



GREENWAY CHAMBERS

Making membership more accessible and supporting diversity

On 15 July 2021, the members of Greenway Chambers voted in favour of allowing shared room ownership within our chambers.

Although room sharing has been possible for those who do not want to occupy a room full time, historically that has only on the basis that one of the occupants was a licensee of the shared room. A sharing licensee does not have:

- the security of membership; or
- the same input into the operation of the floor as members who own a room (a licensee cannot vote at members' meetings).

More barristers are practising from home more of the time. That has been partly compelled (and facilitated) by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it also arises from increasing diversity of members of the bar. It better suits some members of the bar with family and other commitments to work from home some of the time.

The obvious questions arose:

- (a) Why should a person who wants or needs to work from home some of the time be required to pay full freight to have a room sit empty, with their name on the door?
- (b) Why should a person who occupies a room as a licensee, but also is a valued contributor to the floor, not be offered a mechanism to become a member with security of accommodation and voting rights?
- (c) Why not offer a more complete spectrum of options for barristers, whose lives, circumstances and family commitments vary greatly from member to member?

We acknowledge and understand that our barristers have commitments beyond chambers, so we have adapted our membership structure to more easily permit our barristers to satisfy more than one set of those commitments.

At Greenway, we are proud to support diversity and do so proactively. On 8 March 2017 Greenway Chambers adopted a policy that allows a chambers' member to take a period of 6 months leave free of rent and chambers fees following the birth or adoption of a child. On 15 July 2021 we adopted amendments to our founding documents that permit shared room ownership, to more readily permit flexible practice as a barrister with the security, and the voice, that comes with room ownership.

