

7 King's Bench Walk Reasonable Adjustments Policy

(1) Aim and Remit of Policy

1. This is the Reasonable Adjustments Policy for 7 King's Bench Walk, which is established in accordance with Rule C110(3)(m) of the BSB Handbook Equality Rules.
2. This policy is aimed at supporting disabled clients, Chambers' workforce and others, including temporary visitors to Chambers. It is intended to enable disabled people to request, and Chambers to consider and make, reasonable adjustments so as to comply with the requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010.
3. Chambers is committed to making reasonable adjustments in order to remove or reduce substantial disadvantage for disabled people working with Chambers or receiving legal services. This policy covers all employees of Chambers, members, clerks, pupils, mini-pupils and visitors to Chambers.
4. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to disabled persons only. There may be circumstances in which adjustments to normal practices may be appropriate to assist persons who are not disabled but otherwise have particular difficulties or needs. If so, those matters should be raised with the Equality and Diversity Committee, a senior clerk or the Head of Chambers.

(2) Circulation

5. This policy is available on Chambers' website and in Chambers' Policies SharePoint folder to all members, staff, pupils, clerks and those who are required to read and understand it.

(3) Definitions

6. For the purposes of this policy, the definition of disability follows that set out in the Equality Act 2010, s.6. A person is therefore disabled if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. “Substantial” means more than minor or trivial and “long term” means 12 months or more.
7. The duty to make reasonable adjustments arises where a provision, criterion or practice, or a physical feature, or the lack of an auxiliary aid, places disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with persons who are not disabled. The duty is to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.

(4) The Adjustments Committee

8. Chambers has constituted a committee (**‘the Adjustments Committee’**) to consider and investigate possible adjustments to accommodate identified disabilities of prospective or current mini-pupils, pupils, members of Chambers or employees. The Adjustments Committee comprises Chambers’ Equality and Diversity Officers (**“EDOs”**) as well as Stephen Kenny KC and Robert Bright KC, each of whom has received training in equality and diversity issues.

(5) Staff, barristers and others in Chambers

9. Should any member of Chambers or pupil or employee consider themselves to be/to have become disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, they are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Equality and Diversity Committee and/or the Management Committee any problems they feel they face and to request or suggest any reasonable adjustments which they consider may assist in alleviating such problems. A disabled person working for or at Chambers may make, and should feel free to make, a request for a reasonable adjustment at any time.

10. The extent to which Chambers can consider or make reasonable adjustments will depend upon the extent to which the individual in question consents to the disclosure of their disability and its effects and of information about the particular disadvantage and how it might be alleviated. Normally, it will only be possible to make reasonable adjustments if the person or persons with responsibility for the function in question have sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision. Chambers will, however, be sensitive to issues of confidentiality and, in cases in which individuals do not wish details of their disability to be disclosed, will seek to identify alternative ways in which decisions might be made.
11. All requests for adjustments will be considered on a case by case basis by the Adjustments Committee in consultation with the person in question and, if appropriate, with institutions outside Chambers which may be able to provide specialist advice such as the Disability Rights Commission, the Association of Sign Language Interpreters, or specialist charities (such as the RNIB). Consideration will normally be given to whether an occupational health assessment should be carried out and, in some cases, it may be necessary to request additional evidence – whether medical or otherwise – from the disabled person.
12. The Adjustments Committee will report to the Management Committee, which will decide whether it is reasonable to make such an adjustment. The aim of making reasonable adjustments is to ensure that the experience of the person with a disability is as close as possible to that of a person without a disability in those situations. When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable, this aim will be borne centrally in mind. Regard will be had to all the circumstances including: (i) how effective the adjustment will be in avoiding the disadvantage the disabled person would otherwise experience; (ii) the practicality of making it; (iii) the cost of doing so; (iv) health and safety factors; (v) Chambers' resources and size; and (vi) the impact of taking the step on the efficient and effective operation of Chambers and on other persons.

13. Where it is not possible to make the adjustment requested, the Adjustments Committee (in consultation with the Management Committee) will discuss viable alternatives with the applicant.
14. The Head of Chambers is responsible for considering whether or not disabled staff, members or pupils require assistance during an emergency evacuation and if so whether or not a personal emergency evacuation plan is required for the individuals concerned. If so, the plan will be developed in partnership with the individual concerned in order to ensure that adjustments to the emergency evacuation procedure may be made.

(6) Visitors to Chambers

15. Chambers' website and advertising literature will include a statement to the effect that reasonable adjustments will be made on request where this will assist disabled people to use Chambers' services, identifying the person to whom such request should be made and inviting professional clients to identify to Chambers in advance any disabilities of particular clients which may require adjustments and/or adjustments that may be necessary to accommodate the needs of particular clients.
16. If holding conferences in Chambers would involve unreasonable time, inconvenience, effort, discomfort or loss of dignity, arrangements will be made for the conference to take place in one of the rooms made available by the Inner Temple, at the solicitors' offices or using remote technology, as is most convenient to the disabled person.

(7) Types of Reasonable Adjustment

17. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of reasonable adjustments that Chambers may make. However, the types of adjustment that may be made, if considered reasonable, include:

- In relation to employees - adjusting working hours; reallocating certain duties; providing a mentor or additional support; acquiring or modifying equipment; providing training.
- In relation to members and pupils – adjusting briefing practices; adjusting work allocation and practice management systems to reflect shorter working hours or other modes of practice; providing support mechanisms such as mentoring or practice supervision; providing training.
- Generally – providing information in alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille etc); providing accessible conference room facilities; providing a reader or interpreter when needed.

(8) Cost of making reasonable adjustments

18. In no circumstances, will Chambers pass on the cost of a reasonable adjustment to a disabled person or client. The cost of any such adjustments (whether relating to members of Chambers, Chambers' employees or visitors to Chambers) as are implemented will in appropriate cases be treated as expenses of Chambers as a whole.

(9) Monitoring and Review

19. This policy will be reviewed by Chambers' Equality and Diversity Committee every two years.

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