

ATKIN CHAMBERS' EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. POLICY SUMMARY AND IMPLEMENTATION

1.1. The members of Atkin Chambers are committed to ensuring an absence of direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity or paternity, disability, religion or belief, age or political persuasion. Chambers is determined to promote a work environment in which everyone is treated equally and with dignity.

1.2 To that end:

1.2.1 Tenants, door tenants, pupils, squatters, practice managers and staff will comply with:

- i) All relevant statutory requirements, this Policy, those listed below and will also have regard to the Equality and Diversity Provisions of the Code of Conduct.

1.2.2 Chambers has published and implements the following related policies:

- i) Implementation Plan;
- ii) Parental Leave Policy;
- iii) Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy;
- iv) Flexible Working and Career Break Policy;
- v) Reasonable Adjustments Policy;
- vi) Diversity Data Policy.

1.3 Application of this Policy

This Policy applies to:

- i) The selection, recruitment and treatment of tenants, pupils and mini-pupils;
- ii) The selection, recruitment and treatment of practice managers and other members of staff;
- iii) Fair access to work and the allocation of unassigned work within Chambers;
- iv) Equality and diversity monitoring;
- v) The treatment of lay and professional clients;
- vi) Complaints and grievances.

1.4 Officers

1.4.1 Chambers has appointed Camille Slow KC as its Equality and Diversity Officer [EDO] with the responsibility of ensuring that this Policy is being complied with.

1.4.2 Chambers has appointed Julie Demeritt, Chief Operating Officer, as Diversity Data Officer [DDO] (whose name and contact details have been notified to the BSB) and whose role is to collect, process and publish data in accordance with the Bar Standards Board guidelines for publishing data relating to certain characteristics of all members of the Chambers' workforce, including barristers, pupils, practice managers and other members of staff.

1.5 Meaning of "discrimination"

For the purposes of this Policy, "discrimination" shall include victimisation and harassment, all which expressions are defined in the Equality Act 2010. Chambers seeks to go further than the Equality Act by also aiming to prevent discrimination on the grounds of gender identity, nationality and paternity.

2. THE SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF TENANTS, PUPILS AND MINI-PUPILS.

2.1 The selection and recruitment of tenants, pupils and mini pupils will be conducted openly and objectively and be effected in accordance with the principles of equality and diversity as set out in 1.1 above.

2.2 The selection and recruitment of pupils, and of such pupils as junior tenants, will be effected in accordance with the Pupillage Policy.

2.3 The selection and recruitment of Established Practitioners shall be effected in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Bar Council's Fair Recruitment Guide 2021 and Chambers' Established Practitioners Recruitment Policy. The Bar Council's Fair Recruitment Guide 2021 does not define what an "established practitioner" is, but for this policy's purposes, it is a barrister who has held a practising certificate for at least 3 years.

3. MINI-PUILLAGE

3.1 Mini-pupillages shall be awarded in accordance with the principles of equality and diversity as set out in 1.1 above.

3.2 Mini-pupillages shall be awarded in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Pupillage Policy.

4. THE SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF PRACTICE MANAGERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF STAFF

4.1 The recruitment of practice managers and other members of staff will be conducted openly and objectively and in accordance with the principle of equality and diversity as set out in 1.1 above but otherwise by reference to such procedures as Chambers considers to be appropriate in the circumstances of the case.

5. FAIR ACCESS TO WORK AND THE ALLOCATION OF UNASSIGNED WORK WITHIN CHAMBERS

5.1 For the purposes of this clause unassigned work means:

- i) Instructions (phone/hardcopy/email) which do not bear any barrister's name and are addressed to the practice managers;
- ii) Instructions addressed to a named barrister selected by the solicitor on the recommendation of a practice manager;

- iii) Returned work re-allocated by a practice manager;
- iv) Junior work to be assigned by a leader;
- v) Leading work to be assigned by a junior.

5.2 Only practice managers and members who have undergone approved equality and diversity training shall be permitted to allocate unassigned work.

5.3 The practice managers shall so far as practicable record their reasons for the allocation of unassigned work using where possible the standard monitoring facility on the LEX software. The DDO shall process a summary of the monitored data on a quarterly basis and that summary shall be submitted to the EDO in anonymised form. The summary will be provided to the EDO exclusively, but members can request their own quarterly allocation report from the practice managers at any point.

5.4 In the event of a complaint by a tenant, the Senior Clerk shall, if requested by the EDO or the tenant making the complaint, furnish an explanation (in writing if so requested) for the allocation of any item of unassigned work by any tenant or the practice managers. The practice managers will revert only to whoever has raised the complaint, tenant or EDO.

5.5 The EDO shall monitor the allocation of work data not less than once per year and shall report to the Chambers AGM with the results of such monitoring.

5.6 Instructions which are discriminatory and therefore in breach of the principles set out at 1.1 above, will not be accepted by the practice managers.

6. GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

6.1 All grievances and complaints against a tenant, door tenant, pupil, squatter, practice manager or other member of staff should be raised by the complainant using Chambers' Internal Grievance Procedure.

7. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY TRAINING

7.1 Chambers is committed to ensuring that staff and tenants involved in processes relating to ensuring equality and fairness in the allocation of work and in the selection and recruitment of tenants, pupils, mini pupils and staff will have undertaken approved equality and diversity training. Such training shall be in accordance with the Bar Council's Fair Recruitment Guide 2021 insofar as it is recruitment training and generally in accordance with Bar Council guidance, together "the recommended training".

7.2 The EDO regularly reminds tenants of their duty to adhere to the Equality and Diversity rules and guidance and of the need to receive training. The EDO shall ensure that they receive the recommended training in accordance with the Bar Council's Fair Recruitment Guide 2021 or no less than once every 3 years whichever is the shorter period.

7.3 E&D training for recruitment

- i) The head and deputy head of the Pupillage and Recruitment Committee must undertake the recommended training and must ensure that they do so no less than once every 3 years.
- ii) All members of the Pupillage and Recruitment Committee must undertake the training required by the Bar Council's Fair Recruitment Guide 2021. All MOC are encouraged to receive training in the same lest they are asked to sit on an interview panel etc., on an ad hoc basis.
- iii) All staff with responsibility for recruitment must be trained in accordance with the requirements contained in the Bar Council's Fair Recruitment Guide 2021.

7.4 Implementation of further training

- i) The EDO shall consider prior to the Chambers' AGM what training provisions should be made and make appropriate recommendations to Chambers.
- ii) The appropriate resources shall be allocated by Chambers to ensure the implementation and monitoring of, and compliance with, this Equality and Diversity Policy.
- iii) A copy of this Policy shall be given to every tenant, pupil, practice manager and other member of staff, and to each new tenant, pupil, practice manager or other member of staff on joining Chambers and shall be published on Chambers' intranet and available upon request.

7.5 This Policy was adopted on **20 February 2018, most recently updated January 2025** and will be reviewed every 2 years.