



## **FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY**

### **Introduction**

1. This Policy has been produced in accordance with the Bar Code of Conduct C.110.3 (I), which requires that:  
  
“...chambers has a flexible working policy which covers the right of a member of chambers or employee to take a career break, to work part-time, to work flexible hours or to work from home so as to enable them to manage their family responsibilities or disability without giving up work.”
2. This Policy has been written as a guide to how Three Stone Chambers (“Chambers”) will deal with members who wish to work flexibly for any of the above reasons, or for reasons of long-term illness or sabbatical. Employees should refer to their contracts and any staff policies for the different provisions that apply to them, rather than this Policy.
3. All members of Chambers as self-employed individuals are able to set their own working patterns, subject firstly to their obligations under Chambers’ Constitution to pay their Chambers’ expenses and rent; and secondly, regardless of the ability to work flexibly, all members of Chambers shall devote such time to their practice as shall be reasonably necessary to ensure that they provide proper professional services to lay and professional clients of their own or of Chambers.
4. Chambers endeavours to work within the relevant statutory, regulatory and professional frameworks in relation to equality and diversity, and recognises that those with certain protected characteristics e.g. those with disabilities; those with caring responsibilities; and those in older age groups, are afforded protection from various types of discrimination in relation to flexible working and reasonable adjustments under equalities legislation.
5. This Policy is subject to Chambers’ Management Committee’s discretion in relation to Chambers’ expenses as set out in paragraph 12 of Appendix II to the Protocol to the Constitution.
6. This Policy is made available and drawn to the attention of all members of Chambers, clerks and staff, all of whom are required to:
  - a. Read and understand this Policy; and
  - b. Understand their role in relation to this Policy.

### **Areas Covered by this Policy**

7. This Policy will deal with
  - a. General Guidelines with regard to flexible working.
  - b. Procedure and Guidelines for working flexibly.
  - c. Complaints and review General.

### **Guidelines on Flexible Working**

8. Chambers recognises that, from time to time, members may decide they want to work more flexibly than is customary in full-time self-employed practice at the Bar, so as to enable them to manage childcare, family or other responsibilities, or to manage the effects of any ill-health or disability that they or a family member may have, alongside the continuation of their practice. Generally, such arrangements are a matter of the member's individual choice.
9. These general guidelines apply to all members of Chambers working flexibly.
10. In order to ensure that members working flexibly are not being discriminated against on any of the protected grounds under the Equality Act 2010 and for reasons of good practice management, they are encouraged to discuss with the Senior Clerk their wish to work flexibly and ongoing arrangements. They are also encouraged to declare that they are working flexibly when information is being gathered for the purposes of chambers' collection of diversity information for the purposes of the Bar Standards Board's Handbook E&D monitoring provisions.
11. Chambers recognises that it is in its long-term interests to retain all members, including those who work flexibly, in whose practices it has invested time and money and that accommodating and actively managing flexible working arrangements is likely to aid long-term retention of such members in chambers and in practice at the Bar.
12. Chambers shall encourage its clerks to undertake training in relation to flexible working.
13. Chambers will ensure that a member working flexibly for whatever reason is:
  - a. Invited to training events, social occasions, marketing events and chambers meetings;
  - b. Informed about and consulted on any significant issues affecting their practice and the practice of Chambers.
14. The following guidelines should be followed by members and Chambers (through the members' clerking team):
  - a. When the member decides they wish to work flexibly, they should meet with their Senior Clerk prior to starting flexible working to discuss the following:
    - i. the reason that they wish to work flexibly (if appropriate);
    - ii. the hours and days that they wish to work, where the member intends to be based (home or Chambers);

- iii. any geographical limitations the member would like to be placed on work allocated to them;
  - iv. how their proposed days and hours of work are likely to affect the other members of their practice group;
  - v. how the member wishes their flexible working to be referred to in conversations with clients and other members of chambers;
  - vi. what arrangements the member is going to make to ensure good communications are maintained with the clerks and with solicitors;
  - vii. logistical issues (pigeonhole contents; IT; couriers; payment of cheques etc.)
- b. Periodic review meetings will take place between the member and Senior Clerk. Points a.i-vii. above will be considered to see if the arrangements made are working in practice, and adjusted if necessary.
  - c. If the period of flexible working involves a period where the member ceases undertake any work at all for a period (e.g. sabbatical, illness), Chambers, through the members' clerking team will ensure that the member returning to practice is assisted in the re-establishment of their practice.

### **Complaints and Other Information**

15. Any member of Chambers who wishes to make a complaint about the application of this Policy or any other matter in respect of flexible working should in the first instance contact one of the chambers' Equality and Diversity Officers who will endeavour to resolve the complaint informally. If such attempt at a resolution fails, a grievance can be pursued under Chambers' Grievance Procedure.
16. Members who have a disability should also have reference to Chambers' Reasonable Adjustments Policy if necessary, and the government's Access to Work scheme, which provides equipment and assistance to disabled individuals who may need additional equipment to be supplied to remove a disadvantage they suffer in the workplace.

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