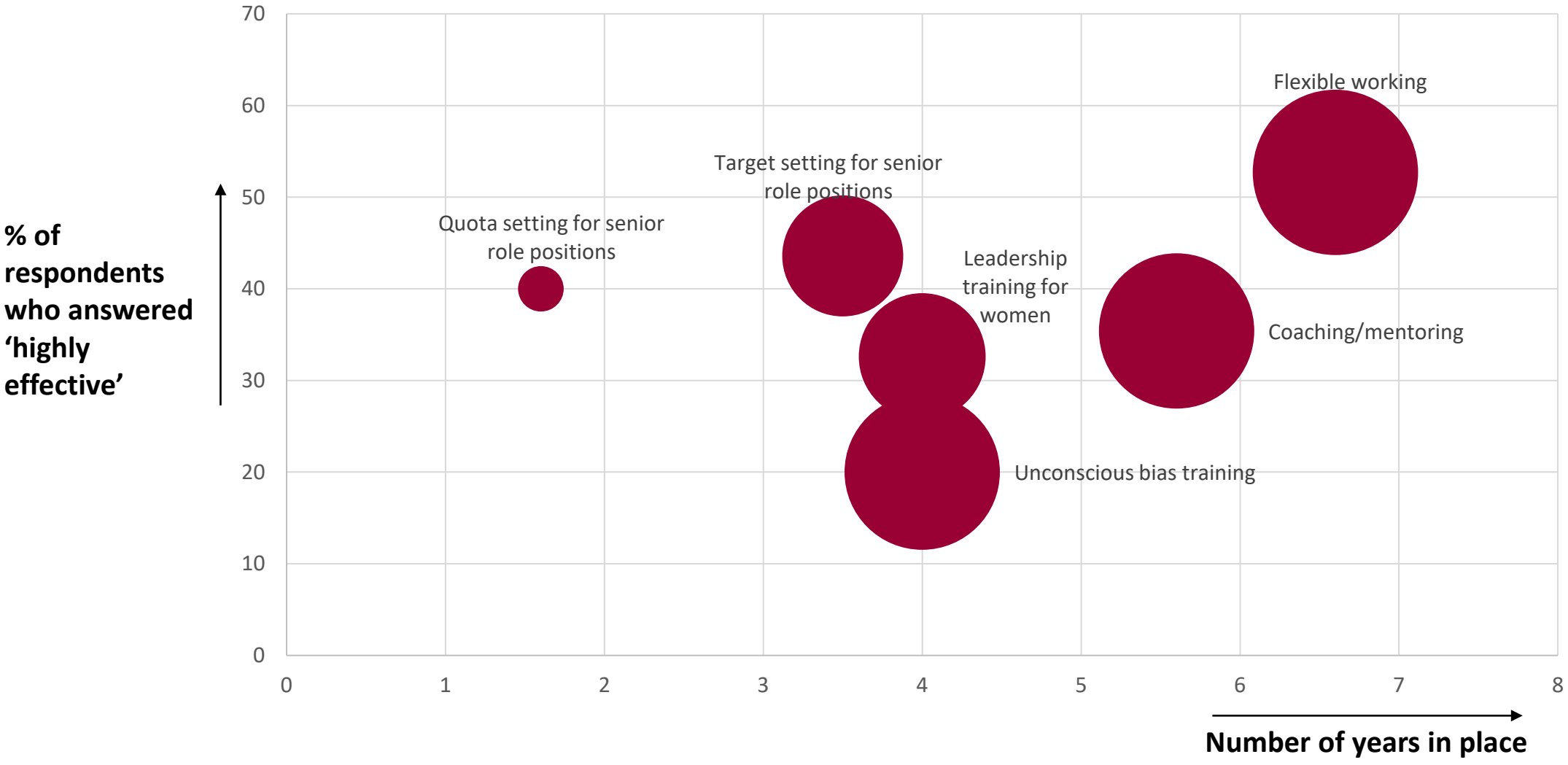
Popularity of initiatives to improve gender representation



