

# PALLANT

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C H A M B E R S

## Equality and diversity

Pallant Chambers is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promoting equality and diversity within our policies, practices and procedures. This applies to our professional dealings with clients, staff and partners, other solicitors, barristers, and third parties. Pallant Chambers shall treat everyone equally and with the same attention, courtesy and respect regardless of:

- (a) age;
- (b) disability;
- (c) gender reassignment;
- (d) race;
- (e) religion or belief;
- (f) sex;
- (g) sexual orientation;
- (h) marriage or civil partnership status;
- (i) pregnancy and maternity or
- (j) caring responsibility.

Pallant Chambers will take all reasonable steps to make sure that our tenants, pupils and staff do not unlawfully discriminate and that we will comply with the current and any legislation in force from time to time relating to discrimination law in employment and the provision of goods, facilities or services.

This Equal Opportunities Policy has been adopted by Pallant Chambers. The policy is intended to comply with the regulatory requirements of the Bar Standards Board. In respect of all ‘relevant areas’ identified below Chambers will have regard to the Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar, which is attached in its current form to this Policy. All Members of Chambers, staff and pupils have been referred to this document and the Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar and have been requested to read the same.

Pallant Chambers has Equality and Diversity Officer. That position is presently occupied by William Emerson. Our Diversity Data Officer is Justin Perring.

## RECRUITMENT PUPILS AND TENANTS

Vacancies for pupils and tenants will be advertised. Chambers has a pupillage policy, which includes the selection and assessment procedure. Both pupils and tenants are selected using objective criteria. Members of the Recruitment Committee have undergone the relevant training and are aware of the requirement of this policy and the accompanying guidance in the Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar in order to ensure fair selection.

## **FAIR ACCESS TO WORK**

Pupils and tenants will have the opportunity to develop their practices, with the assistance of the Senior Clerk and his staff, in a fair and equal manner.

Pupils will have regular feedback from their pupil supervisors and the clerks will discuss practice development formally and informally with all tenants. Pupils are provided with further guidance in the pupillage policy.

All pupils and tenants will be encouraged to participate in marketing activities and any social events as may be organised by Chambers from time to time.

## **MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE**

Pallant Chambers provides arrangements for maternity leave for members of chambers. Similar arrangements would apply on adoption. In respect of rent, there is provided a rent free period of up to six months for those on maternity leave with a right to return to work within one year. Pallant Chambers will also adopt the guidance provided by the Bar Standards Board in respect of paternity leave.

## **FLEXIBLE AND PART TIME WORKING AND CAREER BREAK**

Any member of chambers may work from home. Various part time and flexible arrangements have been agreed with members of chambers in the past. Chambers will continue to apply a flexible and pragmatic approach to all requests as and when they arise. However, the discretion rests with the Management Committee that will take into account the guidance provided by the Bar Standards Board on this issue and in reaching a decision will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 or such other legislation (including Regulations) that may be in force in respect of such issues.

## **HARRASSMENT**

Harassment, as defined in the Equality and Diversity Code (and the relevant statutory provisions), is unacceptable and will not be tolerated from Members of Chambers, Pupils or staff. A summary of behaviour that is likely to amount to harassment is found in the Equality and Diversity Code. Further guidance in relation to pupils is to be found in the pupillage policy.

## **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

The pupillage policy contains the appropriate grievance procedure as applies to pupils. Complaints by others outside chambers will be dealt with according to the Pallant Chambers' Complaints Policy.

Any member of staff who may have a grievance is referred to the Staff Handbook which sets out the full grievance procedure.

If a Member of Chambers has a grievance, then this should be raised with the Senior Clerk. If appropriate, the matter should ideally be dealt with informally and without the need for a written grievance and a written decision.

If the matter is not appropriate for informal resolution, then the Member of Chambers should put his / her grievance in writing and provide this to the Head of Chambers.

The Head of Chambers will arrange to have a meeting with the Member of Chambers to discuss the grievance and the way forward. The Head of Chambers may also invite along to the meeting any other Member of Chambers and / or staff member that they consider appropriate.

Depending on the nature of the grievance, the Head of Chambers may delegate the investigation and decision making to another, senior, Member of Chambers. In either case the Head of Chambers / other senior Member of Chambers will seek to ensure that formal grievances are investigated and determined by more than one Member of Chambers.

Appropriate investigation will be undertaken and a decision will be made, and communicated to the Member of Chambers, in writing, within a reasonable period. No-one will be victimised or suffer any detriment, as properly defined, by reason of their raising a grievance in good faith.

Investigations and decisions will be kept as confidential as the circumstances reasonably permit.

Members of Chambers, Pupils and Staff are encouraged to raise any issues of equality or discrimination with the chambers Equality and Diversity Officer (William Emerson).

## **SERVICE PROVISION FOR DISABLED CLIENTS**

Pallant Chambers has a long history in providing services to clients with physical and mental disability and will continue to do so. Pallant Chambers will make reasonable adjustments to provide services to the disabled.

## **STAFF IN CHAMBERS**

Equal opportunities initiatives in chambers apply to staff as well as members of chambers and pupils. A staff handbook covers a wide range of matters and is referred to above, where relevant.

Other Sources of Information:

Chambers keeps apprised of the guidance offered by the Bar Council. Equality and Diversity guidance and advice (for all concerned) is provided on the internet and is regularly reviewed. The information is currently available on the following link:

<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-bar-standards-board/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-rules-of-the-code-of-conduct/>

All Members of Chambers, staff and pupils are encouraged to refer to the same.

## Implementation

Ultimate responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the Management Committee of Pallant Chambers. The Management Committee has an appointed Equality and Diversity Officer who is responsible for the operation of the policy. All barristers, pupils and employees are expected to pay due regard to the provisions of this policy and guidance provided by the Bar Standards Board and are responsible for ensuring compliance with it when undertaking their practice or employment. Acts of unlawful discrimination on any of the forbidden grounds by employees, tenants and pupils and may will result in disciplinary action. Failure to comply with this policy will be treated in a similar fashion. The policy applies to all who are employees, tenants or pupils.

## Monitoring

1. Pallant Chambers will monitor and record equal opportunities information about staff and barristers on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, and disability.
2. Where it is possible to do so, and where doing so will not cause offence or discomfort to those whom it is intended to protect, we will monitor the sexual orientation and religion or belief of staff and barristers so as to ensure that they are not being discriminated against in terms of the opportunities or benefits available to them. We are aware that individuals may choose not to disclose their sexual orientation or religion or belief and that care will be taken to avoid inadvertent discrimination in such cases. For the avoidance of doubt the provision of information is voluntary.

We store equal opportunities data as confidential personal data and restrict access to this information. Equal opportunities information will be used for exclusively for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and have no bearing on opportunities or benefits. Pallant Chambers monitor all elements of:

1. (i) recruitment and selection process (applicants and existing staff and tenants and pupils.);
2. (ii) promotion and the allocation of non assigned work;
3. (iii) training (all training opportunities not restricted to equality and diversity training);
4. (iv) terms and conditions of employment;
5. (v) take up of benefits (work life balance policies eg flexible working requests);
6. (vi) grievance and disciplinary procedures;
7. (vii) resignations;

## Reviews

This policy will be the subject of yearly reviews by the Management Committee. Monitoring of the policy will normally form part of the Management Committee agenda.

Date of next review 01/10/2019

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