

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Aim and scope

Gatehouse Chambers is committed to making reasonable adjustments in order to remove or reduce substantial disadvantage for disabled people working with Gatehouse Chambers or receiving legal services. Disability is defined below.

This policy sets out practical guidance on reasonable adjustments. This policy covers all employees, staff and clients of Gatehouse Chambers, barristers, members of the practice team, mini-pupils, pupils, assistants to barristers and other visitors to Chambers.

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 person's line manager, pupil supervisor or practice team, or the Chief Executive of Chambers.

Circulation

This policy is circulated to all members, staff, pupils, assistants to barristers and is made available to those under consideration in any recruitment process and visitors to Gatehouse Chambers, as well as those who deal with us through our website.

BSB Rule Requirement

This Policy has been produced in accordance with the Bar Code of Conduct rule C110.3(m), which provides that we must take reasonable steps to ensure that "Chambers or BSB entity has a reasonable adjustments policy aimed at supporting disabled clients, its workforce and others including temporary visitors."

Definition of disability

For the purposes of this policy the definition of disability follows that set out in the Equality Act 2010 s.6 and in Schedule 1 of the Act. 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.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments arises where a provision, criterion or practice, or a physical feature, or the lack of an auxiliary aid, places disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with persons who are not disabled. The duty is to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of employees or pupils applies to the employer, i.e. Chambers. The duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of members, clients, assistants or visitors applies to each individual member or employee who has responsibility for any disadvantage to the disabled person if the adjustment is not made.

Types of reasonable adjustment

This policy does not provide an exhaustive list of the reasonable adjustments that Gatehouse Chambers will make for employees, staff, clients, barristers, pupils or visitors. Examples of the types of adjustment that may be made are listed below:

- Provision of information in alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille etc)
- Provision of auxiliary aids e.g. induction loops
- Acquiring or modifying any other appropriate equipment
- Provision of accessible conference room facilities
- An understanding and support of pupils, barristers and staff with dyslexia, and reasonable adjustment for the same
- Adjusting briefing practices, for example to ensure so far as practicable that the member or pupil is briefed with sufficient time to make arrangements at the relevant court for any necessary adjustments, or to ensure sufficient preparation time generally
- Adjusting work allocation and practice management systems to reflect shorter working hours or other modes of practice
- Providing support mechanisms such as mentoring (for staff or members) or practice supervision (for members)
- Paid leave for disabled employees of Gatehouse Chambers
- Flexible working arrangements for employees acting as carers
- Flexible working arrangements for members (cf. flexible working policy)
- Provision of a reader or interpreter when needed
- Provision of additional training for the disabled person and/or others interacting with them

There is not and cannot be a fixed list of reasonable adjustments: everything depends on the circumstances of each particular case. Every situation in which a reasonable adjustment is requested or might be needed must be considered on its merits.

Consideration of and request for reasonable adjustments

Where we have knowledge of a person's disability, it is everyone's responsibility to identify reasonable adjustments that may be required, whether or not a disabled person has asked specifically for them.

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.

Under no circumstances should the process of considering reasonable adjustments be carried out in such a way as to place a disabled person at a disadvantage or perceived disadvantage. For

example, in recruitment, it is important that questions of reasonable adjustment are not approached in a way that might lead a person to believe that they could be disadvantaged in the recruitment process because of disability.

Decisions about Buildings and Systems

Whenever Gatehouse Chambers is considering changes or refurbishment to buildings, or the introduction of new systems (for example new software), those concerned should think about the implications of what is being proposed for disabled people. Wherever reasonable, plans and projects should be drawn up in a way that maximises access.

In the allocation of rooms and working space, Gatehouse Chambers should consider whether reasonable

adjustments might need to be made to meet the needs of a disabled member.

Gatehouse Chambers' Management Committee, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ("EDI") Committee and Fire Marshalls, are 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. Any such plan will be developed in partnership with the individual concerned in order to ensure that any necessary adjustments to the emergency evacuation procedure may be made.

Recruitment

When recruiting (whether staff, pupils, mini-pupils or members) those involved should consider whether reasonable adjustments are needed to the recruitment process, for example, the provision of recruitment materials in large print or braille, making allowance for candidates and applicants with dyslexia, ensuring that meetings and interviews are located in a manner so as to provide proper access to disabled candidates.

Those responsible for the administration of any recruitment process who become aware that one of the candidates is disabled and may require a reasonable adjustment, should consider what adjustment might be required (for example, arranging interviews at a time which makes access as easy as possible, or providing a reader to assist a candidate in preparing a problem).

Such arrangements should, where possible, be made by someone who has responsibility for organising the recruitment, but is not a decision-maker. With regards to applicants for pupillage, mini pupillage or tenancy, any discussions or concerns as to reasonable adjustments for disability can be raised with the Chief Executive, Practice Operations Director or Administration Manager whose email addresses will be published on the website.

Such adjustments are not relevant to the recruitment decision and it should be made clear that the person concerned will not be disadvantaged by them compared to other candidates. Disabled persons must not be made to feel that because an adjustment is asked for or offered, they will be seen as having 'caused trouble' or that this will in any way count against them in the recruitment decision.

Applicants for pupillage are asked to indicate whether any reasonable adjustments are required as part of their application form. This information is then removed before the Pupillage Committee and members see it for the purpose of shortlisting.

Where someone recruited as pupil, member or staff is a disabled person it will be necessary to consider what reasonable adjustments should be made once they join Gatehouse Chambers. This should not form part of any interview process. It should be done after the recruitment decision has been taken on fair and objective criteria.

Staff, barristers, pupils and others in Gatehouse Chambers

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, their line manager or the Chief Executive; in the case of a pupil, the Chief Executive or their first pupil supervisor, if known; in the case of a member, the Chief Executive. The appropriate person should consult with the disabled person and the EDI Committee. Consideration should normally be given to whether an occupational health assessment should be carried out.

In addition, staff, barristers, pupils and mini-pupils with any specific requirements should feel free to make a request for a reasonable adjustment to the Chief Executive and/or Practice Operations Director and/or Administration Manager, as appropriate. Requests will be considered by the Heads of Chambers, members of the EDI Committee or the Management Committee, as appropriate. A disabled person may also request an occupational health assessment at any time.

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. If not, alternatives will be discussed with the disabled person where this is viable.

Clients and Visitors to Gatehouse Chambers

Clients

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

Client requests for specific reasonable adjustments may be made by contacting the barrister they are instructing, a member of the practice team or Gatehouse Chambers' receptionist/concierge.

Visitors

Barristers and staff members 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.

Visitor requests for specific reasonable adjustments may be made by contacting Gatehouse Chambers facilities team.

Cost of making reasonable adjustments

The costs of making a reasonable adjustment must not be passed on to a disabled person. However, in the case of members of Chambers who pay Chambers contribution, where the costs of making reasonable adjustments form part of the general expenses of Chambers, they will be shared in the ordinary way between all members of Chambers, including any member for whom they are made: the costs will not be treated as an individual expense to a particular Member.

Monitoring and review

This policy was adopted on 21 January 2022. It will be reviewed by Chambers EDI Committee every two years.