

**Essex Court Chambers' Policy on
Parental Leave, Flexible Working and Career Breaks**

1. It is the aim of this policy to:
 - 1.1. encourage members of Chambers following parental leave to return to Chambers and continue to build successful practices;
 - 1.2. prevent discrimination on the grounds of parental responsibility;
 - 1.3. encourage and support members taking time off following the birth or adoption of a child without suffering financial hardship; and
 - 1.4. comply with the requirements of the Handbook and accompanying guidelines.
2. Full-time members of Chambers pay rent and Chambers' Expenses quarterly in proportion to earnings received during the preceding three months. Rooms in Chambers are allocated to full-time members so far as reasonably possible on the basis of order of seniority in Chambers. This statement of policy is based on the assumption that those arrangements remain in place.
3. A member of Chambers is free to perform his or her professional commitments when and where he or she chooses, whether in Chambers or at home or elsewhere, and whether or not during normal working hours or during the working week. A member who retains the sole use of a room in Chambers for practice as a barrister will be charged full rent and Chambers' expenses. Other arrangements may be made with the Heads of Chambers for working without use of a room in Chambers, for sharing a room with one or more other members, for part-time practice as a barrister or for purposes other than practice as a barrister (e.g. as an arbitrator).
4. A member of Chambers may, without relinquishing membership of Chambers, take leave of absence on grounds of the birth or adoption as primary carer of a child by that member for a period of up to 5 years on the occasion of each birth or adoption.

5. A member of Chambers may, without relinquishing membership of Chambers, take leave of absence on grounds of the birth or adoption of a child by the spouse or partner of that member, of sickness or of responsibility as primary carer for a child or family dependent, for a period of up to 12 months on each occasion.
6. During such period of absence the member's room (or a comparable room) will be kept available for use part-time during the member's absence (if the member so wishes) and full-time on the member's return. During the period of absence the room may, however, be shared with other members of Chambers.
7. Since rent and Chambers' expenses are payable in proportion to earnings received, absence from Chambers for whatever reason will not give rise to any further reduction in the member's financial contribution to Chambers by reason of absence.
8. Career breaks on other grounds or for longer periods than those provided above may be negotiated with the Heads of Chambers.
9. A member of Chambers while working at home or on leave of absence will so far as possible be kept in touch with matters which may affect his or her practice, such as Chambers' business, invitations to lectures, and social occasions, etc. The member of Chambers will give reasonable notice to Chambers, and in any event not less than three months' notice, of when he or she intends to return to full or part-time practice. The Senior Clerk will make sure that, on the member's return, potential clients are told that the member is once again available for work.

Explanatory note

Revised November 2012. To be revised November 2015.