

Landmark Chambers – Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

This policy has been developed in response to the broad range of legislation covering equality and diversity issues in the workplace and the duties that are placed upon employers.

“Diversity” refers to the fact that individuals are different. “Equality” refers to equality between individuals (Equality Act 2010).

This policy also takes account of best practice guidelines and codes including those of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (formerly the Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Rights Commission, and Equal Opportunities Commission), ACAS and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and the Bar Council’s Guidelines on the Equality & Diversity Provisions of the Code of Conduct 2012.

What this policy covers

Chambers recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and is committed to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination and where every member, pupil and employee feels valued and has a fair and equitable quality of life.

Chambers will seek to promote the principles of equality and diversity in all its dealings with members, pupils and employees, workers, job applicants, clients, suppliers, contractors, recruitment agencies and the public.

All members, pupils and employees and those who act on the Chambers’ behalf are required to adhere to this policy when undertaking their duties or when representing Chambers in any other guise.

Unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination of any kind in the working environment will not be tolerated and Chambers will take all necessary action to prevent its occurrence.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect.

Direct discrimination occurs when someone or a group is treated less well, in comparison with someone else, because of their or gender, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic origin), pregnancy/maternity, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part-time status, age, religion or belief.

Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral specification, criteria or practice would disadvantage someone or a group on the grounds of gender, race, (including colour, nationality and ethnic origin), pregnancy/maternity, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part-time status, age, religion or belief.

Specifically, Chambers aims to ensure that no member, pupil, employee or job applicant is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on any of the grounds outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and listed above. This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures
- Reasonable adjustments for disabled people (see also Reasonable Adjustments Policy)
- training
- promotion and career-development opportunities
- fair access to work
- allocation of unassigned work
- networking and business development opportunities
- terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities
- grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures
- selection for redundancy

All members and employees are responsible for their own behaviour and must ensure that this is consistent with this policy at all times. Failure to comply with this policy will be treated very seriously and may result in action being taken in accordance with Chambers Constitution and its Conduct and Capability policies and procedures.

Victimisation

Additionally, Chambers aims to ensure that no member, pupil, employee or job applicant is subjected to victimisation following their giving evidence in proceedings relating to an act of discrimination; bringing proceedings or making allegations relating to an act of discrimination.

Recruitment and career development

While positive measures may be taken to encourage under-represented groups to apply for employment opportunities, recruitment or promotion to all jobs will be based solely on merit.

All members, pupils and employees will have equal access to training and other career-development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities.

However, Chambers will take appropriate positive action measures (as permitted by equal opportunities legislation) to provide specialist training and support for groups that are under-represented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career-development opportunities.

Chambers is committed to ensuring that all work is distributed to members and pupils fairly and that no requests that are discriminatory will be accepted.

Chambers will also take appropriate steps, through training, communication and reinforcement of this policy together with the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England and Wales, to ensure that all of its employment practices are carried out in a fair and equitable way and free from bias.

Complaints of discrimination

Chambers will treat seriously all complaints of discrimination made by members, pupils, employees, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

If a member, pupil or employee believes that they have been discriminated against, have witnessed discrimination or have been asked to carry out a task that they believe to be discriminatory, they are encouraged to raise the matter as soon as possible with the Chief Executive, a member of the Management Committee or the Equality and Diversity Committee Chambers Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly. If a member, pupil or employee makes an allegation of discrimination, Chambers is committed to ensuring that they are protected from victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment. Any such incidents will be dealt with under Chambers Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Investigating accusations of unlawful discrimination

If a member, pupil or employee is accused of unlawful discrimination, Chambers will investigate the matter fully in line with the procedure outlined in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

If the investigation and subsequent disciplinary hearing concludes that the reported actions amount to unlawful discrimination, the individual concerned will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal without notice for gross misconduct for an employee (or Pupil) or expulsion under the Chambers Constitution for a Member. Any such actions would also be treated as Professional Misconduct under the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England and Wales.

Chambers Responsibilities

Chambers Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that actions and decisions taken are consistent with this policy and for ensuring that it's Constitution, employment and operational policies are inclusive of legislative requirements.

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that all members and employees are informed about their rights and responsibilities under the policy.

The Chief Executive and Chambers Management Committee are responsible for dealing with any allegation of discrimination, bullying or harassment as a very serious matter and for taking appropriate action in accordance with Chambers Dignity at Work and Grievance Policies.

Equality and Diversity Officer

Camilla Lamont, Matthew Reed QC, Galina Ward, David Blundell, Andrew Parkinson, Anjoli Foster, Paul Newhall, Carolyn Entwistle and Richard Bolton are Chambers' Equality and Diversity Officers. Their responsibilities are to be available to members of staff and colleagues to give advice and discuss any problems in connection with equality issues and to provide advice, if required, on the informal resolution of grievances that may exist.

Monitoring and publication of Equality and Diversity Data

Chambers Diversity Data Officer monitors data from pupillage, member and staff recruitment exercises and Chambers membership. The allocation of unassigned work is analysed regularly and any actions necessary to remedy or investigate unfair outcomes have been/will be developed and added to Chambers' Equality Action Plan. Chambers Equality & Diversity data is available on the Chambers' website.

Equality Action Plan

Based on the findings of Chambers monitoring of Equality & Diversity data, Chambers has developed an Equality Action Plan and this will be subject to regular review.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically in the light of changing circumstances and in particular to take account of future employment legislation.

Version Control and History

#	Description	Updated by	Version	Date
1.	Adopted by Chambers' ACM		1.0	Sept 13
2.	Amended the names of Chambers' Equality and Diversity Officers	CE	1.1	Sept 15
3.	Replaced job titles following restructure	RXB	1.2	05.10.2017
4.	Amended the names of Chambers' Equality and Diversity Officers	CE	1.3	January 2018