

## STRATEGY FOR ENCOURAGING UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS TO JOIN THE BAR

### Statement

New Bailey Chambers fully endorses the Bar Council's commitment to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion in the profession which will enable the Bar to properly serve the public it represents.

We wholeheartedly support the objectives they have set out which identify where the Bar can improve.

*It is important that the Bar is representative of wider society. Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion at the Bar is key to achieving this objective and to building a successful profession for the future. For too long, the Bar has given the impression of being elitist, and overwhelmingly male. The statistics bear this out: for those barristers still in practice after 15 years, approximately 70% are men, and female and BAME barristers earn less on average than male and white barristers of the same seniority in the same practice area.*

*Unless and until the profession takes concrete steps to overcome the obstacles to equal treatment, the Bar will fail to adequately serve the community that requires its services. Attracting the best talent and candidates from the widest possible pool also has strong commercial advantages for chambers and their lay and professional clients. To embed sustainable and positive change in this regard, embracing a change in culture at the Bar is necessary. This culture change requires a commitment from all stakeholders in the profession: chambers, individual barristers, clerks and judges to champion a range of schemes designed to advance equality, diversity and inclusion at the Bar. The basic requirements in the equality legislation and the BSB's Equality and Diversity rules provide the minimum standards that all chambers must adopt to avoid unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failure to make reasonable adjustments. However, these requirements are a bare minimum and much more is required to demonstrate a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Bar can, and should, aim much higher. Only by doing so can it harness its true potential.*

## The guiding principles we must follow

- **Pledging** – to implement desirable standards and targets across the different areas by voluntarily pledging to incorporate these standards in a manner that is achievable and works best for our chambers.
- **Championing** – Chambers can play an active role in championing equality, diversity and inclusion principles and initiatives through implementation of the recommendations and providing a voice for under-represented groups.
- **Senior Level Commitment** – Our Head of Chambers, senior members, senior clerk & clerks, must promote values and provide visible leadership in achieving objectives.
- **Governance** – embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into the governance structures and decision-making processes of chambers. Setting up working groups to look at best practices.
- **Policies** – to advance equality, diversity and inclusion objectives and ensure standards of fairness and compliance.
- **Data capture** – to track progress towards achieving goals. Collecting and reviewing data also provides the opportunity to address anomalies across different areas and monitor impact.
- **Training** – equality, diversity and inclusion training across chambers, from senior to junior level, in order to promote awareness and achieve greater participation.
- **Transparency** – in all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion objectives, targets, decision-making and initiatives within chambers must allow scrutiny and facilitate progress.
- **Communication** – in the form of non-onerous internal and/or external reporting to highlight key achievements and enable reflection. Creating a safe space for open communication and shared experiences.
- **Partnering** – working together across the Bar with stakeholders in other chambers, and with external organisations, to advance equality, diversity and inclusion at the Bar more widely.

At New Bailey Chambers we recognise we must strive to achieve those objectives. We must keep them under regular review to ensure we continue to push for greater representation at the Bar.

Consideration has been given to identify what practical steps we can take to meet the challenge.

We have identified some key areas where those aims may be achieved:

- We will continue to commit ourselves to upholding the highest standards of best practice and review our standards on a regular basis to ensure we maintain those standards and understand what further steps we can take to further our objectives.
- We must make every effort to champion underrepresented groups. We can do this by setting an example within chambers. One example could be facilitating greater levels of flexible working or making our own diversity of members more visible. We must continue to use blind-sifting of CVs to eliminate unconscious bias against socio-economic attributes.
- Our leadership must actively engage in the promotion of a more diverse Bar.
- We must ensure that equality; diversity and inclusion considerations are present in each of the governance and decision making processes.

- We must regularly review our policies to ensure we continue to meet the highest standards and follow our regulatory guidelines for the promotion of diversity at the Bar. We must ensure that if those policies are breached we must take decisive action. We must be held accountable for the equality and diversity policy, and not merely pay lipservice to it.
- We must ensure greater numbers of members and staff receive up to date equality and diversity/anti-discrimination training to ensure they have a clear insight into the issues and what role they will play in bringing about positive change.
- We must review our decision making and monitor progress with our objectives. This must be done transparently. If we identify areas for improvement that should be viewed as a positive step. We must continue to commit to compiling equality data and address any anomalies. We must use data to improve retention and progression at the Bar.
- We must encourage and facilitate open discussion about equality and diversity. Ideas for progress along with scrutiny of the status quo must be valued.
- We must consider what contribution we can make with other members in the profession to work together to achieve our goals. This could include participation in mentoring groups or circuit working panels.