

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT POLICY

Introduction

4PB are committed to ensuring that disabled people are not disadvantaged in accessing our services. Chambers will make reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities and this document sets out our policy, but doesn't seek to explain how will approach every situation.

The Equality Act 2010 deals with the rights of disabled people to the provision of services. It is incumbent upon Chambers as a responsible service provider and employer to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people in order that they are treated fairly.

This policy applies to all individuals who interact with 4PB including clients, current and prospective members, pupils, and employees.

Policy statements

4PB intends to provide its professional services to all who require them regardless of any disability they may have.

4PB will employ the best candidate for the job and undertakes to make all reasonable adjustments within its power to enable the person to work within Chambers having regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

4PB will continue to improve facilities to and beyond the minimum requirements of the Act as part of the ongoing maintenance and marketing plans.

Circulation

This policy will be circulated to all barristers, pupils and employees of 4PB, who are required to read and understand it.

Definition of disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as someone who:

“has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect of his/her ability to carry out normal day-to day activities. “Substantial” means more than a minor or trivial and “long term” means 12 months or more.”

What is a reasonable adjustment?

A reasonable adjustment involves us adapting the way we usually do things to ensure fairness to everyone. This may include changes to a physical feature, provision, criteria or practice that removes or reduces a substantial disadvantage to a person who has a disability.

There are three circumstances where we have a legal duty to make a reasonable adjustment. These include where a person with a disability would be disadvantaged (compared to a person without a disability) by:

- a provision, criteria or practice;
- a physical feature;
- a need to use of an auxiliary aid.

4PB will not make assumptions about whether a disabled person requires any adjustment or what these adjustments should be. We will discuss any requirements with the person concerned and seek to reach an agreement of what the reasonable adjustment/s may be.

Types of reasonable adjustment

4PB will consider each request for a reasonable adjustment individually. The adjustments will always be agreed with the individual concerned to avoid making an incorrect assumption about a person's needs.

4PB will strive to be fully inclusive to all clients, tenants, pupils, staff and any potential tenants, pupils and staff. However, our situation in a listed building makes it difficult to give full access to the premises to those with certain physical disabilities. In these circumstances we will arrange meetings in an alternative venue with appropriate access and facilities.

This policy does not provide a comprehensive list of the reasonable adjustments that 4PB will make. Some examples of simple reasonable adjustments are:

- provision of auxiliary aids;
- provision of information in appropriate alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille, coloured paper)
- extension of time limits (where lawful and within our power to do so);
- arranging meetings in rooms with appropriate access and facilities;
- using email or the telephone in preference to hard copy letters where appropriate;
- speaking clearly and offering additional time to explain matters;
- use of plain English;
- communication through a representative or an intermediary;
- rest/comfort breaks in meetings;
- provision of assistance dogs.

Consideration of reasonable adjustment requests

All requests will be considered on a case by case basis and will be considered as quickly as practicable. Initially requests will be considered by the Chambers Manager in consultation with the Equality & Diversity Officers (EDO).

In the majority of cases 4PB will be able to agree and deliver the required reasonable adjustment without delay.

The equality act does not define what is “reasonable”. 4PB will consider the following factors when considering is an adjustment is ‘reasonable’:

- the effectiveness of the adjustment/s in preventing or reducing the disadvantage to a disabled person;
- the practicality of 4PB making the adjustment/s;
- the availability of 4PB resources, including financial and external assistance that may be required;
- disruption to 4PB business activities by implementing the adjustment

If 4PB concludes that it is not possible to make the requested reasonable adjustment they will provide reasons for the decision and discuss any viable alternatives with the person concerned.

Cost of making reasonable adjustments

4PB will NOT under any circumstances pass on the cost of making a reasonable adjustment to the person concerned.

Review

This policy was adopted by 4PB in May 2019. The policy will be reviewed in May 2021 or earlier if there are any legal or regulatory changes.