

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY

1. Statement of Policy

- 1.1. St Pauls Chambers is committed to making reasonable adjustments in order to remove or reduce substantial disadvantage for 'disabled people' working in *Chambers*. This policy covers all employees of St Pauls Chambers *and* all members, associates, academics, and trainees. There are separate policies for applicants and visitors.
- 1.2. This policy is circulated to all members, associates, academics, employees, trainees, and those who are required to read and understand it. They should also read and understand the policies applicable to applicants and visitors.
- 1.3. 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 Head of Chambers.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. For the purposes of this policy, the definition of disability follows that set out in *section 6* of the *Equality Act 2010*. A person is 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.

- 2.2. 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.
- 2.3. The duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of employees applies to the employer, i.e. *Chambers*. The duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of members, trainees, associates or academics applies to each individual member or employee who has responsibility for any disadvantage to the disabled person if the adjustment is not made.

3. Considering and requesting reasonable adjustments

- 3.1. The extent to which St Pauls 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, St Pauls 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.

- 3.2. 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 St Pauls 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, in the case of a pupil, their first pupil supervisor and finally in the case of a member, the Head of Chambers. The appropriate person should consult with the disabled person and the Equality and Diversity Officer(s). Consideration should normally be given to whether an occupational health assessment should be carried out.
- 3.3. However, a disabled person working for St Pauls Chambers or at St Pauls Chambers *may* make, and should feel free to make, a request for a reasonable adjustment at any time. Such requests should be made to their line manager, their pupil supervisor, the Head of Chambers or the Equality and Diversity Officer(s). A disabled person may also request an occupational health assessment at any time.
- 3.4. All requests for reasonable adjustments or occupational health assessments will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the advice and assistance of 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 what is said above). In some cases, it may be necessary to request additional evidence – whether medical or otherwise – from the disabled person.
- 3.5. 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 St Pauls Chambers and on other persons. If not, alternatives will be discussed with the disabled person where this is viable.

- 3.6 The Equality and Diversity Officer(s) are responsible for considering whether or not disabled employees, members, associates 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.

4. Types of Reasonable Adjustment

- 4.1. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of the reasonable adjustments that St Pauls Chambers may make. However, some of the types of adjustment that may be made, if considered reasonable, are listed below:

4.2. In relation to employees:

4.2.1. Adjusting working hours, or reallocating certain duties;

4.2.2. Providing the employee with a mentor or some other form of additional support;

4.2.3. Acquiring or modifying equipment; and

4.2.4. Providing training for the disabled person or any other person.

4.3. In relation to members/associates/pupils:

4.3.1. Adjusting briefing practices, for example to ensure the member/associate/academic/pupil is briefed with sufficient time to make arrangements at the Court for any necessary adjustments;

4.3.2. Adjusting work allocation and practice management systems to reflect

shorter working hours or other modes of practice;

4.3.3. Providing support mechanisms such as mentoring or practice supervision;
and

4.3.4. Providing training for the disabled person or any other person.

4.4. General reasonable adjustments may include:

4.4.1. Provision of information in alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille etc);

4.4.2. Provision of accessible conference room facilities, and

4.4.3. Provision of a reader or interpreter when needed.