

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Chambers is committed to ensuring that disabled people are not disadvantaged. The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that, as far as is reasonable, a disabled member or worker has the same access to everything that is involved in doing and keeping a job as a non-disabled person. To this end the chambers will make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and this document sets out our policy, but does not seek to explain how we will approach every situation.

1.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires us to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people in order that disabled people are treated fairly. The need to make a reasonable adjustment arises when a disabled person is put at substantial disadvantage to a person who is not disabled.

1.3 This policy applies to all members, staff, prospective members and prospective staff. It applies to all stages of membership and employment.

1.4 It does not matter if the worker was a disabled person when they began working for or became a member of Chambers or if they have become a disabled person while a member of or working for Chambers. Chambers only has to make these changes where we know or could reasonably be expected to know that a worker is a disabled person and is - or is likely to be - at a substantial disadvantage as a result. This means doing everything we can reasonably be expected to do to find out.

2. Definition of disability

2.1 For the purposes of this policy the definition of disability follows that set out in the Equality Act 2010 s.6. A person is therefore disabled if s/he:

“has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. “Substantial” means more than minor or trivial and “long term” means 12 months or more”.

3. What is a reasonable adjustment?

3.1 A reasonable adjustment is any practicable adjustment made to any chambers physical feature, provision, criterion or practice which removes or reduces substantial disadvantage in accessing that service

to a disabled person.

3.2 The legal duty to make reasonable adjustments arises in three circumstances:

- a) where there is a provision, criterion or practice which puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled
- b) where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled
- c) where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

3.3 Chambers will discuss the specific requirements of the person making the request for reasonable adjustments with the individual concerned in order to agree a suitable adjustment in all the circumstances. Chambers will not make assumptions about whether a person requires reasonable adjustments and what those adjustments might be.

4. Types of reasonable adjustment

4.1 This policy does not provide an exhaustive list of the reasonable adjustments that Chambers will make however the following types of adjustment that may be made are listed below:

- Provision of auxiliary aids
- Provision of information in appropriate alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille, coloured paper etc)
- Extension of time limits (where it is lawful to do so)
- Provision of information/documents on coloured paper
- Use of email or telephone in preference to hard copy letters
- Use of plain English
- Communication through a representative or an intermediary
- Arranging meetings in rooms which have appropriate facilities
- Rest/comfort breaks in meetings

- Provision for assistance dogs

5. Consideration of Reasonable Adjustments requests

5.1 All requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case by case basis.

5.2 Requests for reasonable adjustments will be acknowledged within two weeks of chambers receiving the request. The response will set out a decision as regards the request or will set out any further information chambers requires in order to reach a decision.

5.3 In the majority of cases chambers will be able to agree requests for reasonable adjustments.

Chambers' consideration of whether an adjustment is 'reasonable' or not depends on a number of factors including:

- The effectiveness of the adjustment/s in preventing or reducing the disadvantage for the disabled person
- The practicality of making the adjustment/s
- The availability of resources, including external assistance and finance
- Any disruption to chambers activity that making the adjustment might cause.

5.4 There is no formal appeal procedure however where it is not possible to make the adjustment requested chambers will provide reasons for the decision and discuss any viable alternatives with the individual concerned.

6. Cost of making reasonable adjustments

6.1 Under no circumstances will chambers pass on the cost of a reasonable adjustment to a disabled person.

6.2 There is a government scheme called Access to Work which can help a person whose health or disability affects their work by giving them advice and support. Access to Work can help with extra costs which would not be reasonable for an employer or prospective employer to pay.

For example, Access to Work might pay towards the cost of getting to work if the disabled person cannot use public transport, or for assistance with communication at job interviews.

A person may be able to get advice and support from Access to Work if they are:

- in a paid job, or
- unemployed and about to start a job, or
- unemployed and about to start a Work Trial, or
- self-employed

and

- their disability or health condition stops them from being able to do parts of their job.

Chambers should make sure disabled employees are aware of Access to Work. Although the advice and support are given to the worker themselves, we will obviously benefit too.