

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

4PB are committed to actively promoting and advancing equality and diversity. Our goal is to ensure that this commitment, reinforced by our values, is embedded in our daily working practices with colleagues, clients and third parties.

“Diversity” refers to the fact that individuals are different. “Equality” refers to equality between individuals (Equality Act 2010).

### **Policy Scope**

This policy applies to:

- Members (including door tenants);
- Pupils (including mini-pupils);
- Employees (including all casual, contract and volunteer workers);
- Tenancy, pupillage or staff applicants;
- Clients (lay and professional clients) and other service users;
- Suppliers & contractors;
- Visitors

All persons coming into contact with chambers will be treated fairly and with respect. We are committed to equality of opportunity and will not tolerate any form of discrimination on the grounds of an individual’s age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity; race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins); religion or belief; sex or sexual orientation. These are known as protected characteristics.

### **Policy Implementation**

4PB has appointed three equality & diversity officers (EDO) Rebecca Foulkes, Ceri White & Andrew Powell and has appointed Cleo Perry as the nominated pupillage EDO. The EDO assisted by the chambers manager are responsible for:

- Monitoring changes in legislation and regulatory requirements and updating chambers policies and procedures accordingly;
- Effective implementation and promotion of the E&D policy;
- Development of the Equality and Diversity plan and its successful implementation;
- Analysis and review of E&D monitoring data, including all recruitment data and fair allocation of work;
- Hearing and resolution of concerns relating to equality and diversity issues.

To facilitate the implementation of this policy 4PB shall:

- Provide a copy of this policy to all members, employees and pupils;
- Publish a copy on the chambers website and internal shared drive;
- Provide regular equality and diversity training to promote awareness and compliance with the policy;
- Ensure that all members and employees who are involved in any recruitment activities have been appropriately trained in fair recruitment and selection process techniques.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

4PB is an equal opportunities employer, committed to developing diversity amongst its members, pupils and employees.

Advertisements for membership, employment and pupillage opportunities will give clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the post. 4PB will, where possible, publish a statement in relation to its commitment to equality and diversity on all vacancy information.

Advertisements will not express or imply preferences linked with protected characteristics, save for circumstances where chambers is pursuing lawful positive action.

All selection will be carried out against defined criteria and will only assess the candidate's suitability for the vacant position. All those involved in the selection and recruitment processes will be suitably trained using the [Bar Council "Fair Recruitment Guide"](#) principles.

### **Fair Access to Work**

The distribution of work to all members of chambers, working pupils and squatters shall be carried out in a manner that is fair to all and without discrimination.

Chambers' clerks will not accede to discriminatory instructions from professional clients, whether solicitors or other instructing agents. Counsel may be selected only on the basis of the skills and experience required for a particular case. If a solicitor or instructing agent refuses to withdraw a discriminatory instruction it must be reported at once to the Head of Chambers who will report it to the Solicitors Regulatory Authority.

### **Equality and Diversity Monitoring & Review**

The selection of pupils is monitored by reference to race, disability and gender in accordance with the procedures set out in the Pupillage Policy. The anonymous data is analysed by the pupillage committee and nominated pupillage EDO. An action plan will be formulated to address any shortcomings identified.

The distribution of work between second six pupils and junior tenants is monitored by the senior clerk in consultation with the director of pupillage and nominated pupillage EDO who will ensure that the distribution of work is carried out in a manner that is fair to all and without discrimination.

Chambers will regularly review the allocation of unassigned work to ensure that such work is distributed to members of Chambers fairly and without discrimination.

Where Chambers seeks to recruit tenants and staff, monitoring data by race, disability and gender shall be collected on the Equality and Diversity Monitoring Forms set out in the Appendix. Copies of application forms/letters of application and Equality and Diversity Monitoring Forms shall be retained for a period of at least 2 years from the date of receipt.

### **Complaints and Grievances**

#### **Chambers' workforce**

Any member, pupil, or employee who wishes to raise an equal opportunities or diversity issue should raise it with one of the EDOs. That EDO may discuss the issue or refer it to another EDO.

If, in the opinion of the EDOs, the issue should be dealt with as a complaint they may, with the consent of the person who raised the matter, refer the complaint to the Head of Complaints so that the procedures set out in the chambers' grievance policy may be adopted to investigate the complaint.

If the matter is not raised as a complaint, then 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. On completion of the investigation the EDOs will report in writing their findings to the person who raised the issue and to the management committee. 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.

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.

The EDOs will keep a record of every issue raised in accordance with this policy showing:-

- (i) the nature of the issue;
- (ii) the investigation report;
- (iii) any action taken as a result of the issue having been raised.

#### **Clients**

Any client, visitor or contractor who wishes to raise a complaint in relation to an equality and diversity issue should do so by using chambers' client complaints procedure.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if legal or regulatory requirements are implemented. The policy will be reviewed by one of the chambers Equality and Diversity Officers. The date of the next policy review will be February 2021.