

Anti-Racism Statement

This is Serle Court's reply to the final call to arms in the Bar Standard's Board's Anti-Racist Statement: to produce and publish an anti-racist statement.

The members and staff at Serle Court abhor racism, however it manifests itself. We see it as rotten in principle, and culturally toxic and corrosive. We recognise the damaging impact it has on its victims and have no tolerance for racism within Chambers. As a relatively small but influential organisation, we recognise our responsibility to play our part in the eradication of systemic racism from our corner of society.

To this end, our Equality and Diversity Committee sits at the heart of Chambers' life, vigorously championed by our Head of Chambers, Elizabeth Jones KC and our Chambers Director, Kathryn Purkis. Our governing constitution enshrines:

- non-discrimination in all we do;
- adherence to the equality, diversity and inclusion provisions of the Code of Conduct; and
- compliance with all Chambers' policies which are cascaded from such provisions (including our equality and diversity, fair recruitment and fair allocation of work policies) over which our EDI Committee and the Chambers Director maintain close oversight. Those policies refer to the provision of ongoing training. In this regard, the Bar Council's race awareness training programme has been rolled out for all members and staff with a strong uptake this year in response to the BSB's third call to arms.

Minority ethnic groups are badly underrepresented at the Chancery Commercial bar. We deeply regret that, and in that respect want to change outcomes. Our action steps include the following:

- We are working with workplace psychologists to audit our processes and amend them to yield greater diversity throughout our recruitment cycle.
- We have 3 mini-pupillages reserved for members of underrepresented groups (specifically referencing those who are Black or of mixed Black heritage but including all racial groups that are underrepresented), with a guaranteed first round pupillage interview: this is one of our positive action measures, responding to the BSB's second call to arms.
- We are in favour of lawful positive action. We expect to formulate and implement other such measures when occasion suggests.
- We make particular efforts to support with money and with time the law societies of universities whose own outreach is strong.
- We collaborate with other Chancery Commercial sets of like mind to host an annual outreach event in Lincoln's Inn for underrepresented groups.
- We participate in a variety of mentoring schemes for underrepresented groups (the PASS scheme, Bridging the Bar) and from 2023 will participate in the 10,000 Black Interns scheme.

These initiatives dovetail with our CSR commitments to encouraging social mobility in the professions: see further [here](#).

Until that underrepresentation changes, there is no room for complacency. For example, the BSB's first call to arms is that Chambers should complete a race equality audit. Improving our data collection to support this being done properly is an early priority. So too is keeping up with evolving best practice, and not only across the Bar: we can and are learning from solicitors and from industry about how to approach these challenges and keep our thinking fresh. Ultimately, we are committed to changing outcomes, not simply our processes. To that end, we have set ourselves a target of reflecting the UK's racial demographic in our membership and staff by 2032 and sooner if we can.