

## 7 King's Bench Walk Equality and Diversity Policy

### (1) Statement of Policy

1. The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of 7 King's Bench Walk ("**Chambers**") to the promotion and advancement of equality of opportunity and diversity.
2. It is the policy of Chambers to deal with its tenants, employees, pupils, lay and professional clients and all applicants for pupillage or tenancy or any other position (and all others who have dealings with Chambers, including judges, arbitrators, court staff and other barristers) without distinction by reference to race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sex, pregnancy and maternity, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, age or gender reassignment ("**the protected characteristics**").
3. Chambers is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, including direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment.
4. The policy adopted by Chambers in relation to each of the legal and regulatory requirements set out in BSB Handbook Equality Rules and Supporting Information is set out below. In addition to this Equality and Diversity Policy, Chambers has adopted the following further policy documents:
  - (a) Pupillage Policy;
  - (b) Diversity Data Policy;
  - (c) Reasonable Adjustments Policy;
  - (d) Equal Access to and Fair Allocation of Work Policy (and accompanying guidance);
  - (e) Parental Leave, Special Leave, Career Break and Flexible Working Policy;
  - (f) Anti-Harassment Policy; and
  - (g) Grievance Procedure.

5. Chambers retains and will exercise the right to deal appropriately with any inappropriate or improper conduct by any member of Chambers, member of staff, pupil or mini-pupil, whether or not it is covered by one or more of Chambers' specific policies.

**(2) Scope of Policy**

6. This policy applies to members of Chambers and members of staff, pupils and mini-pupils, as well as all applicants to Chambers' workforce. Chambers' clients (both lay and professional) are also protected from discrimination.

**(3) Implementation and Review of Policy**

7. Chambers has an Equality and Diversity Committee headed by Jawdat Khurshid KC (the "**EDC**"). Its appointed Equality and Diversity Officers have been trained in equality and diversity and undertake responsibility for:
  - (a) ensuring that Chambers' written Equality and Diversity Policy is implemented, reviewed regularly (i.e. every 2 years) and kept up-to-date;
  - (b) ensuring that all Chambers' policies and procedures are reviewed regularly (i.e. every 2 years) to ensure that they comply with this Equality and Diversity Policy, as well as the BSB Handbook Equality Rules and Supporting Information and that records are kept of the outcome of such reviews and of any action taken in response;
  - (c) preparing, reviewing and implementing an equality action plan (the "**Action Plan**"), the purpose of which is to monitor and implement Chambers' Equality and Diversity Policy. By its nature, the Action Plan will change and be updated as its specific aims and targets are met;
  - (d) liaising with the Bar Council / BSB Equality and Diversity Officers as appropriate on behalf of Chambers in relation to matters pertaining to equality and diversity;

- (e) assisting members of Chambers, pupils, mini-pupils and members of staff with any problems, issues or queries they may have on equality and diversity issues;
  - (f) advising the Head of Chambers, senior clerks, the Pupillage Committee, the Management Committee and individual members of Chambers and staff on equality and diversity issues;
  - (g) encouraging all members of chambers and staff including clerks to undertake equality and diversity training and ensuring that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment of pupils, tenants and members of staff are trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques;
  - (h) monitoring data from pupillage (as well as any member or staff recruitment exercises) and ensuring that any actions necessary to remedy or investigate unfair outcomes are developed and added to Chambers' equality action plan.
8. The current EDC comprises Jawdat Khurshid KC, John Bignall, Anna Gotts, Andrew Pearson, Henry Ashwell and Sophie Hepburn. A senior clerk (Gary Rose) and member of the Pupillage Committee (Josephine Higgs KC) also sit on the EDC as required.

#### **(4) Recruitment and Selection**

9. Chambers is committed to ensuring that pupils, tenants and employees are selected without discrimination on grounds of the protected characteristics identified at paragraph 2 above and against objective and fair criteria.
10. Pursuant to Rule C110(3)(c), every member of all selection panels must be trained in fair recruitment and selection processes. Chambers is committed to ensuring that these requirements are fulfilled and that the guidance on fair recruitment and selection set out in the Bar Council's Fair Recruitment Guide for the Bar is adhered to.

11. Chambers has a written Pupillage Policy, including in relation to the procedure for application. This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Pupillage Committee, in consultation with the EDC.

**(5) Equality Monitoring**

12. Pursuant to Rule C110(3)(f) of the BSB Handbook Equality Rules, Chambers is required regularly to review (i) the number and percentages of its workforce from different groups and (ii) applications to become a member of its workforce.
13. Chambers recognises the need to collate, monitor and review diversity data in order to ensure that Chambers may best fulfil its commitment to equality and diversity. To this end:
  - (a) The Pupillage Committee will collect and provide to the EDC annually within 3 months of the end of the recruitment process (which occurs on the last acceptance of an offer of pupillage by a candidate) an analysis of the determination of applications broken down by the relevant protected characteristics (including race, disability and gender). The EDC will review the information within 2 months of receipt and will discuss any issues arising (including the reasons for any disparity in that data and any appropriate remedial action) with the Secretary to the Pupillage Committee. The EDC will report to the Management Committee on the outcome of this process by 31 January of the following year.
  - (b) The Lateral Hire Committee and Senior Clerks will collect and provide to the EDC regularly (i.e. every 3 years) available data broken down by the relevant protected characteristics (including race, disability and gender) in respect of all applications to become established practitioners and members of Chambers' staff. The EDC will review that data and discuss any issues arising (including the reasons for any disparity in that data and any appropriate remedial action) with the Management Committee.

