

Responsible Chambers Policy Statement

This Statement is about how Radcliffe Chambers takes account of its economic, social and environmental impact in the way it operates as a business. By demonstrating our commitment to being a responsible chambers we aim to align our business values, purpose and strategy with the needs of our clients, whilst embedding such responsible and ethical principles into everything we do.

This Statement covers our approach to our clients, suppliers and the local community, in order to reduce our energy consumption, transport, water use and other business usage to achieve reductions to our carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Inclusion, diversity and wellbeing

We work hard to create a fair, inclusive and supportive environment, where all of our barristers and employees feel able to be themselves.

We recognise that there is a lack of diversity in our profession and that we, as a chambers, have a long way to go to improve our gender balance, and ethnic and social diversity. We are committed to change and believe it is essential to the continuing success of our business. Only by building a truly diverse chambers can we offer the broad range of perspectives that will allow us to best support our clients.

We believe that to provide the best possible advice and service to our clients, our barristers and employees need to be enthusiastic about what they do, happy in their roles, and supported in developing their expertise and wellbeing.

We are committed to:

- Building an outstanding team, recruited from a diverse pool of talent;
- Creating an inclusive workplace, where people feel able to be themselves and speak openly;
- Providing training and opportunities that help our people fulfil their potential and provide the best possible service to clients;
- Supporting the wellbeing and resilience of our people;
- Reporting on our progress.

We have policies supporting these objectives. In particular, we provide equality of opportunity in chambers and throughout our recruitment processes, and will not tolerate discrimination on grounds of gender, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, religion, age, disability, or political beliefs – or any other irrelevant grounds.

But values alone are not enough. Change needs to be driven by strategy. We have therefore undertaken to set and report on specific goals annually to ensure we make progress towards achieving our vision.

Recent initiatives include:

- implementing new parental leave policies for barristers and employees;

- increasing the amount of training we offer in chambers, and introduce specific training supporting inclusion and wellbeing;
- ensuring that all our barristers and employees have access to an employee assistance programme;
- improving the gender balance of our media spokespeople and seminar panels;
- promoting diversity and inclusion at the chancery bar by continuing with our first of its kind barrister experience programme, inspiring and supporting young people from backgrounds that are under-represented at the bar;
- ensuring that our marketing, recruitment materials and internal policies are LGBT+ inclusive;
- entering the Social Mobility Foundation Employer Index.

We welcome feedback on our approach to inclusion, development and wellbeing, and actively seek to collaborate with our clients, other barristers' chambers, charities and other organisations to refine our approach and maximise the impact we can make.

Environment

Protection of the environment in which we live and operate is part of Radcliffe Chambers' values and principles and we consider it to be sound business practice. Care for the environment is one of our key responsibilities and an important part of the way in which we do business.

With this in mind Radcliffe Chambers is a Member of the Bar Sustainability Network and we are committed to being carbon neutral by 2030.

We do so by:

- Complying with all relevant environmental legislation, regulations and approved codes of practice.
- Protecting the environment by striving to prevent and minimise our contribution to pollution of land, air, and water.
- Seeking to keep wastage to a minimum and maximise the efficient use of materials and resources.
- Managing and disposing of all waste in a responsible manner.
- Providing training for our staff so that we all work in accordance with this policy statement and within an environmentally aware culture.
- Regularly communicating our environmental performance to our members, pupils, employees and other significant stakeholders.
- Developing our management processes to ensure that environmental factors are considered during planning and implementation.
- Monitoring and continuously improving our environmental performance.

The nature of our work means that we do not inherently have a high environmental impact, but we will take consideration of environmental issues in the professional services we provide and endeavour to reduce our environmental impact to an absolute minimum.

Our Sustainability Action Plan 2023

We are working to cut our carbon emissions year on year, from our 2018 baseline year.

Our sustainability action plan for the year includes:

- reducing emissions relating to travel – by using the gains made in virtual working during the pandemic, and using more sustainable forms of transport;
- projects in Chambers and day to day operations – including continued to reduce printing, increase recycling, efficient use of equipment, monitoring and reducing where possible our energy consumption and reducing our use of couriers and reliance on single use items;
- increasing our use of environmentally sustainable suppliers;
- collaborating with suppliers and clients to encourage the measurement and reduction of carbon footprints.

Community and pro bono

We are committed to contributing to our community, society and our profession through pro bono and volunteering, and active membership of charitable and professional organisations.

We are keen supporters of access to justice initiatives such as Advocate (formerly the Bar Pro Bono Unit) and CLIPS (the Chancery Bar Litigant in Person Support scheme)and Black interns. Our barristers volunteer their time and expertise to provide legal representation to members of the public who would otherwise be unable to obtain it. We see this as a key means of furthering our commitment to access to justice for all, but also as a valuable opportunity for our barristers to gain experience in a variety of disputes. We also provide financial support to access to justice organisations, and staff and barristers raise funds through initiatives such as the London Legal Walk and the Great Legal Bake.

A number of our barristers and staff are trustees of charities or sit on committees supporting the positive development of the legal profession as part of organisations such as the Chancery Bar Association and the Charity Lawyers Association.

We believe in encouraging those from non-traditional backgrounds to come to the bar. With that in mind we have started our own initiatives, such as our student barrister experience programme, in conjunction with youth organisation Big Voice London.

We aim to increase our positive impact and would like to collaborate with our clients, other barristers' chambers, charities and other organisations to maximise the impact we can make.

Clients

The Executive Committee and Chief Executive will also ensure that we deal responsibly, openly and fairly with clients and potential clients by:

- Ensuring that all our advertising and documentation about the business and its activities are clear, informative, legal, decent, honest and truthful;
- Being clear and transparent about our services and how we charge for them ;

- Ensuring that if there is an issue with our services we investigate the complaint within a reasonable period and respond fully. In the unlikely event this does not resolve the issue we will provide information on how this can be escalated.
- We will listen to our clients so that this can help us continually improve the services we offer to them;
- Ensuring that we benchmark and evaluate what we do in order to constantly improve our competitive edge in the marketplace.

Suppliers

Chambers will ensure that we deal responsibly, openly and fairly with suppliers by:

- Ensuring that we use local suppliers as much as possible;
- That we will endeavour to pay on time;
- Not expecting any discounts to have a detrimental effect on their business.
- Ensuring they are paying London living wage where appropriate.

The operational and ultimate responsibility for the commitment to our responsible chambers principles lies with the Executive Committee and the Chief Executive of Radcliffe Chambers. Every employee of Radcliffe Chambers is expected to give their full co-operation to the above principles in their activities at work. Consultants or visitors are also expected to apply our environmental principles.

The effectiveness of the Policy Statement will be monitored and reviewed at least annually by Chambers to ensure Chambers' continuing compliance with any relevant legislation and to meet new business requirements and to identify areas in need of improvement. We will also ensure that all areas changes will be brought to the attention of employees, as necessary.

Action	Date
Created and approved by RC Committee	March 2019
Reviewed and approved by CEO & Office Manager	November 2021
Reviewed and approved by CEO & Office Manager	May 2023