

BAR STANDARDS BOARD

REGULATING BARRISTERS

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Effective date	September 2019
Policy owner	Ben Burns, Equality & Access to Justice Manager
Approval and review	September 2020
Circulation	BSB- wide

Introduction

1. This Policy sets out:
 - a. Our commitment to ensuring that everybody finds it easy to access our services and to communicate with us; and
 - b. What a reasonable adjustment is, our duties and the process for requesting a reasonable adjustment.
2. This Policy is a general statement of our approach to reasonable adjustments: it does not set out how we will approach every situation. Reasonable adjustments will be tailored to the individuals requesting them and the relevant circumstances. Some of our departments have operational guidance about the process for handling reasonable adjustment requests.

Who is this policy for?

3. This Policy applies to any person with a disability who uses or seeks to use our services, including: students, barristers, people reporting information, contractors, applicants, suppliers and people contacting us on behalf of an individual from these groups (as appropriate).
4. This Policy does not apply to BSB staff or people with disabilities who are preparing to sit the Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT). We have a separate internal policy for staff and a distinct [policy](#) for individuals requesting reasonable adjustments when taking the BCAT.

Our legal duty in relation to people with disabilities

5. The Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”) requires us to provide reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities in the provision of our services. The Act defines people with disabilities as:

“those who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

6. “Substantial” means more than minor or trivial and “long-term” means 12 months or more.

What are Reasonable Adjustments?

7. A reasonable adjustment is a change to the way that we usually do things, to ensure that everybody can access our services and to remove or reduce disadvantages experienced by people with disabilities.
8. “Reasonable” will depend on the circumstances of an individual case and an assessment of factors, which may include:
 - a. The **effectiveness** of the adjustment, at removing or reducing the disadvantage(s) experienced by the person with a disability;
 - b. The **practicality** of the adjustment i.e. the resource implications of making it;
 - c. The **cost** of making the adjustment;
 - d. The **disruption** caused by the adjustment, to other people and to our systems or processes;
 - e. The **health and safety** implications of making the adjustment.

How do we approach requests for reasonable adjustments?

9. People with disabilities are usually best placed to assess the extent and nature of any adjustments that they require: we will not make assumptions about whether a person with a disability requires any adjustments or about what those adjustments should be.
10. Requests for reasonable adjustments should be made directly to the BSB department or team which is providing the service in question. If no team is involved, then requests should be referred to the Contact and Assessment Team (contactassessment@barstandardsboard.org.uk).
11. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis, by the department or team which is providing the service in question. Where it is needed, advice may be sought from our Equality and Access to Justice Team.
12. We will respond to a request for a reasonable adjustment as soon as reasonably practicable and within ten working days of receiving it. If this timeline needs to be extended (e.g. due to complex circumstances), we will inform the person who made the request of the reasons for the extension and the new timeline.

13. Our response will set out our decision about the request or ask for further information to enable us to reach a decision about the request.
14. If we are not able to make a requested reasonable adjustment, we will explain why and will work with the individual who made the request, to discuss their requirements and try to agree a suitable alternative adjustment.
15. The cost of making a reasonable adjustment will never be passed onto the person who requested it.

Types of reasonable adjustment we can offer.

16. Although we consider requests for reasonable adjustments on a case by case basis, the following non-exhaustive list includes some of the types of reasonable adjustment that we may make:
 - a. Using plain English and avoiding jargon;
 - b. Providing documents or correspondence in a larger font size;
 - c. Providing documents or correspondence with a specific colour contrast, to help people with conditions like dyslexia;
 - d. Providing information in a different format than we usually would, to make it accessible for people with disabilities (e.g. visual impairments);
 - e. Changes to our usual practice if it places a person with a disability at a disadvantage (e.g. by allowing more time than we usually would for someone to provide information);
 - f. Changes to our physical environment to remove obstacles for people with disabilities;
 - g. Arranging meetings, conferences, hearings and events in accessible venues;
 - h. Adjusting our physical environment;
 - i. Providing specialist equipment or additional support (e.g. a sign language interpreter);
 - j. Communicating with people through their representative or advocate, as appropriate;

Complaints

17. We do not have a formal appeals procedure regarding requests for reasonable adjustments. If you are unhappy with all or part of our decision about a request for a reasonable adjustment, or the way in which we handled the request, then you can:
 - a. Share your feedback or concerns with the member of staff or the manager of the team which handled the request;

b. Share your feedback or concerns with our Equality and Access to Justice Team, at equality@barstandardsboard.org.uk; or

c. Submit a [service complaint](#) to servicecomplaints@barstandardsboard.org.uk.

Monitoring and Review

18. We record reasonable adjustments that have been requested and/or made. These records may be used to review and improve the quality of the services that we provide. We will treat this data in line with our data retention schedule.

19. This Policy will be reviewed by our Equality and Access to Justice Programme Board at least annually, and/or when the law changes. The next review is due in **September 2020**.

Ben Burns, Equality and Access to Justice Manager
Ruby Newton, Senior Supervision and Authorisation Officer