

Workforce Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Introduction

Doughty Street Chambers is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and to promoting a culture and practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that no member of Chambers' workforce (staff, all member, pupil or associate) or applicant for any position in Chambers is subjected to disadvantages due to their disability, in comparison to a non-disabled individual, where a reasonable adjustment can be put in place.

This policy applies to all areas of Chambers' work including recruitment, selection, pupillage training, deployment, career development, and promotion.

Chambers' duty

The Equality Act 2010 places a positive obligation on Chambers to make all adjustments that are reasonable for the purpose of removing, reducing, or preventing substantial disadvantages faced by disabled individuals, when compared to nondisabled individuals. The duty arises once Chambers knows or could reasonably be expected to know that a member of the workforce, or applicant, is disabled.

The duty arises in relation to:

- any workplace provision, criterion, or practice
- any physical feature within the workplace
- any provision of auxiliary aids or service

Chambers' commitment

Chambers is committed to taking positive and proactive steps throughout all of our operations and the ongoing engagement of our people to ensure appropriate and effective adjustments are put in place.

This commitment covers all areas of Chambers' work and infrastructure. This is a non-exhaustive list of circumstances where reasonable adjustments may be made:

- Application process
- Recruitment assessments
- Interview process
- Induction sessions
- Workloads
- Working hours
- Workspaces

- Training sessions
- Access to facilities such as kitchen facilities
- Absence management
- Practice management

We encourage all members of the workforce to [make](#) any request for adjustments or for consideration of adjustments using this form or raise the question of adjustments with your line manager, the People Team and/or the Head of Facilities as soon as possible.

Chambers' policy is to make adjustments wherever it will remove, reduce, or prevent a disadvantage or impairment and it is reasonably practical for Chambers to make it regardless of whether it is under a statutory duty to do so. Concerns about whether the individual is disabled as defined by the Equality Act or whether the adjustment will be required by the Equality Act should not discourage individuals making a request. Chambers will also aim to make adjustments to address disadvantage from health conditions which are not disabilities, wherever reasonable, and will seek to follow the process in this policy by analogy.

For reasonable adjustment in pupillage, please refer to the [policy](#).

Chambers' approach

All requests relating to adjustments, and proactive consideration of adjustments, will be treated positively and with sensitivity in line with Chambers' commitment. No detriment, harassment or unfavourable treatment will result as a consequence of an individual bringing any adjustment matters to the attention of Chambers.

All requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the advice and assistance of the Head of People and the Head of Facilities. Where it is not possible to make the adjustment requested, Chambers' Chief Executive Officer will discuss viable alternatives with the individual.

Internal process

Once Chambers receives a request for adjustments or consideration of adjustments, or it becomes aware that an individual is disabled or may be disabled in a way that may be causing a disadvantage, then subject to their consent, the information will be shared only with their line manager (if staff), the People Team and (if applicable) the Head of Facilities.

Unless the request is for a particular adjustment which can be actioned without a meeting, then if consent has been given, a meeting will be arranged to provide opportunity for discussion about the disadvantages faced by the individual and the identification of potential adjustments that could reduce or remove these. At the meeting, the [reasonable adjustment action plan](#) will also be filled in to contain a record of these discussions.

Full consideration will be given to each adjustment to determine whether it:

- reduces, removes, or prevents the disadvantage faced by the individual requesting the reasonable adjustment and
- is reasonable for Chambers to make.

A confirmation of the adjustments that will be put in place after this meeting will be sent to the individual in writing. A completed reasonable adjustment action plan will also be placed on the individual's record to ensure this is accessible to the relevant people.

Using trial periods

An optional trial period allows Chambers and the individual to evaluate the practical impact of any agreed adjustments, ensuring that these go as far as possible towards reducing, removing, or preventing disadvantages faced by the individual.

To ensure Chambers is meeting its commitment of putting in place appropriate and effective adjustments, the use of a trial period for adjustments may be introduced where appropriate. A trial period will only be used where this is agreed by the individual and will be for a short period. A review at the end of the trial period will be used to assess the practical suitability of the adjustment and may, if this is not suitable, lead to amendments or alternative adjustments being introduced.

Reviewing adjustments

As part of its ongoing commitment, Chambers will undertake periodic reviews of agreed adjustments in conjunction with the individual concerned to ensure these remain suitable and have the continued required effect.

The review will be undertaken once an adjustment has been in place for at least 3 months and will be repeated at agreed intervals, or at the request of the individual. It will be a collaborative review involving discussion between the individual and the People Team, and, as applicable, a manager or supervisor and the Head of Facilities. The intention is to allow full consideration of the effectiveness of the adjustment.

The outcome of this review may be that the adjustment in place continues, is altered or alternative adjustments are introduced as may be agreed.

External advice and assessments

To aid the consideration of suitable adjustments, individuals are encouraged to provide Chambers with any reports, advice or guidance that they have received from third parties such as GPs, Occupational Therapists, and work coaches. Any advice or guidance provided will be used to consider the effectiveness of introducing, and continuing, the workplace adjustments.

It may be the case that an Occupational Health (OH) referral is suitable to receive expert advice on necessary adjustments. In these circumstances, the individual's consent will be sought in advance of any referral.

An individual may also ask Chambers to commission an OH assessment, before or after consideration of other adjustments by Chambers. Unless it is clearly unnecessary for the purpose of making the adjustment, an OH assessment is likely to be a reasonable adjustment in itself.

Reasonable adjustment for applicants

Applicants for pupillage, tenancy and staff positions are asked to indicate alongside their application form whether any reasonable adjustments are required during the application process. This information is removed before the interview panel receives the application. Requests are dealt with by the Head of People and will only be shared with the interview panel so far as necessary.

Insofar as relevant, the information in the rest of this policy will guide Chambers' approach.

Potential reasonable adjustments include but not limited to:

- Additional time for assessments
- Larger font for interview documents
- Earplugs to reduce audio disturbance
- Providing interview questions in advance of an interview
- Changing the interview format

Concerns

If an individual has any concerns regarding the making or consideration of workplace adjustments, they are encouraged to bring this to the attention of Chief Executive Officer as soon as possible. The CEO, or a person nominated, will undertake an investigation and report back to the individual concerned, and discuss a resolution.

Alternatively, where this is not appropriate, an individual may raise any concerns through the internal grievance policy if all the collaborative processes detailed above have been exhausted. The policy is available to view *on the Chambers [policies](#) on the Everyone@DSC teams' site.*