

Wilberforce Chambers Equality & Diversity Policy

Purpose

Wilberforce Chambers is committed to advancing equality and diversity.

We aim to provide a working environment and culture which values and recognises difference and tackles discrimination pro-actively in order to ensure no individual or group is discriminated against.

Our aim is to ensure that equality is considered in all the organisation's policies, practices and service delivery and to comply fully with the Bar Standards Board (BSB) E&D Rules of the Code of Conduct and all other regulatory and legislative requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Members, pupils, mini-pupils, employees and agency workers
- Clients
- Partner organisations
- Suppliers and sub-contractors
- Visitors

Policy Statement

Wilberforce Chambers is committed to:

- Becoming an organisation which is inclusive and values difference by striving to ensure that our services are accessible to all
- Attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining talented people from all sections of the community to contribute at every level of the organisation
- Creating an environment that upholds the right of everyone to be treated with dignity and respect
- A robust action plan to tackle discrimination and to encourage respect for diversity
- Ensuring members of Wilberforce Chambers will not be treated less favourably because of their disability, race, ethnicity, nationality religion/belief (or lack thereof), gender, gender reassignment, family circumstance, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, political beliefs, pregnancy, social background or for any other characteristic
- Listening to the needs of our staff, members and clients

- Ensuring all staff have a responsibility to be proactive in promoting equality and diversity and tackling unlawful discrimination

Definition

- **Equality** is about treating people fairly and with respect, giving regard for others rights and wishes
- **Diversity** is “otherness” or those human qualities present in other individuals and groups that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong. Diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences. Diversity encompasses the properties and characteristics of a person. These include (but are not limited to) race, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion/belief (or lack thereof), age, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic background and can also include other differences

Implementation

1. Chambers shall have two Equal & Diversity Officers (EDOs), one of whom one shall be a QC, and a Diversity Data Officer (DDO).
2. The EDOs will work with the Management Board to provide a forum where policies and action plans on equality and diversity can be developed, progressed and monitored.
3. Appropriate training and support for all persons responsible for recruitment/selection will be provided to ensure the successful implementation of this policy.

Communication

1. Chambers has written policies on all matters required by the BSB E&D Rules of the Code of Conduct. These policies are available on Chambers intranet and on request from the Executive Director. They include:
 - Bullying & Harassment Policy
 - Diversity Data Policy
 - Flexible working Policy
 - Reasonable Adjustments Policy
 - Fair Access to Work Policy
2. A briefing will be provided to ensure that staff are aware of the policies.
3. Training as described in “Definitions” within the E&D Rules of the Code of Conduct 408.2 (b) and (c) will be provided for all persons participating in recruitment and selection processes to enable them to have a clear understanding of the Equality & Diversity Policy, their responsibilities in regard to this policy and the BSB E&D Rules of the Code of Conduct.

4. This policy can be provided in alternative formats upon request via the EDOs or Chambers' Executive Director.

Complaints

1. Chambers Workforce

- (a) Any member, pupil, mini-pupil, clerk or other employee who wishes to raise an equal opportunities issue which relates to Chambers' business, or activities relating to Chambers' business ("the issue"), should raise it with one of the EDOs.
- (b) If in the opinion of the EDOs the issue is more properly dealt with as a complaint they may, with the consent of the person who raised the issue, refer the issue to the Head of Chambers to be dealt with as a complaint.
- (c) If the issue is not referred to the Head of Chambers to be dealt with as a complaint the EDOs will carry out all necessary investigations into the issue and give all relevant persons the opportunity to state their opinion on the issue. As far as possible the investigation of the issue will be concluded within 28 days of it being raised. On completion of the investigation the EDOs will report their findings to the person who raised the issue and to the Head of Chambers. The report will include details of any changes to Chambers' policies or practices which the EDOs consider should be implemented by Chambers as a result of their investigation.
- (d) All conversations and documents relating to any issue will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent necessary for the investigation of the issue.
- (e) The EDOs will keep a record of every issue raised in accordance with this policy showing:-
 - (i) the nature of the issue;
 - (ii) the report prepared on the conclusion of the investigation;
 - (iii) any steps taken as a result of the issue having been raised.

2. Clients

- (a) Any client wishing to raise an equal opportunities complaint should do so using our Complaints Procedure.

Monitoring and Review

1. Workforce data review

- (a) The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed in accordance with section 408.2 (e) of the BSB E&D Rules of the Code of Conduct.

- (b) We commit to undertake an annual review in respect of data on pupils and to review data on tenants no less than every three years.

Responsibilities

The Management Board is responsible for:

1. Ensuring Wilberforce Chambers meets all its legal and regulatory obligations.
2. Ensuring with assistance from the EDOs that all action plans, strategies, processes and practices arising out of this policy are successfully implemented.
3. Ensuring the policy is reviewed (as described above) and relevant staff attend appropriate training to ensure successful implementation of the policy.
4. Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities under the policy.

Members of recruitment and/or selection panels are responsible for:

1. Ensuring they have completed the required training as set out in the BSB E&D Rules of the Code of Conduct 408.2 (b) & (c).
2. Not discriminating unfairly if involved in recruitment, selection, and /or promotion decisions.

Members, pupils, mini-pupils and employees are responsible for:

1. Fostering an environment where compliance with the policy is integral to their work.
2. Fostering an environment where individual goals can be pursued without fear or intimidation.
3. Not victimising any person who has complained, including complaints of unlawful harassment or discrimination, or who has given information in connection with a complaint.
4. Being proactive in their approach to tackling discrimination in the workplace and for responding to situations appropriately, ensuring that the Equality and Diversity Policy is put into practice.

Partner organisations/suppliers/sub-contractors are responsible for:

1. Ensuring the standards of behaviour implicit in this policy are observed whenever business is being conducted on behalf of Wilberforce Chambers.
2. Ensuring any staff operating on and/or attending our premises observe the standards of behaviour implicit in this policy.

Clients/visitors are responsible for:

1. Ensuring the standards of behaviour implicit in this policy are observed at all times when attending Chambers' premises.