

Reasonable adjustments policy

1. One Essex Court is committed to making such reasonable adjustments as may be requested in the context of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, in order to remove or reduce substantial disadvantage for disabled people working within Chambers or receiving our services. This policy aims to achieve that.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to disabled persons only. There may be circumstances in which adjustments to normal practices may be appropriate to assist persons who are not disabled but otherwise have particular difficulties or needs. If so, those matters should be raised with the Senior Clerk.
3. This policy covers all employees and lay and professional clients of Chambers, barristers, clerks, pupils, mini-pupils and any third parties who visit Chambers. 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.
4. This policy does not provide an exhaustive list of the reasonable adjustments that chambers will make for employees, lay and professional clients, barristers, pupils, mini-pupils or other third parties who visit Chambers. Examples of the types of adjustment that may be made in appropriate cases are:
 - Provision of information in alternative formats (e.g. large print, electronic, Braille etc)
 - Provision of auxiliary aids e.g. induction loops
 - Provision of access to nearby accessible conference room facilities
 - Provision of a reader or interpreter
 - Provision of further time for interview preparation for pupillage candidates

5. Within a reasonable time after a person known to be disabled accepts an offer to join Chambers as a pupil, member or employee, an appropriate person at Chambers should normally consider what, if any, reasonable adjustments they require and what, if any, steps might be required to identify such adjustments. The appropriate person will normally be in the case of an employee, the Senior Clerk; in the case of a pupil, their first pupil supervisor, if known; in the case of a member, the Senior Clerk. The appropriate person should consult with the disabled person and the Equality and Diversity Officers. Consideration should normally be given to whether an occupational health assessment should be carried out.
6. A disabled person working for Chambers or at Chambers may make, and should feel free to make, a request for a reasonable adjustment at any time. Lay and professional clients may request an adjustment by contacting the barrister they are instructing or any clerk. Barristers with specific requirements should make requests via their Management Committee representative. Pupils should raise any relevant issues with their pupil supervisor or the Senior Clerk. Staff and any person not previously mentioned should do so through the Senior Clerk.
7. All requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case by case basis, with the advice and assistance of one or more Chambers' Equality and Diversity Officers. The person(s) responsible for the decision will depend on the nature of the step requested and the extent to which the disabled person has consented to disclosure (as to which, see below). In some cases, it may be necessary to request additional evidence - whether medical or otherwise – from the disabled person.
8. The person responsible for the decision will decide whether or not it is reasonable to take the step requested, taking into account all the circumstances including the extent to which the step would be likely to address any disadvantage, the cost of taking the step, and the impact of taking the step on the efficient and effective operation of Chambers and on other persons. Where it is not possible to make the adjustment requested, the Management Committee or Senior Clerk will discuss viable alternatives with the applicant.

9. The extent to which Chambers can consider or make reasonable adjustments will depend upon the extent to which the individual in question consents to the disclosure of their disability and its effects and of information about the particular disadvantage and how it might be alleviated. Normally, it will only be possible to make reasonable adjustments if the person or persons with responsibility for the function in question have sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision. However, Chambers will be sensitive to issues of confidentiality and, in cases in which individuals do not wish details of their disability to be disclosed, will seek to identify alternative ways in which decisions might be made.

10. The Management Committee is responsible for considering whether or not disabled staff, barristers 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.

11. Barristers are responsible for considering reasonable adjustment requests for their visitors. They are also responsible for anticipating any likely reasonable adjustments that will need to be made for visitors whom they know to be disabled and are likely to require assistance.

12. Chambers will make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled candidates to demonstrate their suitability for employment, membership or pupillage. Candidates should make requests for adjustments to the Secretary to the Pupillage Committee, after receiving an invitation to interview. The Pupillage Secretary will raise such issues with an Equality and Diversity Officer.

13. Chambers will make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled mini-pupils to come for a mini-pupillage. Successful applicants for mini-pupillage should request an adjustment when arranging the date of their mini-pupillage with the Secretary to the Pupillage Committee. Chambers can accommodate mini-pupils who are wheelchair users; a request for an accessible mini-pupillage should similarly be raised when the date of the mini-pupillage is arranged.

14. Chambers will take such steps as are reasonable to provide auxiliary aids or services to a disabled employee who would otherwise be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a non-disabled employee.
15. In no circumstances will One Essex Court pass on the cost of a reasonable adjustment to a disabled person.
16. This policy is available on Chambers' website, and shall be included in the "Chambers Policies Barristers" and "Chambers Policies Staff" folders in the shared folders on the O-drive, the existence of which members and staff shall be periodically reminded.
17. This policy is reviewed by one of Chambers' Equality and Diversity Officers every two years. The last review took place in October 2022.