

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

References to Chambers in this policy include Brick Court Chambers and its service company, Little Essex Street Service Company Ltd. References to employees are to employees of Little Essex Street Service Company Ltd.

A. Introduction

1. This is Chambers' Equality and Diversity Policy. Chambers is required to have such a policy by rule C110.1 of the Bar Standards Board Handbook. This policy is effective, in this version, from the date of its approval by the Executive Committee, set out below.

B. Purpose

2. Chambers is committed to equality and diversity at the Bar and within Chambers. This includes preventing discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity, and promoting diversity.
3. Preventing discrimination, and ensuring equality of opportunity, require that nobody is treated less favourably because of their age; disability; gender identity or expression;¹ marital or civil partner status; political persuasion; pregnancy or parental status; race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin); religion or belief; sex, sexual orientation; or social background (the "Protected Characteristics").
4. Promoting diversity includes, over and above preventing discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity, taking steps to increase the representation of minority and underrepresented groups at the Bar and within Chambers.
5. This policy sets out Chambers' overarching rules, principles and procedures for preventing discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity, and promoting diversity. Chambers is committed to co-operating with the Commissioner for Conduct, and engaging the support of the Commissioner for Conduct as may be necessary.

¹ Gender identity and expression include, but are not limited to, gender reassignment and sex within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. For the avoidance of doubt, for the purpose of this policy and the other policies referred to in paragraph 6, gender is not a binary or closed category.

13. Chambers also has an Equality and Diversity Committee, which is chaired by the Equality and Diversity Officer.
14. The Equality and Diversity Officer, assisted by the Equality and Diversity Committee, is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and the other policies referred to in paragraph 6 above, for acting as the point of contact for the Commissioner for Conduct and for ensuring that:
 - (1) such policies are regularly reviewed;
 - (2) Chambers has an action plan for implementing such policies, in accordance with rule C110.2 of the Bar Standards Board Handbook;
 - (3) all members of all selection panels complete training in fair recruitment and selection processes (in accordance with r.C110.3.c of the Bar Standards Board Handbook), and that at least all those involved in managing or overseeing Chambers' selection processes have received equality training in respect of issues affecting applicants from the groups referred to in paragraph 32 below;
 - (4) persons working within Chambers are periodically notified of the existence of such policies, and of the methods for raising any queries, concerns, issues, complaints or grievances set out in section M below; and
 - (5) Chambers complies with, and where appropriate goes beyond, its obligations under rules C110–C112 of the Bar Standards Board Handbook, and its legal obligations in respect of equality and diversity.
15. Chambers also maintains an Equality and Diversity Panel to consider equality and diversity issues, grievances or complaints. Further details are set out in Chambers' Equality Procedures.
16. Chambers employs an Equality and Diversity Manager, whose role is to assist the Equality and Diversity Officer, the E&D Committee and help with review and implementation of the equality and diversity action plan and other equality and diversity initiatives.

E. Preventing discrimination

17. You must not unlawfully or improperly discriminate against other people, including (but not limited to) members of Chambers,

G. Equal opportunities

20. Equality of opportunity means that equal work and employment opportunities are provided to all existing members of Chambers, pupils, mini-pupils, and employees, and in the recruitment of new members of Chambers, pupils, mini-pupils and employees.
21. This means that all work and employment opportunities must be provided, and all recruitment must be conducted, without unlawful or improper discrimination:
 - (1) in recruitment of any kind including members of Chambers, pupils and mini-pupils and employees. This includes the arrangements made for selection, any terms of engagement or employment provided, and in offering or refusing a person work or employment;
 - (2) in all dealings with or on behalf of Chambers and members of Chambers, pupils, mini-pupils and employees;
 - (3) in affording access to opportunities for promotion, career development, transfer and training;
 - (4) in the terms on which pupillage or employment is offered and in affording access to any benefits, facilities or services;
 - (5) in ensuring that no individual is victimised for complaining in good faith of unlawful or improper discrimination or giving evidence about such a complaint;
 - (6) in the manner in which and the reasons for which employees are dismissed, and
 - (7) in ensuring that employees, pupils, mini-pupils and members of Chambers are not treated unfavourably in any other way.
22. Additional provisions in these respects are set out in Chambers' Fair Allocation of Work Policy, which is available on the Equality and Diversity section of Chambers' website.

H. Part-time and fixed-term work

23. Part-time and fixed-term employees must be treated the same as comparable fulltime or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

L. Promoting diversity

31. Chambers is committed to promoting greater diversity at the Bar and within Chambers.
32. Chambers will take steps to encourage applications from minority and underrepresented groups, including BME people and members of other ethnic minorities, women, disabled people, LGBT+ people, and people from less advantaged social backgrounds. Chambers will also take steps to ensure that its recruitment processes are inclusive of people with neurodivergent conditions.
33. Where appropriate and permitted by law including under the Equality Act 2010 (as amended from time to time), Chambers may, on a case-by-case basis, approve proportionate positive action in recruitment and/or promotion.

M. Queries, concerns, issues, complaints or grievances

34. Any general queries or concerns in respect of this policy, or the other policies aimed at achieving the objectives of this policy, should be raised with the Equality and Diversity Officer, directly or via the Equality and Diversity Manager or Committee members.
35. Persons working within Chambers are invited to discuss any matter related to equality and diversity with the Equality and Diversity Officer, a member of the Equality and Diversity Panel (see Equality Procedures Policy) or Chambers' HR Manager.
36. Specific concerns, complaints or grievances should be raised formally or informally in the ways set out in Chambers' Equality Procedures.

Approved by the Executive Committee on 10 June 2026.

To be reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Committee regularly.