

FREEBAR

Promoting LGBT+ equality and inclusion across the Bar

2018 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF FREEBAR



Members of FREEBAR at the start of #LegalPride march on 7 July 2018 at London Pride

We hereby deliver the report of the Trustees for the period up to 24 July 2018.

The original FreeBar governing document was signed on 5 December 2016 and amended on 27 February 2017¹. FreeBar is a charitable organisation that aims to foster inclusion and support for LGBT+ people who work at and for the Bar. The charitable purposes of FreeBar are the promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by (1) the elimination of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity; (2) advancing education and raising awareness of equality and diversity; (3) promotion activities to foster understanding between people of different sexual orientations and gender identities; and (4) cultivating a sentiment in favour of equality and diversity

As the report from the Treasurers make clear (23 July 2018) FreeBar is not close to having income of over £5000 in this partocular year ending 30 June 2018 and therefore there has been no reason for them to register FreeBar with the Charity Commission. FreeBar are very grateful to COMBAR, Criminal Bar Association, LPMA and Brick Court Chambers for their donations totalling £4,000 for the twelve month period ending on 30 June 2018. The Trustees are very grateful to Joyce Arnold and Conall Patton for their report.

The aims of FreeBar to achieve these purposes, through “(1) Connecting LGBT+ people and allies and providing a forum of mutual support; (2)_ Raising awareness of LGBT+ equality and diversity issues specific to the Bar; (3) Sharing best practices on workplace inclusion.”.

¹ “First amendment agreed at a FreeBar meeting on 27 February 2017, amending paragraph 26 to delete the word ‘two’ [with respect to the number of Trustees] in the first sentence.”

Our Social Media twitter account @FreeBarLGBT+ is growing steadily in numbers and provides a resource to publicise our various events and the work of individual Chambers and members of FreeBar.

Decisions are made by those who attend the meetings with the basic structure of FreeBar intended to promote the widest possible participation amongst those who support FreeBar's purposes. The examples below provide a flavour of FreeBar's activities during the last year, included in the Newsletters produced by Cameron Stocks during the year.

Sexuality at the Bar report launch event was on **25 September 2017** where **Dr Steven Vaughan** and **Marc Mason** launched their report on the world-first research into the experiences of LGBT+ members at the Bar. The report is based on research undertaken in 2016 surveying 126 LGBT+ barristers, QCs, pupils and BPTEC students. 38 interviews were undertaken: 27 with barristers; 5 with QCs; 4 with students and 2 with pupil barristers. The report can be downloaded via <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/centre-on-the-legal-profession/projects/sexuality-at-the-bar> .

Best Practice Event on **30 October 2017** was hosted by Hardwicke chambers attended by over 50 people from 30 sets of chambers, representatives from the Inns of Court, SBAs and the regulators. The event was chaired by David Wolfe QC and Brie Stevens-Hoare QC, with Chris Edwards of Travers Smith, Rachel Reeves of Global Butterflies and Reg Keraj of Stonewall as panellists. A toolkit will be drafted and launched later on this year.

Alex Southern spoke at **the Institute of Barrister Clerks** annual conference on **11 November 2017** addressing the importance of inclusivity in chambers. This was the first time Freebar had been provided a prime speaking slot at the conference.

The **Summer Social Website Launch** event on **21 June 2018** at 23 Essex Street marked the launch of the website, made possible by the generous donations of the Criminal Bar Association, London Common Law and Commercial Bar Association, Brick Court Chambers and Matrix Chambers. The current website at www.freebar.co.uk should be updated in the next few months with updates and interviews by Susanna Rickard with members of FreeBar.

BSB Consultation - 5 July 2018 deadline – Conall Patton led FreeBar's response on the BSB Consultation on the current prohibitions on reporting on sexual orientation in the Diversity Data surveys. It is hoped the BSB adopt a far less restrictive approach to reporting.

#Legal Pride – 7 July 2018 - with some decked in wigs and gowns FreeBar provided a visible and popular contingent in this year's marching group for London Pride. Joining with the Bar Council, Law Society, CILEX and the Bar Lesbian and Gay Group.

FreeBar is reliant on volunteers who attend our meetings to make the decisions to give effect to our aims. Please feel free to volunteer to ensure we grow stronger in "*Promoting LGBT+ equality and inclusion across the Bar*".

Nicholas Allen, QC

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Paul Ozin, QC

24 July 2018