FREEBAR

TOP TIPS FOR INCLUSIVE CHAMBERS ENVIRONMENTS

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ACCEPTANCE WITHOUT EXCEPTION

Stonewall

INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT

INCLUSIVE COLLEAGUES

INCLUSIVE BUILDING

INTRODUCTION

There is a moral case and a business case for creating an environment in chambers where lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) people are fully included. There are many more ways in which people define their gender and sexuality, and you will see this described as LGBT+.

People perform better when they can be themselves: it enables us to attract and retain the best talent, and a diverse workforce represents society and our client base as a whole.

You may want to consider implementing some of the following suggestions in your chambers to create a more inclusive environment.

INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT

Encourage and support LGBT+ colleagues and allies to be visible role models. A potential applicant will always feel more comfortable applying if they can see from your website or in people's profiles that they will be *accepted without exception*.

If you become Stonewall Diversity Champions you can use the logo on pages of your website and in recruitment materials.

Ensure that your website and all marketing materials are written in gender neutral language, for example:

Click here to read Alex Highlighter's latest article..(as opposed to: *click here to read her/his latest article*).

Use inclusive language and make clear in recruitment adverts for pupillage, lateral hires or staff that you encourage applications from LGBT people.

On the recruitment pages of your website you could say:

Flipchart Chambers supports FreeBar, a forum focused on LGBT+ people and their allies working at and for the Bar.

An open recruitment policy also means advertising in places other than Counsel Magazine and the IBC. Try the Stonewall website (posting adverts are free if you become Stonewall Diversity Champions).

Encourage and support the setting up of an internal chambers LGBT+ networking group including LGBT+ role models and those people who do not identify as LGBT+ (known as allies). Engaging with allies can help spread the message of embracing an inclusive environment.

Consider a visibly inclusive website message on the chambers website and/or encouraging individual members and staff to do this on their profiles, for example:

Alex supports FreeBar, a forum focused on LGBT+ people and their allies working at and for the Bar.

Undertake a review of your policies for members and staff to ensure they are LGBT+ inclusive (both in the language used and in policies themselves), including parental leave, health insurance, compassionate leave, transitioning at work and so on. Stonewall provide a free review of your policies if you become Champions.

Encourage visible endorsement of LGBT+ initiatives by senior leadership in chambers (HOCs, management committee, CEO, senior clerk) - this can be a very powerful message and statement of intent.

Encourage chambers marketing staff to (re) tweet or (re)post/like on LinkedIn LGBT+ friendly posts.

Consider training for all members and staff on LGBT+ issues. Stonewall can provide excellent training. Contact Reg Kheraj about training and membership on Reg.Kheraj@stonewall.org.uk.

INCLUSIVE COLLEAGUES

INCLUSIVE BUILDING

Undertake a ‘walk through’ exercise of your building through the eyes of your LGBT+ members, staff, clients and would-be applicants. Consider the signage around the building, visitors books/passes, the language you use when greeting/introducing them, induction materials (staff/member handbooks), and so on. For example:

Pre-printed visitors book/passes say: ‘Name’ and not ‘Mr/Mrs/Ms’.

Likewise on any application forms for jobs/ mini-pupillage/etc and consider including the statement on the application form itself along the lines of: Flipchart Chambers supports FreeBar, a forum focused on LGBT+ people and their allies working at and for the Bar.

Say: “I am delighted to introduce Alex Highlighter” not “I am delighted to introduce to Miss/Mrs/Mr Highlighter”. As a general proposition, go through your internal documents, handbooks and so on and try to gender neutralise the language, as above.

Consider creating gender neutral toilet/s. The sign on the door could say ‘All Gender Toilet’ or ‘WC’ without the matchstick figures.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Don’t be afraid to ask us for help: the FreeBar group are your friends and colleagues at the Bar and want to help.

If you experience something that works well for you in your chambers, please share it with us so we can add it to these top tips and re-circulate from time to time.

Come and join us. Details of our activities are on the FreeBar website and on our twitter feed @FreeBarLGBT.