

Angel Chambers Parental Leave Policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the internal chambers' regulations which govern the taking of "Parental Leave" by a member of chambers.

2. DEFINITION

"Parental Leave" refers to leave taken by the main carer of a child following birth or adoption. This could be the mother, father or an adoptive parent.

3. It is the aim of this policy to:

- encourage individuals following parental leave to return to chambers and continue to build successful practices
- prevent discrimination on grounds of parental responsibility
- encourage and support individuals taking time off following the birth or adoption of a child without them suffering financial hardship
- comply with the requirements of the Bar Code of Conduct and accompanying Guidelines.

4. This policy is circulated to all members of chambers and its clerks who are required to:

- read and understand the policy and
- understand their role in relation to the policy.

5. PARENTAL LEAVE

Every member of chambers is entitled to return to chambers within a period of one year after the birth of or adoption of their child for whom they are the main carer.

6. A member of chambers taking a period of parental leave is entitled to a 6 month period during which they will not be required to pay the Standing Charge element of Chambers' monthly administration charges. That 6 month period applies regardless of whether an individual takes a longer period of parental leave.

7. Members of chambers are required to notify chambers' executive committee of their intention to take a period of parental leave not less than 2 months before the commencement of the period of leave indicating the estimated commencement date and likely date of return.

8. If a member of chambers wishes to take more than 6 months parental leave he or she should notify chambers' executive committee 2 weeks before the end of that period stating the estimated date on which he or she intends to return.

9. If a member wishes to take leave for a period of longer than 12 months, this should be arranged with chambers' executive committee.

10. If a member is absent from chambers for more than 12 months without having agreed an extension with chambers' executive committee, his/her automatic right to return to chambers ceases unless such absence is due to consecutive births/adoptions.

11. Where membership of chambers ceases by virtue of the provisions in paragraph 10, a member can re-apply to chambers in the usual way.

12. ARRANGEMENTS DURING LEAVE

A member on parental leave is encouraged to maintain contact with chambers.

13. The Head of Chambers' Family, Civil or Criminal Team (as relevant to the member on parental leave) will ensure that the member is:

- offered opportunities to do appropriate work if this is requested and
- invited to attend training events, social occasions, marketing events and chambers' meetings and
- is consulted on any significant issues affecting the practice of chambers
- receives assistance with the re-establishment of their practice on return to work including (where requested) the arrangement of a meeting with the relevant clerk within 2 weeks before the member returns to work.

14. Informal working arrangements during a period of parental leave do not affect a member's entitlement to the 6 month period free of the Standing Charge provided that the Head of Chambers is kept informed of the arrangements by the member taking leave and is satisfied that the level of work being undertaken does not constitute a return to work.

15. RETURN FROM LEAVE

It is the policy of Angel Chambers to enable parents to work reduced hours on return from a period of parental leave. This should be discussed with chambers' executive committee and clerks.

16. Any member who wishes to make a complaint regarding a breach of this policy should in the first instance contact Chambers' Equality and Diversity Officer.

17. Chambers' Equality and Diversity Officer is Alison Donovan. Contact telephone number 01792 464623. She is the point of contact for all queries regarding this policy.

18. This policy was adopted on 1st January 2013 and will be reviewed every 2 years.