



## Flexible Working Policy

### Introduction

1. This Policy has been produced in accordance with the BSB Handbook rC110.3.I, which requires that:

*“...Chambers has a flexible working policy which covers the right of a member of chambers or employee to take a career break, to work part-time, to work flexible hours or to work from home so as to enable them to manage their family responsibilities or disability without giving up work.”*

2. This Policy has been written as a guide to how Chambers will deal with Members who wish to work flexibly for any of the above reasons, or for reasons of long term illness or sabbatical. Employees should refer to their contracts and any staff policies for the different provisions that apply to them, rather than this Policy.
3. All Members of Chambers as self-employed individuals are able to set their own working patterns, subject firstly to their obligations under Chambers’ Constitution to pay their Chambers’ contribution, unless specific provision is made in the Constitution or other Policy for any reduction or modification of that contribution; and secondly, regardless of the ability to work flexibly, all members of Chambers shall devote such time to their practice as shall be reasonably necessary to ensure that they provide proper professional services to lay and professional clients.
4. Chambers endeavours to work within the relevant statutory, regulatory and professional frameworks in relation to equality and diversity, and recognises that those with certain protected characteristics (e.g. those with disabilities, those with caring responsibilities, and those in older age groups) are afforded protection from various types of discrimination in relation to flexible working and reasonable adjustments under equalities legislation.



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5. This Policy is published on Chambers' website and is thereby made available to all Members of Chambers, Clerks and staff, all of whom are required to read and understand this Policy and understand their role in relation to it.

### **Guidelines on Flexible Working**

6. Chambers recognises that, from time to time, Members may decide they want to work more flexibly than is customary in full-time self-employed practice at the Bar. This may be so as to enable them to manage childcare, family or other responsibilities, or to manage the effects of any ill-health or disability that they or a family member may have, alongside the continuation of their practice, or for other reasons. Generally, such arrangements are a matter of the Member's individual choice in accordance with paragraph 3 above.
7. In order to ensure that Members working flexibly are not being discriminated against on any of the protected grounds under the Equality Act 2010 and for reasons of good practice management, they are encouraged to discuss with a Clerk of appropriate seniority their wish to work flexibly and to discuss the ongoing arrangements in their practice reviews. They are also encouraged to declare that they are working flexibly when information is being gathered for the purposes of Chambers' collection of diversity information for the purposes of the Bar Standards Board's Handbook E&D monitoring provisions.
8. Chambers recognises that it is in its long-term interests to retain all Members, including those who work flexibly, in whose practices it has invested time and money and that accommodating and actively managing flexible working arrangements is likely to aid long-term retention of such Members in Chambers and in practice at the Bar.
9. Chambers shall encourage its Clerks to undertake training in relation to flexible working.
10. Chambers will ensure that a Member working flexibly for whatever reason is:
  - a. Invited to training events, social occasions, marketing events and Chambers meetings;



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- b. Informed about and consulted on any significant issues affecting their practice and the practice of Chambers.

### 11. The following guidelines should be followed:

- a. When the Member decides they wish to work flexibly, they should meet with a Clerk of appropriate seniority prior to starting flexible working to discuss the following: -
  - i. the reason that they wish to work flexibly (if appropriate);
  - ii. the hours and days that they wish to work, where the Member intends to be based (home or Chambers);
  - iii. any geographical limitations the Member would like to be placed on work allocated to them;
  - iv. how their proposed days and hours of work are likely to affect the other Members of their practice group;
  - v. how the Member wishes their flexible working to be referred to in conversations with clients and other Members of Chambers;
  - vi. what arrangements the Member is going to make to ensure good communications are maintained with the Clerks and with solicitors;
  - vii. logistical issues (pigeon-hole contents; IT; couriers etc.);
  
- b. A review meeting should take place between approximately four and six weeks after the start of the flexible working, and at subsequent practice meetings, at which the Member and a Clerk of appropriate seniority should consider points 11.a.i-vii above to see if the arrangements made are working in practice, or need to be adjusted;
  
- c. If the period of flexible working involves a period where the Member ceases to undertake any work at all (e.g. sabbatical, illness), Chambers, through the Clerks, will ensure that the Member returning to practice is assisted in the re-establishment of their practice.



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12. Members who have a disability should also refer to Chambers' Reasonable Adjustments Policy if necessary, and the government's Access to Work scheme, which provides equipment and assistance to disabled individuals who may need additional equipment to be supplied to remove a disadvantage they suffer in the workplace.
  
13. Complaints in relation to this Policy or any other matter in respect of flexible working may be raised informally with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer or formally. Whichever method is used, Chambers' Internal Complaints Policy and Procedure applies.
  
14. This Policy was adopted on the date below. Chambers' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this Policy. It is intended that this Policy, and its operation, should be regularly reviewed.

This Policy comes into effect on the date specified below; the Flexible Working Policy approved by the Board on 24 April 2019 and reviewed by the EDI Officer on 17 December 2020 is revoked.

Approved and implemented by the Secretary in consultation with the Head of Chambers pursuant to delegated powers:

**I.J.C**

2 January 2024