

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY

### Who We Are

Kings Chambers is a modern and forward-thinking Chambers, with a national reputation practising from Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham. We are widely recognised as one of the country's leading sets and ranked as 'Band 1' in many practice areas in independent legal directories Chambers and Partners, and have many individual members ranked as Leading Silks or Leading Juniors in The Legal 500. We were awarded 'Regional Set of the Year' in the [Chambers Bar Awards 2018](#).

Kings Chambers considers that regular, positive recruitment of excellent pupils, barristers and staff has been the key to this success. We develop and maintain our national reputation as a first-class set through the recruitment of ambitious and outstanding individuals who seek a successful career at the Bar. In furtherance of our recruitment strategy we are committed to promoting access to the Bar and encouraging diversity and social mobility.

Kings Chambers is proud to be the first chambers to become a Northern Powerhouse Partner, working with the Ministry of Housing & Local Government to promote the North of England and support development in: connectivity and transport; skills, science and innovation; quality of life and culture; and devolution.

### Our Values

All Kings Chambers barristers, pupils and staff proactively support and promote the following values throughout the community we serve:

#### 1. Equality of Opportunity and Treatment

Kings Chambers is an equal opportunities employer and we are committed to promoting and actioning diversity amongst our barristers, pupils and staff. We are committed to ensuring

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that all those who work within Chambers are treated with equal respect and courtesy at all times. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying or inappropriate behaviour.

## **2. Striving for Excellence**

All members of Chambers are committed to achieving excellence in all areas of our service. We aim to provide the highest quality of client care and legal service. We actively seek and encourage feedback on all aspects of the service we provide. We look for ways to develop new skills, knowledge and commercial awareness to better serve our clients and ensure that we maintain our position as a leading set.

## **3. Teamwork**

Kings Chambers is known for its collegiate spirit and friendly atmosphere. We are committed to supporting all of our barristers, pupils and staff in achieving their professional and personal goals. We are supportive of our barristers, pupils and staff who have caring and family responsibilities. For example, caring for young children, elderly relatives or unwell partners.

We are committed to the training and mentoring of our own barristers, pupils, staff and other barristers and legal professionals. We have an in-Chambers mentoring scheme overseen by a silk and provide mentoring training for staff and barristers.

We do not believe it is desirable or responsible to recruit more pupils than can realistically be offered tenancy. When we make a pupillage offer, we make it having identified a vacancy and a business need for a junior tenant in Chambers.

Pupils are a respected and valued part of Chambers life and play an active role in the social and professional life of Chambers. Our Planning & Environment pupillage award is the 'Patterson Award' named after [Dame Frances Patterson](#) DBE, former Head of Chambers, respected planning, environmental & public law silk and Judge of the QBD. Our Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence pupillage award is the 'Halliday Award' named after Harold Halliday, a successful and busy junior practising in the field of personal injury who sadly passed away in 2006 – aged 57 years.

Frances and Harold were highly regarded barristers and dedicated pupil supervisors who were committed to the development of young barristers through pupillage and beyond.

## **4. Transparency**

The Head of Chambers chairs Management Committee meetings and is responsible for certain executive functions but our Constitution guarantees that all Kings Chambers barristers have an equal say in the running of Chambers. We consult and listen carefully to the opinions of our staff, pupils, and other professional partners.

To facilitate fairness and opportunity within Chambers we ensure that all barristers and staff are kept fully informed of events by an Annual General Meeting, regular Practice Group Meetings, other meetings and the circulation of the Management Committee Agenda and Minutes of Meetings. Chambers accounts are circulated at every Management Committee meeting and are available to all members on request.

## **5. Social Responsibility**

Social responsibility (SR) is an approach to business that promotes ethical practices and socially responsible behaviour and contributes to sustainable development.

Kings Chambers places social responsibility at the heart of its identity. Our SR strategy is comprised of four components: public service; wellbeing initiatives; outreach and education work; and environmental responsibility. Through our SR work we seek to promote Our Values.

Our approach to SR is set out in more detail below. We are proud of our SR work and champion the work of barristers and staff on SR projects on social media and in the news section of our website.

