

Blackstone Chambers Equality and Diversity Statement

Statement of Principle (“the Statement”)

1. Blackstone Chambers (“Chambers”) is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and equality in the workplace without discrimination on grounds of race, disability, age, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment¹, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation (“the Protected Characteristics”).
2. Chambers is committed to treating others with dignity and respect, regardless of their personal situation, identity, non conformity to gender stereotypes, background, or beliefs and to providing a welcoming and supportive environment for all.
3. Of particular importance is Chambers’ role in furthering the Bar’s aim of being a representative profession.
4. In light of the above, Chambers is committed to the following aims and objectives:
 - To promote equality and diversity both within Chambers and at the Bar in all aspects of recruitment and employment.
 - To seek to improve access to the Bar for individuals from under-represented groups.
 - To embrace and celebrate equality and diversity and ensure the continuing education of all staff and members about the importance of equality and diversity policies, practices, and behaviours.
 - To identify learning opportunities and hold regular training sessions relating to equality and diversity.
 - To contribute to equality and diversity focused events and campaigns.
 - To operate and enforce a policy of prohibiting harassment or discrimination of any kind in relation to the Protected Characteristics.
 - To identify and redress any unconscious bias in relation to Protected Characteristics.
 - To be open to ideas from all staff and members in relation to equality and diversity related changes and improvements.

¹ This reflects the wording of the Equality Act 2010, which specifies statutorily defined protected characteristics. The legal meaning of the phrase ‘gender reassignment’ as used in the Equality Act 2010 has been broadly interpreted in case law and bears that broader legal meaning when used here..

Status of the Statement

5. The Statement is applicable to all who work within Chambers and is identified and made available to all members, staff, pupils, mini-pupils and is published on Chambers' website. The Statement should be read alongside Chambers' Equality and Diversity policy.
6. The Statement does not form part of the contract of employment between any individual and Chambers and it may be amended at any time.

Implementation of the Statement

Equality and Diversity Officers

7. In order for Chambers to achieve its aims and objectives set out above, Chambers shall at all times have at least two Equality and Diversity Officers whose role will be to assess and make recommendations to Chambers regarding its implementation of the Statement. The Equality and Diversity Officers' details are available [HERE](#).
8. The Equality and Diversity Officers will produce and keep up to date an Equality and Diversity Action Plan identifying areas of Chambers' practice and administration and any policies requiring review and/or improvement with a view to meeting the aims of the Statement. Where specific action is required, the Equality and Diversity Officers will make appropriate recommendations for approval by Chambers' Management Committee.
9. The Equality and Diversity Officers will be supported by a sub-committee consisting of the Officers themselves, the Chambers' Director and Chambers' Deputy Director.

Policies

10. Chambers has various written policies dealing with specific aspects of equality and diversity with a view to promoting and meeting the aims and objectives of the Statement set out above. The written policies include the following:

<u>For Members</u>	<u>For Pupils</u>	<u>For Employees</u>	<u>For All</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance Procedure • Flexible Working • Recruitment • Parental Leave • Fair Access to Work • Bullying and Harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance Procedure • Parental Leave • Bullying and Harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental Leave • Recruitment • Flexible Working • Grievance Procedure • Bullying and Harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Racism • Reasonable Adjustments • Modern Slavery • Wellbeing • Diversity data • Equality and Diversity

11. Chambers will ensure that all staff and members are aware of the relevant policies, including those listed above.

Recruitment

12. Chambers values equality and diversity and welcomes applications for all roles in Chambers from candidates from all backgrounds.
13. Chambers has specific recruitment policies in place relating to employees, pupils and members. These recruitment policies specifically consider the possibility of unconscious bias and ensure that all candidates for all roles are assessed and engaged solely on the grounds of merit.

Equality Monitoring

14. Chambers shall conduct equality monitoring and analysis in accordance with Chambers' Diversity Data Policy.

Review of the Statement

15. Chambers shall conduct a regular review of the Statement and the progress made towards achieving the aims and objectives identified in it. The review will inform the Equality and Diversity Officers' action plan.

Queries, Support and Complaints

16. Any general queries regarding the Statement, or the other policies referred to above, can be addressed to one of the Equality and Diversity Officers.
17. All members and staff are encouraged to discuss any general concern, or request for support, in relation to equality and diversity with any of the Equality and Diversity Officers, who will endeavour where appropriate to provide or sign-post the relevant guidance.
18. Particular complaints or grievances should be raised formally or informally in accordance with Chambers' Grievance Procedures.

Approved by Chambers Committee 13.10.2022

Last reviewed October 2022