- (c) Chambers has adopted a written Diversity Data Policy and appointed a Diversity Data Officer (“**DDO**”) who (every 3 years) will collect, process and publish on Chambers’ website diversity data in accordance with that policy, the BSB Handbook Equality Rules and Supporting Information. The current DDO is Zoë Hamilton.

**(6) Providing Services to Disabled People**

- 14. Chambers is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all those to whom this policy applies who have a disability.
- 15. A disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 is “any physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out their normal day-to-day activities”.
- 16. Such persons will not be treated unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability where it cannot be shown that such treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 17. 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. To this end, Chambers has adopted a written Reasonable Adjustments Policy aimed at supporting disabled clients, Chambers’ workforce and others including temporary visitors to Chambers. This policy will be reviewed regularly by the EDC.

**(7) Fair Access to Work and the Allocation of Unassigned Work**

- 18. It is the policy of Chambers that its affairs should be conducted in a manner which is fair and equitable for all members and this extends to the fair distribution of work opportunities amongst pupils and members of Chambers. Pursuant to Rule C110(3)(f) of the BSB Handbook Equality Rules, Chambers is also required regularly to review the allocation of unassigned work.

19. To this end:
  - (a) Chambers has adopted a written Equal Access to and Fair Allocation of Work Policy, together with guidance on its implementation from the Management Committee.
  - (b) Chambers has also appointed an Equal Access to and Fair Allocation of Work Monitor, the responsibilities of whom are set out in the Equal Access to and Fair Allocation of Work Policy. Those responsibilities include the review of available data broken down by the relevant protected characteristics (including race, disability and gender) in respect of the allocation of unassigned work and the discussion of any issues arising (including the reasons for any disparity in that data and any appropriate remedial action) with the senior clerks, the EDC and the Management Committee as necessary. The current Equal Access to and Fair Allocation of Work Monitor is Keir Howie.
  - (c) Chambers is committed to ensuring that (in accordance with the BSB's recommendation) its clerks are provided with diversity training, briefed on the importance of the fair allocation of work, made aware of their legal obligation not to discriminate and their duty to act equitably when distributing work.
  - (d) Chambers will also seek to ensure that marketing opportunities, including promotion to relevant directories, seminars and lectures and social events are carried out without discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics identified at paragraph 2 above and with equality of opportunity to all members to participate (including members on parental leave or career breaks or working flexibly).
20. The Equal Access to and Fair Allocation of Work Policy will be reviewed regularly by the Equal Access to and Fair Allocation of Work Monitor, in consultation with the EDC, the Senior Clerks and the Management Committee (as appropriate).
21. Any member of Chambers who feels that they have been the subject of unequal or unfair treatment in the allocation of work is encouraged to discuss the situation with a

Senior Clerk, and if necessary or appropriate, to utilise Chambers' Grievance Procedure.

22. Any unequal or unfair treatment of members of Chambers or pupils in the allocation of work will be treated as a serious matter.

**(8) Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave, Flexible and part-time working and career breaks**

23. Chambers has a written Policy on Maternity, Paternity, Parental Leave, Flexible Working and Career Breaks. This policy applies to members of Chambers and will be monitored and reviewed regularly by the EDC.

24. Any individuals who have concerns about this policy and/or its application should raise them in the first instance with the EDC.

25. As regards members of Chambers' staff, it is the policy of Chambers to comply with statutory requirements in relation to maternity, paternity, parental leave, flexible working and career breaks.

**(9) Harassment**

26. Chambers is committed to providing a working environment in which all individuals, clients and the public are treated with dignity and respect. Chambers will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of, or by, any member of its workforce.

27. To this end, Chambers has adopted a written Anti-Harassment Policy. This policy applies to all members of Chambers, employees, pupils and mini-pupils and all those for whom Chambers constitutes a working environment. It will be reviewed regularly by the EDC who will also take steps to ensure that Chambers' employees are aware of the existence of the policy and its applicability to them.

## **(10) Complaints and Grievances**

28. Chambers has adopted a written Grievance Procedure which covers any complaint, grievance or dispute including but not limited to complaints of unfair discrimination or harassment and complaints about the distribution of work. This procedure applies to all members of chambers, pupils, mini-pupils, employees and applicants for positions in Chambers. The Grievance Procedure will be reviewed regularly by the EDC.

## **(11) Distribution**

29. A copy of this Equality and Diversity Policy, together with all policies and procedures identified at paragraph 4 above will be available at all times on Chambers' website and in Chambers' Policies folder on SharePoint. The EDC will notify all new members of Chambers and pupils of the availability and location of such policies and will notify all members, pupils and staff by e-mail when a revised policy is approved and uploaded.
30. The Action Plan is retained by the EDC but available to all members, pupils, mini- pupils and staff upon request. The EDC will provide a copy of the Action Plan to the Management Committee for information and review every six months.

Rev. February 2025