



Ref	Policy 1.01
Issue	02
Date	30/04/2021

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Authorised

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Reviewed By	
Authorised By	Naomi Madderson

Version Control

Issue	Date	Changes from Previous Version
01	01.07.2020	First Version
02	30.04/2021	Second Version

Purpose & Scope

Crown Chambers is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We vehemently oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination at all times.

The aim of the policy is for all those associated with Crown Chambers to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best. This policy has been prepared to record the Chambers' commitment to support equality and diversity in the workplace.

Crown Chambers strives to provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time. We do not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This Policy has regard to the legal obligations, principles and guidance derived from the Equality Act 2010 and the related Codes of Practice.

Crown Chambers recognises that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only right as a matter of principle and consistent with our core values, but that it is also good management practice.

This Policy will help us, and those who work with and for us, to develop our full potential, and thus promotes respect for the individual worth of all people involved with Crown Chambers.

This policy applies to;

- Members, including associate and academic members,
- Employees,
- Applicants for membership, employment or other engagements,
- Trainees/Pupils
- Individuals on work experience,
- Contract workers (including casual workers),
- Agency workers,
- Volunteer workers,
- Clients (lay and professional) and other service users,
- Providers of services to Crown Chambers,
- Anyone who has formerly fallen into one of the categories above, but whose relationship with Crown Chambers has either terminated or altered, and
- Visitors to Crown Chambers

Crown Chambers is committed as a business and its members, employees to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.

- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- Responsibilities include all members conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.
- Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.
- Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

All applicants for membership, employment, traineeship, and work experience and all others who work with or for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against because of any of the protected characteristics by colleagues. We will also use our best endeavours to protect colleagues from discrimination or harassment in the course of their work by persons outside Crown Chambers.

Decisions about membership, recruitment and selection, promotion, training, pay, disciplinary action and any other matter will be made objectively and with the aims and commitments in this Policy in mind.

Responsibility for implementation of this Policy lies with the Head of Chambers, reporting to the Equality & Diversity Officer(s) and to the Management Committee (MC).

In order to implement the Policy, Crown Chambers shall:

- Provide a copy of this Policy to all existing employees, members and trainees,
- Provide a copy of this Policy to all new employees, members and trainees in their induction packs as part of their initial diversity training,
- Require all employees, members and trainees to sign an acknowledgement that they have read and understood copy of this Policy,
- Publish a copy of this Policy on Crown Chambers website,
- Inform all job applicants, students on work experience, contract workers, agency workers and volunteer workers of the existence of this Policy and provide a copy of this Policy to such persons upon request,
- Retain a copy of this Policy on a public drive on the Crown Chambers serve,
- Produce an annual report on equality and diversity at the Crown Chambers Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year,
- Have regard to this Policy when allocating work to third party organisations which do business with Crown Chambers, monitor compliance with it thereafter, and endeavour to ensure that Crown Chambers only does business with third party organisations who respect equal opportunities principles in their dealings with Crown Chambers,
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of this Policy, and
- Create and implement an equality and diversity action plan that is reviewed annually by the EDO(s). This will be the responsibility of the EDO(s) in conjunction with the Management Committee. The action plan should be communicated to the MC and published in the MC papers for the benefit of all members.

Equality and Diversity Officer(s)

Pursuant to the implementation of the BSB Equality rules, Crown Chambers will appoint Equality and Diversity Officer(s) on the following basis:

Two Equality & Diversity Officers should be appointed:

- One EDOs should be a member (whether full, associate or academic) and one EDO should be a member of staff (except for the Head of Chambers who should not act as the EDO at any time).
- EDOs who are members shall be appointed for a three year term, but are entitled to resign from the position on reasonable notice (which will normally be at least three weeks) at any time.
- Appointments shall, where possible, be staggered so that there is the ability for one EDO to have legacy knowledge on recent issues.
- None of the EDOs should be a member of the MC at any time during their appointment.
- EDOs will work collaboratively with the MC on a regular basis.
- The EDOs should have a good understanding of the principles of equality and discrimination law knowledge before taking up their role.
- The EDOs will be responsible for all equality and diversity regulatory matters as listed by the BSB rules.