## **Social Responsibility at Kings Chambers**

### **Public Service**

We have a deep-rooted commitment to public service.

Public service at Kings Chambers has two components: pro-bono work and charity fundraising.

### **Pro Bono Work**

Kings Chambers' barristers and pupils undertake pro bono work. Our commitment to achieving excellence applies equally to our publicly funded and pro bono work.

Kings Chambers has a dedicated pro bono clerk. A barrister is appointed as 'Pro Bono Champion' to coordinate and encourage involvement with pro bono work in Chambers.

Recent examples of pro bono work undertaken by Kings members include: advising on judicial review proceedings and acting pro bono for a trust in a large planning inquiry.

Kings Chambers supports the Public Law Pro Bono Scheme, which provides free legal advice on public law matters, including representation at renewal hearings at the Administrative Court in Manchester. Sam Karim KC is the administrator and founding member of the Scheme.

In September 2018 Kings Chambers became a Chambers Member of the Environmental Law Foundation ('ELF'), a registered charity providing pro-bono legal advice via a network of specialist environmental lawyers. Details of ELF cases that members of Chambers have assisted with can be found on members individual profiles and the [ELF website](#).

### **Charity Fundraising**

Kings Chambers has a long standing relationship with [Wood Street Mission](#), a children's charity helping children and families living on a low income in Manchester and Salford. We have been proud supporters of [Wood Street Mission's Christmas Appeal](#), donating new gifts for children aged 0-14 to support local children and struggling families over the festive period, since 2013.

Each department at Kings Chambers is encouraged to choose a charity to support and fundraise for over the year. The Planning and Environment Team has chosen to support the [Together Trust](#) a Manchester-based charity providing special education, residential services, fostering, family support and community services. The Clinical Negligence and Personal Injury Team has supported the [Child Brain Injury Trust](#) (CBIT) for approximately six years through a variety of fundraising initiatives.

We host a popular annual charity golf tournament for members, staff and clients. This event is now in its eighth year. The tournament is underwritten by Chambers and all proceeds raised

go to a chosen charity. Charities which have been supported by this event include: The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital; Francis House; the Diane Modhal Sports Foundation and CBIT.

Barristers and staff regularly take part in sporting challenges to raise money for charities. Activities range from participating in fun '[It's a Knockout](#)' style challenges to raise money for [LandAid](#) to challenging triathlons for cancer research. A Kings Chambers team has entered the Peak District Challenge for three years in a row, raising money for CBIT. We encourage and support staff and members who are completing sporting challenges in aid of charity, recognising that such activities have important wellbeing benefits.

We are happy to support the charity initiatives of our clients where they share Our Values and we regularly support and attend our clients' fundraising events.

Details of recent Kings Chambers fundraising initiatives can be found on the dedicated Chambers charity news page.

### **Wellbeing Initiatives**

Kings Chambers considers that wellbeing plays a critical role in creating and maintaining a thriving and successful workplace for staff and members of Chambers. In May 2017, in recognition of the vital importance of wellbeing, Kings Chambers adopted a Wellbeing Policy.

The Wellbeing Policy is designed to promote the health and wellbeing of all members of Chambers and Staff. It recognises the importance of the wellbeing of all in Chambers and that this is the responsibility of us all from top to bottom. It produces a framework within which Chambers encourages and facilitates good working practices for both members and staff. To download a copy of the policy [please click here](#).

In February 2018 Kings Chambers was proud to receive 'The Wellbeing Certificate of Recognition' from the Bar Council in acknowledgment of its wellbeing work within Chambers.

All staff and members have the benefit of the Employee Assistance Programme which provides expert advice, interactive tools and educational resources on a range of Wellbeing related topics on a confidential basis.

### **Outreach and Education Work**

Outreach and education work are a cornerstone of Kings Chambers CSR strategy. We recognise that engaging with and inspiring future lawyers from all backgrounds is part of our broader commitment to diversity and social mobility. We seek partnership with organisations that match our professional interest and areas of expertise, share Our Values and champion equality.

