

**PARENTAL LEAVE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY**

**Parental Leave**

1. A member of Chambers who becomes or is expecting to become the parent of a newborn child or to adopt a child may take a period (or a number of separate periods) of parental leave of up to 12 months in total during which she/he is not practising from Chambers but is entitled to retain her/his room in Chambers without liability for rent or rates. During the period of parental leave his/her room may be used by Chambers for another purpose (including temporary use by another member of Chambers or a member of staff) unless the member of Chambers elects voluntarily to pay the rent and rates as normal.
  
2. A member of Chambers who takes any period of parental leave (or longer absence after the birth of a child pursuant to paragraph 3 below) will remain liable to contribute to Chambers' expenses assessed each quarter in the usual way (i.e. as a percentage of his/her receipts during the quarter), save that:
  - (a) On commencing a period of parental leave, a member of Chambers may cancel any standing order for payments on account of Chambers' expenses. She/he will be expected to arrange a new standing order within 6 months of resuming her/his practice from Chambers in an amount to be determined by the Treasurer commensurate with her/his anticipated liability for Chambers' expenses; and
  - (b) On resuming her/his practice from Chambers following a period of parental leave of at least three months (or any longer absence pursuant to paragraph 3 below), a member of Chambers is entitled to a credit of £6,000 against her/his liability for Chambers' expenses; the credit will be applied to the next quarterly bill and any subsequent quarterly bills until it is exhausted.

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3. If a member of Chambers does not resume her/his practice from Chambers at the end of a period of parental leave, she/he is entitled to remain a member of Chambers for a guaranteed period of 3 years from the date when she/he began her/his parental leave on terms that:
  - (a) While she/he is not practising from Chambers, she/he will have no liability for rent or rates and no right to a room in Chambers; and
  - (b) She/he may at any time resume practice from Chambers and a room or the use of a room will then be made available to her/him, upon giving at least one month's notice to the Head(s) of Chambers.

If a member of Chambers wishes to remain a member and/or resume practice from Chambers after the end of the guaranteed period, she/he must apply to Chambers.

4. The policy in paragraphs 1–3 above applies equally to any member of Chambers (male or female) who becomes a parent or adopts or otherwise assumes parental responsibility for a child.

### **Flexible Working**

5. It is the policy of Chambers to make all reasonable efforts to assist any member of Chambers who takes time away or elects to work flexible hours or part-time or partly from home for the purpose of managing their family responsibilities, disability or serious illness. Such assistance may include a waiver or reduction of the member's liability for rent and rates and/or Chambers' expenses. Any financial arrangement made will depend upon the circumstances of the individual case, and will be decided by the Head(s) of Chambers with the approval of the Executive Committee.

### **Grievances and Review**

6. If in a particular case there is potential for financial hardship in connection with taking a period of parental or co-parental leave, a member of Chambers may request

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that a different financial arrangement from that set out in this policy be made. Any such request should be made in writing to the Head(s) of Chambers, who will decide on it subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

7. If a member of Chambers has a query or concern about this policy or its application, he or she should raise it with the Chambers' Equal Opportunities Officer (who is currently Kelyn Bacon QC) in the first instance.
8. Any grievance or complaint about this policy, its implementation or the treatment of any member of Chambers in any matter which relates to the impact of parental or childcare responsibilities on his or her membership of or practice from Chambers, will be dealt with in accordance with Chambers' Equality Procedures. A copy of those Procedures can be obtained from Chambers' Equal Opportunities Officer.
9. The Chambers' Equal Opportunities Officer is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. It is intended that this policy, and its operation, should be regularly reviewed.

*Brick Court Chambers*

*Revised version approved by the Executive Committee as of 13 May 2019 and applicable to any Member of Chambers already taking parental leave on that date or taking parental leave thereafter*