



## ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

### **Introduction**

1. This policy covers all those working in Chambers, visiting Chambers and providing services to Chambers .
2. Chambers is committed to providing a work environment in which all individuals, clients and the public are treated with dignity and respect. Chambers is determined to promote a work environment in which everyone is treated equally and with dignity and can flourish.

### **What is Harassment?**

3. Harassment in any form will not be tolerated at Chambers. Harassment includes any unwanted conduct related to sex, race, disability, gender re-assignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age. Such behaviour may take many forms including:
  - conduct which is unwanted by the recipient and perceived as hostile or threatening;
  - conduct which gives rise to a hostile or threatening work environment;
  - conduct which creates an atmosphere in which it is feared that rejection or submission will be used as a basis for decisions which have an impact on the recipient at work such as an allocation of work or tenancy decision.
4. The following are examples of types of behaviour which may amount to harassment:
  - physical or sexual assault;
  - requests for sexual favours in return for career advancement;
  - unnecessary physical contact;
  - exclusion from social networks and activities or other forms of isolation;
  - bullying;
  - compromising suggestions or invitations;
  - suggestive remarks or looks;
  - display of offensive materials, including on a computer screen;
  - tasteless jokes or verbal abuse, including any sent by email;
  - offensive remarks or ridicule;
  - dealing inappropriately or inadequately with complaints of harassment.
5. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the above unwanted conduct, it can arise where a person engages in any kind of unwanted sexual behaviour (or gender reassignment or sex related behaviour).

### **Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour, Harassment and Bullying**

6. Everyone who works at Chambers is encouraged to take steps to stop, deter and prevent harassment, bullying and inappropriate behaviour.

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<sup>1</sup> S.26 Equality Act 2010

7. Anyone who witnesses such behaviour directed at another, including hearing harassing or bullying comments, is encouraged to challenge it rather than let it pass (unless to do so would place themselves in danger).
8. Anyone who witnesses such behaviour directed at another, including hearing harassing or bullying comments, is encouraged to bring it to the attention one of the Equality and Diversity Officers (“EDO”).
9. Anyone who learns of such behaviour by another should encourage those involved to raise a concern with an EDO, informally or formally, as set out below.
10. Any barrister who has reasonable grounds to believe that there has been sexual or other harassment by another barrister also has a professional duty to report it to the Bar Standards Board. To fail to do so is a breach of the Code of Conduct, unless they reasonably believe that the misconduct has already been reported to the BSB by someone else. If you are not sure whether an incident should be reported, or has already been reported, you can seek advice from the BSB or Bar Council, or Chambers’ EDOs. Advice can be obtained from the BSB by calling them on 0207 611 1444 or from the Bar Council by calling their Ethical Queries Helpline on 0207 611 1307.

### **Making a Complaint**

11. Complaints of harassment may be raised informally in the first instance with the Chambers Equality and Diversity Officer, the Head of Chambers or another senior member of Chambers who will agree an appropriate response. Formal complaints should be made under the Chambers’ Grievance Procedure.
12. Harassment is misconduct for employees or a breach of the Bar Code of Conduct for barristers. Allegations of harassment will be dealt with under the Chambers’ Disciplinary Procedure.
13. Chambers is committed to ensuring that no-one who makes an allegation of harassment in good faith should be subjected to any detriment as a result. Any victimisation of a complainant, witness or anyone else involved in the investigation of a complaint will be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

### **Additional Practical Steps to Reduce Harassment, Bullying and Inappropriate Behaviour**

14. Recognising that inappropriate behaviour is more common at events where alcohol is served, Chambers shall:
  - i. consider the possibility of non-alcoholic/daytime networking events where appropriate
  - ii. seek to ensure that a good range of soft drinks is readily available at all Chambers functions where alcohol is served, that soft drinks are promoted equally to alcoholic drinks and that soft drinks are as easily available to all as alcoholic drinks;
  - iii. seek to ensure that an appropriate quantity of food, bearing in mind the expected consumption of alcohol, is served at all Chambers functions where alcohol is served.
15. Any person considered by the Head or Deputy Head of Chambers to have consumed too much alcohol at an event shall be asked to leave the event and it is expected that they shall do so promptly and quietly.

16. Any person who, in the view of the Head or Deputy Head of Chambers, consumed too much alcohol at an event may be asked not to attend a future event.
17. This policy shall be actively promoted by the Head of Chambers and/or Deputy Head of Chambers and EDOs.
18. This policy shall be available and easily accessible in the clerksroom and/or can be obtained from the EDOs. A copy of this policy is also available on Chambers website.
19. This policy shall be carefully reviewed at least every 2 years by the EDOs and amended as appropriate.