

Equality and Diversity Policy

We are committed to equality and diversity and make every effort to comply with the Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar. In accordance with the Code, our equality and diversity policy is published below.

Preamble

Chambers has always practised and believed that it has practised equality of opportunity. Applications for tenancies and pupillage are considered only on the basis of the applicant's abilities and potential as a barrister and a contributor to chambers. Chambers has formally adopted the following Statement of Intent to:

ensure that our intent is put into practice;

enable chambers to monitor the efficacy of its practices;

enable chambers to provide statistics to outside bodies such as the Bar Council; and

enable chambers to inform applicants, staff, members of chambers and pupils of our policy.

Statement of Intent

1. Chambers shall endeavour to ensure that it complies with this policy in its collective decisions and actions and the behaviour of individual members of chambers and the clerks and other persons working on behalf of chambers.

2. In particular it will seek to ensure that :

(a) no applicant for a pupillage, tenancy or a job in chambers or for chambers nor any pupil, tenant, clerk or other employee receives less favourable treatment than another by reason of her or his sex, race, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, language, religion, political opinion, social origin, age, disability or infirmity;

(b) no applicant, pupil, tenant or employee is placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately adverse effect on persons of her or his sex, race, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, language, religion, political opinion, social origin, age or degree or type of disability or infirmity;

(c) where appropriate and permissible under existing legislation, employees of under-represented racial or gender groups are given training and encouragement to achieve equality of opportunity within the organisation.

3. Responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this policy shall be placed with chambers' Equality Officer, who shall be a member of the management committee, and that information be made public.

4. Copies of this policy shall be given to each pupil, tenant and employee and shall be displayed in the clerk's room and on chambers' website. It shall also be made available to prospective applicants for pupillage, tenancy or any staff position.

5. The Equality Officer shall ensure that those who have most involvement with the implementation of this policy (i.e. the staff, the management committee, the pupillage and recruitment committee and those dealing with tenancy applications) understand the policy and their responsibilities under existing legislation and codes

of conduct and guidance issued by the Bar Council or Inns of Court.

6. The Equality Officer shall ensure that consideration is given by the management committee and chambers to the need for any amendments to this policy and the practices of chambers at least once each year.

7. An analysis of the ethnic origin, gender, age, marital status and level of disability of current pupils, tenants and staff shall be made and then maintained to enable monitoring of the implementation of the policy. Records of the ethnic origin, gender, age, marital status and level of disability of applicants shall also be maintained for the same reason.

8. (a) Advertisements inviting application to chambers shall not be confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants from a particular racial or gender group.

(b) Vacancies for tenancies, pupillage or employment shall be advertised in accordance with Rules made in accordance with the Constitution.

9. Any literature sent to applicants and, wherever practical, any advertisements shall contain a statement that chambers is committed to equality and diversity and complies with the Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar.

10. When recruiting through employment agencies, job centres, careers offices and schools, universities or colleges, they shall be referred to this policy on chambers' website. No instructions shall be given to them to discriminate (e.g. by indication of any preference for a particular racial group) nor should pressure be brought upon them to discriminate against members of a particular gender or racial group and they shall be actively discouraged from so doing.

11. Opportunities for training or promotion should be made known to all eligible employees, pupils or tenants.

12. Selection criteria, post or role descriptions and person specifications:

(a) shall be decided before the post or role is advertised and notified to all candidates;

(b) shall not require previous periods of residence in the UK;

(c) shall not set standards of English higher than necessary for the relevant post or role;

(d) shall respect foreign qualifications and not assume them to be inferior to comparable UK qualifications;

(e) shall be objective and relate to the post's or role's requirements;

(e) shall not penalise career breaks caused by child care arrangements; and

(f) shall not exclude candidates who have children or who may have children within the foreseeable future.

13. Those responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates should be clearly informed of this policy, the relevant provisions of the Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar, the selection criteria, the post or role description and the person specification.

14. Save in the case of tenancy applications that are fast-tracked in accordance with the rules for the recruitment of tenants, consideration will be given only to applications that are made on a chambers' application form in order that the assessment of candidates may be made on a clearly defined comparative basis by reference to the qualities that are relevant to the selection criteria.

15. Selection panels shall, so far as possible, include persons of different age, gender and social, racial and cultural background.

16. All interviewers shall ensure that candidates are treated equally in the questions that they are asked, the

tasks that they are required to perform and the way that their performance in the interview is assessed. The purpose of the interview shall be to assess aptitude for the task required of the post holder.

17. Records of interviews and applications shall be kept for two years.

18. Assessments of pupils or staff in post shall be carried out in a systematic manner to assess aptitude against established criteria and shall be clearly marked by the assessor. The criteria should be known to the person under assessment.

19. Grievance procedures shall make provision for complaints of discrimination to be dealt with without the complainant being adversely treated for making the complaint.

20. Disciplinary procedures and decisions to dismiss persons from chambers shall be taken in such a manner that they comply with paragraph 2 (a) and (b).

21. Clerks or anyone else responsible for dealing with casual or formal applicants shall be reminded of the need to treat them with equal courtesy and consideration irrespective of their sex, race, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, language, religion, political opinion, social origin, age, disability or infirmity.

22. Chambers shall implement, maintain and monitor procedures for ensuring that work is allocated fairly to members of chambers and pupils and that all members of chambers and pupils are given a fair opportunity for marketing and practice development.

23. Chambers shall implement, maintain and monitor a fair policy for leave of absence, the facilitation of return to work after leave of absence and the promotion of flexible working practices.