



Chambers of John McDonnell QC

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MEMBERS PARENTING AND FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY STATEMENT

For the avoidance of doubt “parental leave” refers to leave taken by the main carer of a child following birth or adoption. This could be the mother, father or adoptive parent of any gender.

It is the aim of this policy to:

- Encourage members following parental leave to return to chambers and continue to build successful practices;
- Prevent discrimination on grounds of parental responsibility;
- Encourage and support members taking time off following the birth or adoption of a child without suffering financial hardship;
- Comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct and accompanying Guidelines.

The terms of this policy have been circulated to all members, clerks and staff all of whom are required to read and understand it; and understand their role in relation to it.

Any member who wishes to make a complaint regarding a breach of this policy should in the first instance contact the Equality and Diversity Officers.

Parental Leave

Every member of chambers is entitled to return to chambers within a period of one year after the birth or adoption of a child for whom they are the primary carer.

A member of chambers taking a period of parental leave is entitled to six months' free of any payments in respect of Room Charges under paragraph 5 of Appendix II to Chambers' Constitution.

A member of chambers taking a period of parental leave is also entitled to a credit to be set against his or her expenses contributions under paragraph 2 of Appendix II to Chambers' Constitution. Such credit shall be whichever is the lesser of:

- 6 times the monthly average of that member's expenses contributions taken over the period of twenty four months immediately preceding the commencement date of the period of parental leave (or over the period of that person's membership of Chambers where that is less than twenty four months); or
- £7,500.

The amounts so foregone by Chambers in respect of Room Charges and expenses contributions shall be borne as a general expense of Chambers.

Members of chambers are required to notify the Head of Chambers in writing of their intention to take a period of parental or adoption leave not less than one month before the commencement of the period of leave, indicating the estimated commencement date and likely date of return.

The Head of Chambers in Consultation with the Management Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, permit a member to take more than twelve months' parental leave and/or increase the period during which a member is not required to make payments in respect of Room Charges and/or increase the amount of the credit in respect of expenses contributions.

If a member is absent from chambers for more than 12 months without agreeing an extension with the Head of Chambers, their automatic right to return to chambers ceases unless such absence is due to consecutive births.

Where membership ceases by virtue of the provisions in paragraph (7), a member can reapply to chambers in the usual way.

A member on parental or adoption leave is encouraged to maintain contact with chambers.

The Head of Chambers in consultation with the Management Committee will ensure that the member is:

- Offered opportunities to do appropriate work if this is requested; and
- Invited to training events, social occasions, marketing events and chambers meetings; and
- Is consulted on any significant issues affecting the practice of chambers; and
- Receives assistance with the reestablishment of their practice on return to work, including (where requested) the arrangement of a "practice meeting" with the relevant clerk within two weeks before the member returns to work.

Informal working arrangements during a period of parental leave do not affect a member's entitlement to the six-month period free of rent or the credit against expenses contributions, provided that the Head of Chambers and Management Committee are kept informed of the arrangements by the member of Chambers and is satisfied that the level of work being undertaken does not constitute a return to practice.

It is the policy of Chambers to enable parents to work reduced hours on return from a period of parental or adoption leave. This should be discussed with the Head of Chambers, and Management Committee.

Other temporary absence

In any case not covered by the above, where a member of Chambers is temporarily unable to practice due to injury, ill health or other personal or family circumstances, such relief may be given from the contributions that would otherwise be payable by that member under Appendix II to Chambers' Constitution as may be agreed between that member and the Head of Chambers in consultation with the Management Committee.