#### Outreach through Education

Kings Chambers has been involved with the [Bar Mock Trial Competition](#) organised by the Citizenship Foundation for many years. The Bar Mock Trial competition is an opportunity for students aged 15-18 from all over the UK to take part in a criminal trial, as barristers, witnesses, clerks, ushers and jury members. Students appear in real crown courts in front of real judges. Kings Chambers' barristers act as barrister mentors for students preparing for trial.

Kings Chambers participates in the Bar Council's annual [Bar Placement Scheme](#), which offers a three day placement to talented sixth-form students from families without links to the professions as an insight into life at the Bar.

Kings Chambers Business and Property team is part of a Northern Circuit Commercial Bar Association (NCCBA) initiative, organised in conjunction with the Sutton Trust, to offer sixth form college students a taste of life at the Commercial Bar in Manchester.

Our barristers give talks at events to promote access to the profession hosted by the Bar Council, Pathways and other similar organisations. Kings Chambers is happy to be contacted by organisations seeking speakers for such events.

#### Education, Training and Dissemination of Knowledge

Barristers and pupils often attend careers talks at BPTC providers and judge law student mooting and debating competitions. Kings Chambers is represented at the Inns of Court Pupillage Fair and Northern Pupillage Fair where junior members are present to answer questions from aspiring barristers and those considering an application for pupillage or mini-pupillage.

Kings Chambers runs a competitive and popular [mini-pupillage programme](#). Our programme includes: court visits; workshops in topics such as advocacy; talks from judges, senior and junior practitioners about their work; and opportunities to meet, mix and discuss issues with members, pupils, barristers' clerks and others involved in the management of Chambers.

Part of our outreach and education strategy is to disseminate our expertise through '[Kings Chambers Insights](#)', our online library facility housing past seminar papers, articles and links to our podcasts. The Planning & Environment Team produce 'The Planning Podcast', in which an expert panel discusses the latest developments in planning law and policy. The Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence Team produce 'Debrief', a series of podcasts addressing the latest case law. This is a new initiative which accords with Our Values. It is hoped the 'Insights' resource will be useful to our client base and to those considering a career in law and interested in our specialist practice areas.

#### Outreach through Diversity and Equality Initiatives

Kings Chambers is proud to support initiatives that seek to champion equality and inclusivity. We provide event space, sponsorship and speakers for events for such initiatives, where possible.

Kings Chambers has been an early supporter of [Women in Planning](#) in the North West and Yorkshire, an independent network which aims to promote a diverse equitable and inclusive planning industry. Women in Planning and Kings Chambers co-hosted a hugely successful Planning Inquiry Training Event in Manchester in October 2018. We are also involved in the launch of the West Midlands branch of Women in Planning.

#### **The Environment**

Kings Chambers actively looks to partner with sustainable suppliers. We are currently partnered with Office Team who won a Gold award in the 2018 Global Good Awards and have a long-term sustainability agenda.

We use energy efficient lightbulbs and have motion sensitive lights to save energy when lighting is not required. These measures reduce our electricity consumption.

We do not serve bottled water to clients in conferences and instead provide a jug of filtered tap water and glasses to avoid using plastic.

We recycle our paper waste and use a range of recycled and recyclable stationery products.

Public transport, cycling and walking is encouraged wherever possible. We have had a Cycle to Work scheme in place for several years.

We support barristers who wish to adopt paperless working practices where possible and encourage all our barristers to consider adopting paperless working in whole or in part. We actively look for ways to reduce or avoid printing and move to paperless working where feasible.

We also encourage the use of teleconferencing, skype and video conferencing where practicable. This avoids travel and thus encourages good environmental practice but is also often more time-efficient, promoting work-life balance.

### **Ongoing Commitment**

Kings Chambers recognises that placing social responsibility at the heart of our identity is ambitious. We regularly communicate our CSR activities to all members and staff via our internal monthly newsletter. We review our work under this strategy annually both to assess whether we are furthering Our Values and to identify areas of improvement. Feedback and ideas from staff, pupils, barristers and clients about our SR strategy and initiatives, is welcome and encouraged.

We are happy to be approached by prospective new partners seeking assistance with charitable or SR initiatives which share Our Values.