

Garden Court North Chambers' Reasonable Adjustment Policy

Aim and remit of policy

1. In developing this policy, Garden Court North Chambers aims to anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments as required.
2. Chambers is committed to:
 - a. Actively considering whether a provision, criterion, practice, physical feature or lack of auxiliary aid is likely to put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage and factoring this into any decision-making;
 - b. Making reasonable adjustments in order to remove or reduce substantial disadvantage for disabled people working with Chambers or receiving legal services;
 - c. Adopting an anticipatory approach and considering making reasonable adjustments without waiting for a request.
3. This policy covers all employees, temporary workers, those who provide a service to Chambers, members and associate members, pupils, mini-pupils and visitors to Chambers.

Circulation

4. This policy is made available to all members and associate members, staff, pupils, mini-pupils and any others who are required to read and understand it.

Definition of disability

5. For the purposes of this policy Chambers use as a starting point the definition of disability contained within the Equality Act 2010, s. 6 and Schedule 1. A person is therefore disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. "Substantial" means more than minor or trivial and "long term" means 12 months or more. However, where there is a doubt about whether someone meets this definition, we would seek to level up rather than level down and make the adjustment sought if it could reasonably be done. Under Schedule 1, a person has a disability if they have cancer, HIV infection, or multiple sclerosis. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010 a person is deemed to have a disability, and

hence to be a disabled person, if they are certified as blind, severely sight impaired, sight impaired or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist.

6. Chambers recognise and will be mindful that disability is not always visible and that many people with disabilities choose not to disclose their disability.

Anticipating reasonable adjustments

7. Delivering an anticipatory approach to reasonable adjustments requires Chambers to think in advance about removing barriers experienced by disabled persons; to identify any possible disability-related disadvantage and to take reasonable steps to avoid it.
8. Examples of circumstances in which reasonable adjustments should be considered include:
 - Decisions regarding moving, changing or refurbishing premises
 - Monitoring access to premises and facilities
 - Introduction of new systems (for example new software) or new processes
 - Allocation of rooms and workspaces
 - Recruitment processes
 - Use of external venues for events
 - Arranging Chambers' social and wellbeing activities
 - Considering applications for part-time or flexible working arrangements

Types of reasonable adjustment

9. This policy does not provide an exhaustive list of the reasonable adjustments that Chambers will make however the following types of reasonable adjustment that may be made are listed below:
 - Provision of information in alternative formats
 - Provision of auxiliary aids or equipment
 - Provision of a reader or interpreter
 - Provision of accessible facilities
 - Paid leave for disabled employees of Chambers
 - Workstation adjustments
 - Remote working or participation in Chambers' business
10. It is important not to act on assumptions but to be prepared to ask in advance what, if any, reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure individuals are not being put to unreasonable difficulty.

11. In assessing whether an adjustment is reasonable, Chambers will follow the guidance given by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to the effect that: “When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable, service providers can consider issues such as the cost of the adjustment, the practicality of making it, health and safety factors, the size of the organisation, and whether it will achieve the desired effect ... In considering what is reasonable, you may consider factors such as your organisation’s financial resources: generally, more is expected of larger organisations.”
12. Further, Chambers will be mindful of the practical and financial support for people who have a disability via the government’s Access to Work scheme.

Staff, members, associate members and pupils

13. Individuals should make requests for reasonable adjustment decisions as follows:
 - a. For staff, to the Chair of the Staffing Committee
 - b. For members and associate members, to the Chair of the Planning Committee
 - c. For pupils, to either their pupil supervisor or the Chair of the Pupillage Committee.
14. An individual who does not feel comfortable making a request through the above channels is encouraged to speak to a trusted colleague or staff member and invite them to raise the matter on their behalf.
15. All requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case by case basis and, where necessary, with the advice and assistance of Chambers’ Equality and Diversity Committee. All information given will be kept confidential by Chambers, save where is necessary to implement the reasonable adjustment. Where it is not possible to make the adjustment requested viable alternatives will be discussed with the individual.
16. The Head of Chambers, in conjunction with the Operations Manager¹, is responsible for considering whether or not disabled staff, members and associate members or pupils require assistance during an emergency evacuation and, if so, whether or not a personal emergency evacuation plan is required for the individual(s) concerned. If so, the plan will be developed in partnership with the individual concerned in order to ensure that adjustments to the emergency evacuation procedure may be made.

¹ In accordance with Chambers’ Health and Safety Arrangements document.

Visitors to Chambers

17. Visitor requests for specific reasonable adjustments may be made in advance by contacting our Operations Manager or, in their absence, by the Head of Practice Management on 0161 8176377 or regulatory@gcnchambers.co.uk. Our website and publicity material will make clear that reasonable adjustments will be made for service users and identify the person(s) to whom requests should be made.
18. Members and associate members are responsible for considering whether their visitors are likely to need reasonable adjustments and alerting staff to the same.

Cost of making reasonable adjustments

19. In no circumstances will Chambers pass on the cost of a reasonable adjustment to a disabled person.

Monitoring and review

20. This policy was adopted on 13 March 2022. It will be reviewed by Chambers' Equality and Diversity Committee annually, ahead of Chambers' Annual General Meeting.