Overview
(July 31, 2018, Washington, DC) — Steptoe has been named to Working Mother magazine’s 2018 list of the “Best Law Firms for Women.” Now in its 11th year, the annual list recognizes US law firms that create and use best practices in retaining and promoting women lawyers.

The full list highlights law firms where on average almost half of associates and more than a third of partners are women, while one-fifth of equity partners are women. The recognized firms also offer extended parental-leave benefits and encourage more lawyers to work remotely and use flexible hours. The 2018 Working Mother Best Law Firms for Women application included more than 300 questions about attorney representation, schedule flexibility, paid time off and parental leaves, and development and retention of women.

“The law firms that make Working Mother’s list are remarkable for their long-term commitment to retaining and promoting women lawyers,” said Meredith Bodgas, editor-in-chief of Working Mother, which for the second year, collaborated with the ABA Journal as a knowledge partner for the list “One hundred percent of these firms provide flexible work arrangements and 57 percent of them offer sponsorship programs for high-potential women lawyers. That’s resulted in a jump in the number of women equity partners to 21 percent.”

Steptoe counts a number of women lawyers among its ranks, including in leadership. The firm’s vice chair is a woman, a number of the firm’s practice departments and management teams are headed by women, the firm’s compensation committee has equal numbers of men and women, and women comprised 75 percent of the most recent partner class and 50 and 80 percent of the two prior classes.

“We are delighted to be recognized by Working Mother as a Best Law Firm for Women,” said Phil West, chair of Steptoe. “Along with the many women lawyers who serve in leadership positions at the firm, including my vice-chair, Gwen Renigar, we have made a number of benefit changes over the past year which we hope collectively will help provide a better balance between family and work obligations, and assist the firm in continuing to attract and retain high quality talent to support our clients.”

Steptoe was among the first law firms to implement a partnership with Milk Stork, a program designed for working mothers who breastfeed and travel for business. The program provides a convenient and secure option for women lawyers who are breastfeeding so that they can ship or tote their breastmilk home to their child while on business travel for the firm. Milk Stork allows those women to make the decision on ship or carry methods, how large of a package is needed, and comes with easy to use pre-labeled and post-paid package.

In addition to the Milk Stork program, the below benefits took effect for Steptoe lawyers on January 1:
• 10 weeks of paid parental leave available to all new parents.
• Parental leave is in addition to the eight weeks of paid medical leave available to the parent giving birth and to the primary caregiver after adoption or after a new baby first joins the family.
• To help full-time attorneys transition back to work after parental leave, the billable hour requirement for the attorney returning from parental leave has been reduced to 80% for the first 12 weeks after the full-time attorney returns to the office, without a reduction in salary. Attorneys may opt-out of this reduction in billable budget if desired. In addition, Steptoe implemented an enhanced Lawyer Phase Back Program and a Customized Work Policy to assist attorneys in reintegrating when they return from parental leave or other extended absences.

Several new family care benefits also took effect at the beginning of the year via the Bright Horizons program. They include high quality back-up child and adult/elder care, including access to regular caregivers; access to a free, self-serve and self-pay comprehensive database of nannies, babysitters, pet sitters, dog walkers; and tutoring and test prep services for school age children grades K-12.

Firms that appear on this year’s Best Law Firms for Women list will be honored at the annual Working Mother gala awards luncheon on October 26 in Chicago.

About Steptoe

In more than 100 years of practice, Steptoe has earned an international reputation for vigorous representation of clients before governmental agencies, successful advocacy in litigation and arbitration, and creative and practical advice in structuring business transactions. Steptoe has more than 500 lawyers and other professional staff across offices in Beijing, Brussels, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, San Francisco, and Washington. For more information, visit www.steptoe.com.

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