

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

Introduction

1. This Flexible Working Policy is produced in accordance with the Bar Code of Conduct, C.110.3.I, this materially requires that:
'...chambers has a flexible working policy which covers the right of a member of chambers, manager or employee) to take a career break, or 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. In this Flexible Working policy chambers:
 - i) Seeks to support and where applicable encourage flexible working arrangements including taking career breaks, working part-time, working reduced hours and working flexible hours.
 - ii) Without prejudice to the generality of the above, where applicable the policy also seeks, depending on the circumstances, to facilitate flexible working as a reasonable adjustment for disabled people.
3. Chambers recognises the rights referred to in C.110.3.I of the Code of Conduct.
4. Employees should also refer to their contracts of employment in relation to their material rights.
5. All members of chambers are able to conduct their own working life and arrange their working patterns subject to their obligations under Chambers' constitution and to ensure they devote such time to their practice as shall be reasonably necessary to ensure that they provide proper professional services to lay and professional clients of theirs or of chambers.

Distribution of Policy

6. This policy is to be circulated to all members, clerks and staff and ensure that they read and understand the policy and their role in relation to it.

Flexible Working

7. It is recognised that from time to time members of chambers may decide to work flexibly so as to enable them to manage family, childcare or other responsibilities or manage the effects of ill-health or disability they or their family have while continuing their practice.
8. To ensure that members working flexibly are not discriminated against on any grounds and to aid good practice management, they are encouraged to discuss with the Senior Clerk their wish to work flexibly and to discuss arrangements.
9. Chambers acknowledges that it is in chambers' long-term interest to retain members, including those who are working flexibly, and that managing the arrangements is likely to aid retention of members in chambers.
10. A member wishing to work flexibly should discuss with the Senior Clerk prior to commencing working flexible hours the following:
 - a. Why they wish to work flexibly;
 - b. The days and hours they wish to work;
 - c. Where they wish to be located;
 - d. Any limitations the member would like to be placed on work allocated to them;
 - e. Whether and how their proposed flexible working life will impact on other members of chambers;
 - f. Whether and how the member wishes their flexible working life is to be raised with clients and other members of chambers;
 - g. What arrangements the member intends to make to ensure working communications are maintained with clerks and clients;
 - h. Any practical or logistical issues that arise.
11. Chambers' telephone, IT and online facilities and resources will be used to assist members, pupils and staff to work remotely and/or flexibly.

12. Members and staff, in particular the clerks, will assist by taking reasonable steps to try and ensure flexible working is achievable and as free from difficulties as practically possible. For example, this includes re-directing instructions via DX or post, emailing or scanning documents. This may also include forwarding and/or connecting telephone calls to the flexible worker's alternative telephone number or not doing so during set hours during the day (for example between 8.30 – 9.30 a.m. during the school run).
13. Those working flexible hours will be informed of Chambers' marketing, social or other events to ensure those who work flexible will remain fully integrated into the life of chambers. They will also be informed and consulted on any material issues affecting their practice and the practice of chambers.

Review of flexible working arrangements

14. The member working flexibly and the Senior Clerk (or in their absence) their deputy shall review the flexible working arrangements six (6) weeks after the member has commenced flexible working and make any adjustments required or desirable.
15. The arrangements in relation to a member working flexible shall also be reviewed and adjusted, if necessary, at the member's Practice Review.

Return from flexible working

16. Any member wishing to cease working flexibly shall discuss the matter with the Senior Clerk and consideration and any appropriate arrangements shall be made in relation to the member ceasing to work flexibly, including informing any clients or other members of chambers.

Pupils and prospective pupils

17. It is recognised that pupils may sometimes need to work flexibly to enable them to manage family, childcare or caring responsibilities, or manage the effects of ill-health or disability.

18. Chambers shall consider and, where possible, accommodate, pupils' requests for flexible working arrangements to allow them to manage family, childcare or caring responsibilities or manage the effects of ill-health or disability. Any decisions on flexible working arrangements will be made in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory obligations, including any duty to make reasonable adjustments.

19. The need to have flexible working arrangements for these reasons should not, as far as possible, affect the allocation of work during the practising period of pupillage. The need for flexible working arrangements for these reasons shall not, in any way, affect a pupil's chances of being recruited as a tenant.

20. Prospective pupils who need flexible working arrangements to manage existing family, childcare or caring responsibilities or to manage the effects of ill-health or disability may discuss with the Pupillage Committee how their working hours and arrangements can be altered to accommodate such commitments and needs.

Complaints

21. Any member who wishes to make a complaint regarding a breach of this policy or wishes to raise an issue with flexible working or career breaks should in the first instance contact Chambers' Equality and Diversity Officers (currently Jared Norman & Emma Godfrey).

Other information

22. Members who have a disability should also refer to chambers' Reasonable Adjustments if necessary and/or the government's Access to Work scheme in relation to the provision of equipment and/or assistance to disabled individuals who may need equipment to remove a disadvantage they may suffer in the workplace.

Review

23. The Equal Opportunities Officers will from time to time review this policy and raise any issues that arise with the Management Committee and/or Chambers as a whole.

Career Breaks

1. In addition to chamber's Flexible Working Policy, chambers has a Sabbatical policy.
2. This policy on sabbaticals/career breaks is distinct from chambers' Parental Leave policy.
3. Chambers are supportive of those who wish to take a sabbatical whether for family, health or other valid reasons.
4. The member seeking a career break and the management committee will discuss arrangements relating to the career break including, but not limited to, payment of member's contributions during the break, retention of the member's room and return to chambers following the break. While the terms upon which chambers will agree a career break are at the discretion of the Management Committee, the Management Committee will exercise its discretion in a way so as to not discriminate on prohibited grounds.

Review

5. The Equal Opportunities Officers will from time to time review this policy and raise any issues that arise with the Management Committee and/or Chambers as a whole.