

Middle Temple LGBTQ+ Forum

Statement of Values

Core Statement

1. The Forum has been created to support, advise and encourage members of The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple and the Bar as a whole, who identify within the broad heading of LGBTQ+. Although the Forum is described as being for those identifying as LGBTQ+, it is open to all and supportive of all. In doing so, the Forum welcomes allies from every corner; it is created to be an inclusive rather than exclusive organisation. *Everyone* is welcome, regardless of sexuality, gender or any other characteristic.

Values

2. At the heart of the LGBTQ+ Forum are the twin concepts of equality and inclusivity. Regardless of sexuality, gender or identity, we are all equal and deserve to be treated as such. No one should be discriminated against, made to feel discriminated against or ostracised based on characteristics innate to their personhood. This applies to all aspects of work and life at the Bar of England and Wales, and at Middle Temple.
3. Despite this, there are still times where prejudice and out-dated modes of thinking cause harm, pain and distress to individuals and groups, based on their sexual or gender identity. The report of Marc Mason and Dr Stephen Vaughan, *Sexuality at the Bar: An Empirical Exploration into the Experiences of LGBTQ+ Barristers in England and Wales* (UCL Centre for Ethics and Law, September 2017) found that just over half of those members of the Bar consulted reported having experienced discrimination in some form linked to their sexuality and that one third had suffered bullying or harassment. The Inns of Court were criticised particularly for not doing enough to signal their support for LGBTQ+ members of the Bar.
4. It is the position of Middle Temple and this Forum that discrimination of anyone on grounds of their sexuality or gender is wrong. This Forum seeks to ensure that such prejudices are redressed, that the objectives of equality and inclusivity are advanced, and that the Inn's support for its LGBTQ+ members and employees is voiced clearly and with pride.

5. To do so, the Middle Temple LGBTQ+ Forum will provide support and guidance to those who need it; education and assistance to those who seek it; as well as camaraderie and fellowship to all.

Objectives

6. To deliver these broad goals, the following specific objectives will be considered by the Forum when considering its activities. The Forum should take steps to:
 - Provide education on LGBTQ+ issues for all members of the Inn;
 - Provide genuine support and guidance on LGBTQ+ issues;
 - To combat and address issues facing the LGBTQ+ community at the Bar;
 - To ensure that the facilities and organisations within Middle Temple reflect its welcoming and tolerant values by representing LGBTQ+ interests within the Inn;
 - Form links with other existing charities and networks whose objectives correlate with our own;
 - Where appropriate, to respond to consultations conducted by the Bar Standards Board, the Bar Council, the Government or any other relevant bodies on issues relevant to the Forum and its objectives;
 - To support the continuing work of the Inn to make Middle Temple a safe and inclusive space for its members and employees.
7. It is important to stress that all members of Middle Temple are welcome in the Forum. Events and projects organised by the Forum will be open to all; allies should be encouraged and invited. This is particularly important where an essential part of eliminating discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community is to build an understanding by, and familiarity with, others from outside of the community itself.
8. In meeting these objectives, the Forum is mindful of existing organisations and networks, and recognises their role in supporting LGBTQ+ members of the profession. The Forum is committed to working with these groups to advance its objectives effectively.

Steering Group

9. The Forum will be co-ordinated and governed by a Steering Group. The group will be comprised of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and six other members. One Member will be appointed by the Middle Temple Students' Association and a further member appointed by the Middle Temple Young Barristers' Association. How these two societies appoint their representatives is to be determined by the Committee of each respective association. The remaining four members will be drawn from the membership of Middle Temple, from whomsoever the Steering Group consider appropriate.
10. When selecting its members, the Working Group should consider the importance of a representative body. It is desirable when selecting members that they be drawn from a diverse range of individuals within the scope of the LGBTQ+ umbrella.
11. Further, when selecting members, the Steering Group should consider where possible drawing from the memberships of Hall Committee, and the Equality, Diversity, and Social Mobility Sub-Committee.
12. Finally, it is important when selecting its members that one member should be a Master of Bench. This may be the Chair or Vice-Chair but is not a requirement that a Master of the Bench should fill one these positions.

Membership of the LGBTQ+ Forum

13. Membership of the Forum is not a formal requirement, nor necessary for the operation of the Forum. Rather, the Forum operates as a group providing opportunities to whoever wants to take advantage of them. Everyone is welcome.

Interaction with Existing Organisations

14. The Forum recognises that organisations such as BLAGG and FreeBar already exist and fulfil an important role in supporting LGBTQ+ members of the profession. The Forum believes that its work will compliment and augment existing structures by representing and supporting the LGBTQ+ community within Middle Temple and ensuring that Middle Temple continues to be open to all.

Dated: Thursday, 31st October 2019