

Equality & Diversity Policy

1. General Statement

- 1.1. Chambers is committed to good equal opportunities practice and operates an equal opportunities policy in all areas including recruitment and selection of pupils, tenants, Practice Managers and other staff. No applicant for any role or position within Chambers will be discriminated against on the basis of his/her race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or political persuasion. Chambers also operates a policy of fair access to work for all tenants and pupils. Chambers will review its policy and the means by which it is implemented at regular intervals and welcomes constructive criticism.
- 1.2. Chambers will not tolerate sexual, racial or other harassment and has a written complaints procedure for dealing with such allegations.
- 1.3. Chambers recognises that equality of opportunity is fair, commercially advantageous, necessary for compliance with non-discrimination law and constitutionally important. Further, all barristers are obliged to comply with paragraphs C110 – 112 of their Code of Conduct in this respect.
- 1.4. All barristers, pupils, Practice Managers and other staff need to recognise their own prejudices and to be aware of the assumptions they make when evaluating others. They must learn how to ensure that prejudices and assumptions do not influence their treatment of others in the work place. Chambers encourages, and where appropriate requires, diversity training to be undertaken.

2. Operation of Policy

- 2.1. Chambers' Equality and Diversity Officer is David Fisher who is responsible for the implementation of Chambers' Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 2.2. Pupils
 - 2.2.1. Chambers has a pupillage policy document covering the basis on which pupils are recruited and selected. This document provides for agreed written selection criteria for both selection of interviewees from amongst the total number of applicants and the selection of pupils from amongst the interviewees, of interviews, conduct of pupillage, distribution of work amongst pupils and selection of junior tenants.
 - 2.2.2. All applicants for pupillage, interviewees, offerees and pupils are monitored by sex and ethnic origin. The secretary of the pupillage committee is responsible for analysing each stage of the process and ensuring that each group is appropriately represented at each stage of the selection process. If the analysis discloses any significant differences between the total number of applicants, interviewees and offerees, the secretary of the pupillage committee will raise the matter with the Head of Chambers and the chairman of the pupillage committee who will consider whether there has in fact been any discrimination, whether direct or indirect, and will take all steps necessary to redress the position and ensure that the procedures are altered so as to prevent any future recurrence.
 - 2.2.3. All monitoring forms and other documents will be retained for a period of 3 years.
- 2.3. Race relations
 - 2.3.1. If it is apparent that there is under-representation of a particular group Chambers will consider the use of positive action pursuant to the Equality Acts to increase the rate of applications from the under-represented group or groups.

2.3.2. All monitoring forms and other documents will be retained for a period of 3 years.

2.4. Tenants

2.4.1. Chambers has a tenant recruitment policy covering the means by and the basis on which tenants are recruited and selected. Where recruitment is at large, this document provides for agreed written selection criteria for both selection of interviewees from amongst the total number of applicants, conduct of interviews and the selection of tenants from amongst the interviewees.

2.4.2. All applicants for tenancy, interviewees, offerees and pupils are monitored by sex and ethnic origin. A tenancy secretary will be appointed and will be responsible for, inter alia, analysing each stage of the process and ensuring that each group is appropriately represented at each stage of the selection process. If the analysis discloses any significant differences between the total number of applicants, interviews and offerees, the tenancy secretary will raise the matter with the Head of Chambers and the chairman of the tenancy committee who will consider whether there has in fact been any discrimination, whether direct or indirect, and will take all steps necessary to redress the position and ensure that the procedures are altered so as to prevent any future recurrence.

2.5. Recruitment of Practice Managers and Other Staff

2.5.1. The above provisions concerning the recruitment of pupils and tenants apply mutatis mutandis to the recruitment of Practice Managers and other staff. In particular, vacancies for Practice Managers will always be advertised on the Chambers website and through the Institute of Barristers Clerks.

2.6. Fair Access to Work

2.6.1. The Head of Clerking is responsible for monitoring the distribution of work within Chambers. This is overseen by the Equality and Diversity Officer. A separate document has been produced setting out the means by which the monitoring is carried out.

2.6.2. All Practice Managers are instructed that they may not accept instructions from a solicitor or other instructing agent which involve discrimination against any barrister or working pupil on the grounds of colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion, political persuasion, sex, sexual orientation or marital status. Chambers has a separate training guidance Annex A which identifies potential indirectly discriminatory selection requirements which all Practice Managers are required to read.

2.6.3. Practice Managers are instructed that should they receive any discriminatory instructions or if they become aware of a discriminatory practice they must immediately report the matter to the Head of Chambers who is required to report it forthwith to the relevant Bar Council committee chairman.

2.7. Complaints and Grievances

2.7.1. Chambers has a separate written grievance procedure and a harassment policy covering grievances of all kinds including discrimination and sexual or other harassment.

2.8. Maternity/Paternity Leave Policy

2.8.1. A woman tenant's tenancy and a female employee's job will remain open for up to one year while she takes maternity leave.

2.8.2. Up to 6 month's maternity/paternity leave will be free of Chambers expenses and rent. For the absence, of doubt this applies only when a tenant is absent from Chambers. Chambers has a separate written policy on parental leave.

2.8.3. Pregnant female employees will be informed of their statutory maternity rights.

2.8.4. A male employee is entitled to up to two weeks paid paternity leave.

2.9. Prolonged Illness

2.9.1. In the case of prolonged illness which prevents a barrister from working, Chambers will waive up to 3 months of their Chambers expenses and rent.

2.10. Reasonable Adjustment Policy

2.10.1. Chambers has a separate written policy covering this topic.

2.11. Flexible Working

2.11.1. Chambers has a separate written policy on flexible working.

Annexes:

Diversity awareness training handout

January 2016