




Chancery Bar Association Statement on Racism

The Chancery Bar Association is committed to encouraging the flourishing of Chancery Barristers of all backgrounds and to encouraging diversity among its membership and the membership of the Chancery judiciary, so no one is excluded for reasons which should be irrelevant, and so we better reflect our society. Equal representation is an important issue for our legal system concerning, as it does, both power and legitimacy. Despite ongoing work and good intentions, much remains to be achieved.

On 5 June 2020 we expressed our commitment to the principles of justice and the rule of law and the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion both within the profession and in the community we serve. This means that all forms of racism are wrong and cannot and should not be tolerated. It also involves taking action to ameliorate the problem of unconscious bias; investigating how systems can cause discrimination to persist; and improving those systems for the better. We recognise that underrepresentation at the Chancery Bar of people of a Black African and Black Caribbean background is especially acute.

Working towards the elimination of discrimination on the basis of race requires concerted action. We have long taken this seriously, but we acknowledge that there is so much more to do. This is what the Chancery Bar Association has been doing – and how, harnessing recent momentum, we are stepping up our efforts:

1. For many years the Chancery Bar Association has been involved in various initiatives aimed at helping Black applicants improve their CVs and applications. The Chancery Bar Association intends to continue this work.
2. The Chancery Bar Association has been planning an access event for students, aimed at encouraging and inspiring applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds, and in particular Black applicants, to apply to the Chancery Bar. Planning has been interrupted by Covid-19, but the recent popularity of online events presents an opportunity to reach students who might not have attended an event in person. This event is likely to take place in late 2020. The intention is that it will be repeated at regular intervals.
3. The Chancery Bar Association is also considering other methods of engaging students from underrepresented ethnic backgrounds and in particular Black students, who might not already aspire to a career at the Chancery Bar. It is planned to do this in conjunction with other specialist bar associations.
4. The Chancery Bar Association is seeking to engage independent advice as to best practice in recruitment, including contextualised recruitment practices, training and other systematic changes that can be made in order to improve the fairness of recruitment to the Bar. We hope to do this in partnership with others to increase the impact of what is achieved. This work is in the planning stage.
5. The Chancery Bar Association is hoping to support a project similar to the First 100 Years project, documenting and celebrating the contribution to the profession of barristers and judges from ethnic minority backgrounds.
6. The Chancery Bar Association will continue to support social mobility initiatives including in partnership with the Sutton Trust, the Inns of Court and our schools-based project with Achievement for All.

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7. The Chancery Bar Association will continue to run equality and diversity events, promote best practice and encourage under-represented groups to apply for silk and to the part-time and full-time judiciary.
 8. The Chancery Bar Association will continue to provide member sets with assistance to comply with their equality duties in particular in implementing fair allocation of work policies which are effective in providing equal opportunities for all.

We encourage our members to consider what positive action they can take to encourage candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds and particularly Black candidates, to apply to their sets and to ensure that they are given a fair opportunity to succeed in that application process and in their careers at the bar, and are retained within the ranks of Chancery Barristers.

**ChBA Committee
July 2020**