Appointment of EDOs

The following procedure shall apply to the appointment of EDOs who are members:

- In good time before the expiry of an EDO's term or (where possible) before the expiry of any notice given by a current EDO, the MC shall invite members, to express an interest in becoming an EDO. The MC may, if it considers it appropriate, encourage particular individuals to express an interest.
- Any prospective EDO shall communicate their willingness to become an EDO to the MC.
- The MC shall identify a suitable candidate EDO from those who have expressed an interest or, if no person expresses an interest, take such further steps as it considers appropriate to identify a suitable candidate.
- The MC shall notify the membership and staff of its preferred candidate. The notice shall identify an email address to which any concerns or objections may be sent.
- Within seven days of such notice, any person may set out in an email and send to that email address any reasons why they consider a person may be unsuitable for such a post. Any such email will be treated by the MC in confidence.
- The MC shall consider any reasons offered, and decide whether or not to appoint the preferred candidate. Where an EDO is appointed, arrangements should be made for them to receive training as appropriate.
- The appointment of the EDO shall be endorsed by the membership at the next General Meeting or the next AGM (whichever is sooner). An appointed and endorsed candidate shall take up their position as EDO on the expiry of the term or notice of the existing EDO, as the case may be. An appointed candidate may take up the position pending endorsement.
- In a case where the MC decides not to appoint its preferred candidate, or the membership does not endorse the appointment, the MC shall identify another preferred candidate from any person who has expressed an interest and shall follow the procedure set out above.

Training

Crown Chambers will provide equality and diversity training at least every three years to all members and staff.

Such training will be mandatory for all members and staff. This includes associate and academic members.

Failure to attend equality and diversity training without good reason shall be considered a breach of this Policy and sanctions may be applied pursuant to the Conduct & Capability Procedure.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, no members or employees shall take part in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion unless they have received training in non-discriminatory selection techniques within the previous three years.

Any training provided will, as a minimum, address all criteria set out in the BSB Equality Rules and take into account the advice on non-discriminatory recruitment in Part 2 of the EHRC's Code of Practice on Employment.

Information about vacant posts for employment, traineeship, membership or work experience will be provided in a manner that does not restrict its audience in terms of any protected characteristic.

Crown Chambers will publish the statement set out below on detailed vacancy information for job vacancies, work experience placements, traineeship and membership posted on its website:

“Crown Chambers strives to be an equal opportunities employer and is committed to diversity amongst its staff, members and trainees. We therefore encourage and welcome applications from underrepresented or disadvantaged groups (including, for example, women, BAME candidates, disabled candidates and LGBT+ candidates). We are happy to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled candidates to demonstrate their suitability for the job and to consider flexible working in appropriate cases.”

All vacancies for employment will be notified internally via the intranet as well as externally, through appropriate non-discriminatory advertising.

Where appropriate, persons from underrepresented groups will be particularly invited to apply and Crown Chambers will endeavour to use those advertising media that are likely to attract the widest and/or most diverse group of candidates.

Descriptions and specifications for posts be reviewed by an EDO so as to ensure that they do not discriminate and will include only those requirements that are reasonably necessary and justifiable for the performance of the job.

All selection will be conducted against defined criteria and will deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job.

In the case of short-term or casual work where a full and open recruitment process would be disproportionate, recruitment will be through a Job Centre or any another appropriate agency that demonstrates compliance with good equal opportunities practice generally, and in particular in relation to the selection of candidates for work.

Crown Chambers will establish appropriate information, monitoring and review systems to assist the effective implementation of this Policy.

Crown Chambers is committed to the review and analysis of the allocation of work to members. This process is set out in the Fair Allocation of Work Procedure.

The reporting of work allocation monitoring results shall prioritise the anonymity of members and their protected characteristics, and therefore the redaction of information may be required in order to preserve identities.

Anyone to whom this Policy applies who believes that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation contrary to this Policy, is entitled to raise that concern.

They should seek advice from an EDO, and/or should follow the Grievance & Complaints Procedure.

Anyone to whom this Policy does not apply, who wishes to make a complaint relating to breach of this Policy by someone to whom it does apply, should raise that complaint with the Head of Chambers, who will decide how the complaint ought to be addressed within our internal our Grievance & Complaints Procedures.

All complaints in relation to this Policy will be treated seriously and promptly.

You are able to seek the advice of an EDO (Sarah Fearon) in relation to any matter relating to this Policy EDO's.

References

ACAS Guide Equality and Diversity

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

Definitions

None

This policy has been approved & authorised by:

Name: Naomi Madderson

Position: Head of Chambers

Date:30/04/2021

Signature: