

# Modern Lawyer

Ideas for Legal Leaders

Editor: Alex Davies

April 2026 [www.globelawandbusiness.com](http://www.globelawandbusiness.com)



Featured in this issue

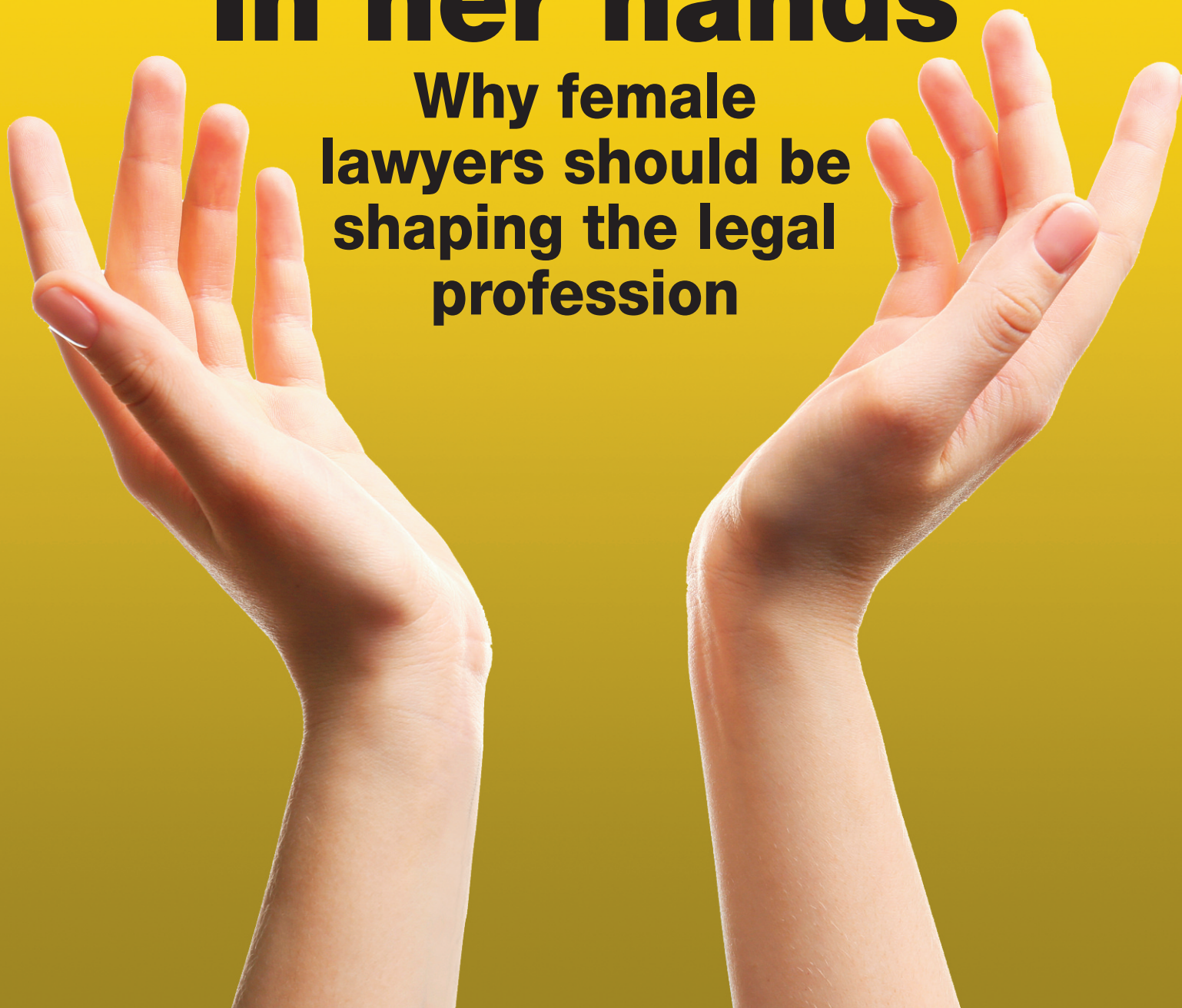
Why is investor bias holding back female lawtech founders?

Reimagining the future of law

Survival Codes – the law as a guiding philosophy of life

## In her hands

Why female lawyers should be shaping the legal profession





What does progress really look like for women in law? A century after women first entered the profession in England and Wales, their growing presence in legal practice is undeniable (and indeed above parity). Yet as law is reshaped by technology, data and new models of leadership, representation alone is no guarantee of influence. The more pressing question may be not whether women are in the profession, but whether they are helping to define its future.

In this issue, we hear from two legal leaders interested in this question. Dana Denis-Smith, deputy vice president of the Law Society of England and Wales, looks at how the profession has changed since women were first permitted to enter, just over a hundred years ago. Whilst the make-up of the legal workforce now skews female, historical biases remain, and this data is now being used to train AI systems that will affect how the profession continues to be measured and rewarded.

Meanwhile, Professor Mimi Zou, a global leader in the field of law and emerging technologies and a member of the LawTechUK panel, looks at the representation of women in lawtech – arguably the people creating the algorithms from the data – and finds it lacking. Whilst women are wellrepresented in legal practice, they’re rarely found in the places where technology, capital, and innovation meet. In fact, women make up only around one-fifth of tech teams, and one in three are planning to leave their roles because of limited career progression, inadequate workplace flexibility, and an unsupportive culture.

Professor Zou argues that “As AI becomes embedded in all aspects of legal work, the absence of women in its development and governance risks encoding bias into the future of legal practice”. She believes there is hope – especially in the UK, with its strong academic base and public-private initiatives such as LawtechUK leading the way in this space.

Denis-Smith agrees, championing the ‘Next 100 Years’ Project, which is working towards ‘accelerating the pace of change in the legal profession... and supporting woman lawyers’.

She believes that the skills required for a twenty-first century legal workforce demand greater investment in human judgment – “bringing together practitioners, legal educators, technologists and policymakers that the profession has so far struggled to sustain at scale”. In other words, give women in the profession a voice and enable them to shape a profession that suits the majority of the people in it.

One small way we at Globe Law and Business are helping do this is by championing our female authors. In this issue, we also hear from two recently-published Globe authors – Dr Catherine McGregor and Iryna Nikitina – as they discuss the skills needed for lawyers to thrive in the technology age, and how to better make the decisions that matter.

The contributions in this issue remind us that the next chapter of progress will not be measured simply by numbers, but by participation, visibility and voice. If the future of law is being built now, then it must be shaped by the full diversity of those it serves. By amplifying the perspectives of women leaders, we hope to play a small part in ensuring that the profession of tomorrow is not only more modern, but more inclusive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Davies". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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Alex Davies at  
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**Citation**

This journal should be cited as  
MLP Vol 10 [2026]

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**Annual subscription**

Digital £375/\$595/€485

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*Modern Lawyer* is published by

Globe Law and Business Ltd

3 Mylor Close, Horsell, Woking

Surrey GU21 4DD

Tel: +44 20 3745 4770

The idea for this journal arose from the 'Business of Law' series of books, which is co-published with the International Bar Association. The journal is complementary to the book series, and the publishers gratefully acknowledge the support of the IBA.

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ISSN 2634-548X



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