

ANNEX B

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Date of Assessment	2 September 2024
Assessor Name & Job Title	Mark Neale Director General
Name of Policy/Function to be Assessed	Chambers initiative
Aim/Purpose of Policy	The policy aims to ensure that all chambers, regardless of size, are effective in overseeing standards, equality, access and other key support functions and comply with all relevant regulations in these areas.

1. Evidence

What evidence will you use to assess impact on equality?
<p>In developing the policy, we have drawn on evidence, drawn from barrister records, about the numbers and size of chambers. We have also drawn on two consultation exercises in which we actively sought view on equality impact.</p> <p>In evaluating the impact of the policy, we shall be drawing on our annual <i>Diversity at the Bar</i> reports to assess the impact of the Chambers initiative on the representation and progression of different groups with protected characteristics at the Bar. We shall draw on our annual Ipsos Mori surveys to track changes in the confidence of different consumer groups in the services provided by barristers.</p>

2. Impact on Equality

Consider whether the evidence listed above shows the potential for differential impact, either adverse or positive, for different groups. If there are negative impacts, explain how you will attempt to mitigate these. Mitigating actions can be described in more detail in your Action Plan (Section 4).
An important aim of our initiative is to improve the quality and consistency of chambers' oversight, including of diversity and inclusion. We expect to see this reflected in the implementation of the revised <i>Equality Rules</i> once these are promulgated following the consultation and the implementation of the existing rules meanwhile. Accordingly, we should expect the initiative to have a positive impact on equality across the Board. Further information about the initiative is set out in the accompanying document for publication.

Race	<p>Barristers from Asian/Asian British and from Black/Black British backgrounds are disproportionately represented in small chambers (fewer than 52 barristers) and in large chambers (more than 126 barristers). As our paper for publication acknowledges smaller chambers are more likely to lack the critical mass of support needed effectively to implement the full range of practice management obligations and, accordingly, to need to look for support to other networks or, perhaps, to consider merger. We do not, however, consider that this will adversely impact equality. On the contrary, the obligation on all chambers, including smaller chambers, to raise their games should benefit barristers from minoritised backgrounds. This will be particularly so where chambers do, as a result of the initiative, fully implement current and future <i>Equalities Rules</i> and provide effective support to their pupils and tenants through practice reviews and through other means to support their progression and development of their professional competence.</p>
Sex	<p>Women barristers are proportionately represented in chambers of all sizes. We expect, therefore, that the initiative will benefit their progression through the full implementation of current and future <i>Equalities Rules</i>, through support for their career development and through the implementation of policies to combat bullying and harassment and to promote well-being.</p>
Disability	<p>Disabled barristers are also represented proportionately across chambers of all sizes. We expect, therefore, that the initiative will benefit their progression through the full implementation of current and future <i>Equalities Rules</i>, through support for their career development and through the implementation of policies to combat bullying and harassment and to promote well-being.</p>
Age	<p>We identify no impacts arising from the initiative based on barristers' ages.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>Full and consistent implementation of present and future <i>Equalities Rules</i> will help to ensure that chambers are inclusive environments.</p>
Religion/Belief	<p>Full and consistent implementation of present and future <i>Equalities Rules</i> will help to ensure that chambers are inclusive environments and benefit barristers of all religions and beliefs.</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>Full and consistent implementation of present and future <i>Equalities Rules</i> will help to ensure that chambers are inclusive environments.</p>

Pregnancy/ Maternity	We shall expect all chambers to be consistent in implementing current and future <i>Equalities Rules</i> . That will require all chambers to have in place parental leave policies and to monitor the allocation work within chambers. The latter, in particular, will play an important role in ensuring equal outcomes for barristers who take parental leave and, in doing so, cease to practise for a short period.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Full and consistent implementation of present and future <i>Equalities Rules</i> will help to ensure that chambers are inclusive environments.
Other Identified Groups	It is intrinsic to our expectations and requirements of chambers that they are inclusive in their culture and provide equality of opportunity regardless of background. We expect, therefore, this initiative will also benefit students, pupils and barristers from low income backgrounds.

How does the policy advance equality of opportunity?
The essence of the policy is to ensure a more consistent approach by chambers to their oversight responsibilities, including in relation to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion.

How does the policy promote good relations between different groups?
Implementation of the initiative will require all barrister who belong to chambers to play and active and engaged part in the management of the practice. That should, in turn, lead to more interaction and better relationships between barristers of all backgrounds and with all protected characteristics in the chambers.

Summary of Analysis

Now you have considered the potential impacts on equality, what action are you taking? (Mark 'X' next to one option and give a reason for your decision)		
a. No change to the policy (no impacts identified)	Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination. You have taken all appropriate steps to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.	X
b. Continue the policy (impacts identified)	Continue with the proposal, despite any adverse impacts, provided it is not unlawfully discriminatory and is justified.	

c. Adjust the policy and continue	Take steps to remove barriers, mitigate impacts or better advance equality before continuing with the policy.	
d. Stop and remove the policy	There are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. The policy is unlawfully discriminatory.	
Reason for decision: See the answer to the question about how the policy advances equality of opportunity.		