Popularity of initiatives by sector

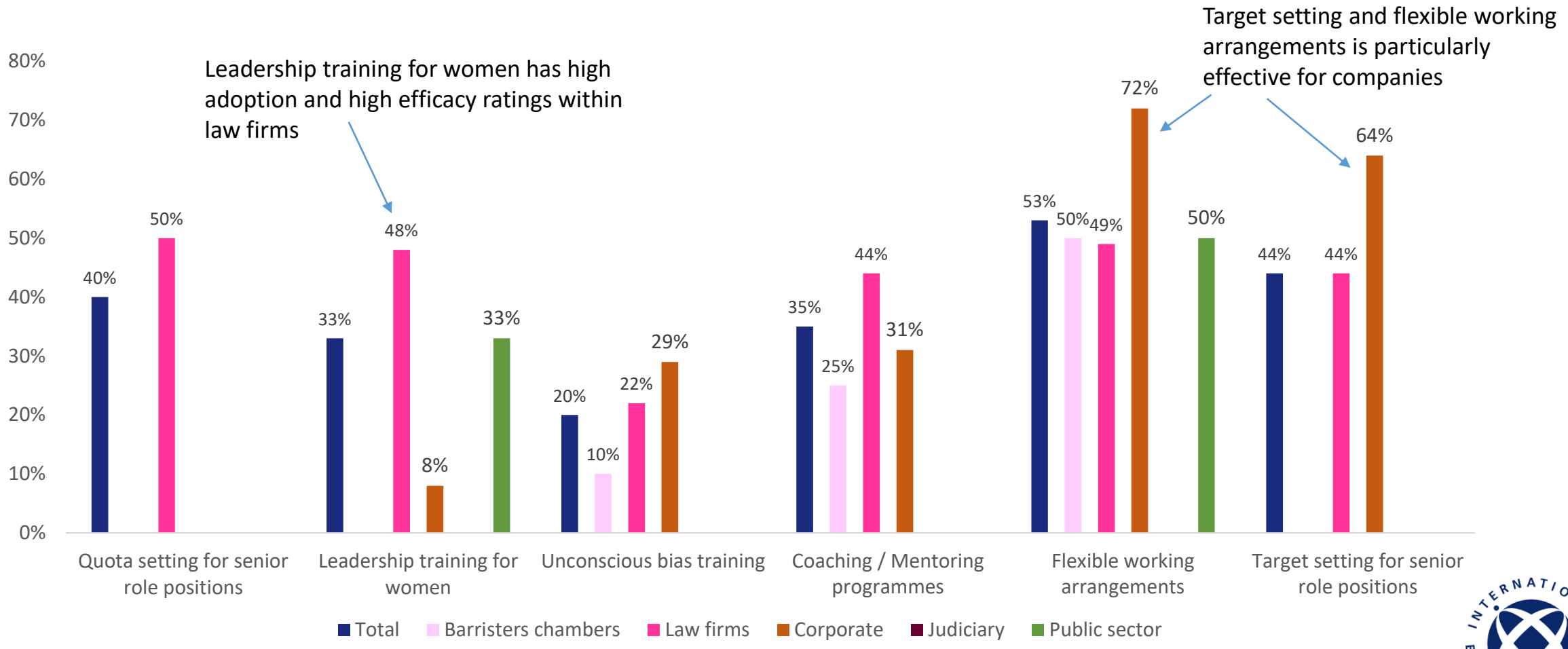


How effective do workplaces think these initiatives are?



**Size of bubble = number of workplaces with this initiative. In the previous slide, you will see quota setting for senior role positions is the least common initiative. Hence, the small bubble.*

Initiatives percieved to be “very effective”



Key findings: Barristers chambers

- The Chambers with the best representation of women in senior positions are the only ones that mentioned maternity/paternity mentor initiatives.
- The Chambers with the lowest number of initiatives have the lowest overall representation of women, and the third lowest representation of women in senior positions.
- The two Chambers with the lowest percentage of women in senior positions regard their initiatives to be highly effective.
- There are often different flexible working arrangements for barristers and staff.
- The most common initiatives are **unconscious bias training**, **flexible working arrangements** and **coaching and mentoring programmes**.

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Key findings: Law firms

- Only 18% of law firm respondents have half or more of their senior positions filled by females.
- Law firms have the largest percentage gap between female lawyers overall and female lawyers at a senior level (19%).
- A vast majority of all part time lawyers are female (83%). This percentage ratio reduces very slightly at a senior level (80%).
- The most common initiatives are **flexible working arrangements**, **coaching and mentoring programmes** and **unconscious bias training**.

Key findings: Corporate

- For 12/16 FTSE 100 respondents, more than 50% of all lawyers in the organisation are female but only 5/16 respondents have more than 50% female lawyers at a senior level.
- The impact of initiatives are positively perceived, and initiatives are classed as “very effective” more frequently than other sectors of the legal profession.
- Companies that are performing very well at both overall % and senior % percieve their flexible working arrangements to be “very effective”.
- Three of the companies operate reverse mentoring, designed to improve diversity and inclusivity of the office.

Key findings: Public sector

- The public sector has particularly good overall gender balance:
  - 64% of lawyers in the public sector are women
  - 57% of senior lawyers in the public sector are women
- All public sector workplaces have coaching and mentoring programmes available, but to specific employees and on a semi-informal basis.
- Some public sector workplaces have withdrawn formal mentoring programmes due to their past success and are now focused on BAME and disabled colleagues.
- One workplace sets gender targets based on the overall ratios of the national population.

Key findings: The Judiciary

- The focus is predominately on coaching/mentoring.
  - Offers ongoing work shadowing and mentoring programmes
  - Programme is aimed at those groups who are currently underrepresented in the judiciary
  - Has a 'cadre' of 122 diversity judges who actively encourage women and other under-represented groups to consider a judicial career
- Runs a series of seminars: '**Women in the Judiciary: Making it Happen**', where female lawyers of all backgrounds are invited to meet senior female judges and members of the Judicial Appointments Commission.

Appendix A: Responses

Organisation	Population	No.	%
Barrister's chambers	21	11	52%
Law firms	200	50	25%
Corporate	104	16	15%
Public sector*	5	5	100%

**CPS, SFO, GDL, HMRC and the Judicial Office.*

Appendix B: Breakdown of data

	Barrister's chambers	Law firm	Corporate	Judiciary	Public sector	Total
Total number of lawyers/judges	1,148	25,677	2,491	8,281	5,281	42,878
Total number of female lawyers/judges	363	12,921	1,475	3,591	3,397	21,747
% Female lawyers	**32%**	**50%**	**59%**	**43%**	**64%**	**51%**
Senior level lawyers/judges	384	6,840	512	143	305	8,184
Senior level female lawyers/judges	77	2,121	235	37	174	2,644
% Female lawyers in senior roles	**20%**	**31%**	**46%**	**26%**	**57%**	**32%**
No. of responses	11	50	16	1	4	82

Thank you very much for having participated.

For further information:

- IBA home page: https://www.ibanet.org/
- Legal Project and Research Unit: https://www.ibanet.org/LPRU/Home.aspx

  Sara Carnegie – Legal Director; Beatriz Martinez – Project Lawyer
- IBA Diversity & Inclusion Council: https://www.ibanet.org/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Council