



Bringing [Dis] Ability to the Bar  
BDABar.org

## Bringing [Dis]Ability to the Bar Two-Way Mentorship Scheme

**Estimate Launch Date:** July 2022

### **BDABar Two-Way Mentorship Scheme: Overall Objectives**

- Connect disabled aspiring barristers with practising barristers who can provide guidance in the pursuit of a career at the Bar;
- Consenting mentees may share their experiences of living with disabilities for the benefit of mentors and their chambers/ employers;
- All dialogue over the course of the mentorship will have the intention of raising awareness on disabilities, accessibility, reasonable adjustments, and what support is available;
- Where support is not available, mentors and their chambers/ employers may learn how to better serve and engage with aspiring barristers who have chronic conditions and/or disabilities;
- All participants will be mindful that the scheme promotes accessibility at the Bar, and when accessibility is currently limited, innovation rather than pessimism is the appropriate approach;
- This Scheme will increase opportunities for aspiring barristers to build lasting connections and build their networks with professionals at the Bar.

### **What is the Purpose of the BDABar Two-Way Mentorship Scheme?**

- The primary purpose of the scheme is to enable aspiring barristers, with any form of disability, to gain support from a practising barrister in their pursuit of a career at the Bar.
- The secondary purpose of the BDABar Two-Way Mentorship Scheme is to give the opportunity to practising barristers, and their Chambers or employers, to gain an insight into their mentee's disabilities and the various hurdles that they encounter in their pursuit of a career at the Bar.

### **Eligibility criteria: Who can be a mentee?**

The BDABar Two-Way Mentorship Scheme will be open to those who are 18 years old and above, and identify as disabled. Mentees need to be in one of the following career stages:



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- Undergraduate degree (law or non-law degree)
- GDL
- Postgraduate
- Bar Course
- Seeking Pupillage
- Undertaking Pupillage

If this program gets over-subscribed, priority will be given to those who have not in the past received Bar related mentorship.

### **Application procedure for mentees**

The application system for mentees will be flexible and prospective mentees will be asked to share relevant information to support their application; relevant information will include academic attainment, work experience, volunteering, whether they have joined a Bar related mentorship program previously, and professional experience. Importantly, prospective mentees will also be invited to share any mitigating circumstances which they consider relevant to their application.

Within the application form, there will also be a section where individuals can express the areas of legal practice that they are interested in. Moreover, within the application form there will be questions on why applicants want to join the Bar and how they feel that this program will be beneficial to them.

It is hoped that all applicants will be able to be assigned a mentor in the program; in the event that there are more applicants than there are mentors available, the Schemes Team will select applicants based on who they believe will benefit the most from the scheme based on the application submitted. In reaching their decision, the Schemes Team will pay particular regard to the purpose and objectives of the scheme. For example, if a person has particularly good grades but has already benefited from the input of a mentor in their pursuit of a career at the Bar, preference will be given to an applicant who has weaker grades but has not benefited from mentorship up to this date.

### **What happens once a mentee has been selected for the BDABar Two-Way Mentorship Scheme?**

Once a mentee has been accepted onto the scheme, they will be contacted by the Schemes Team and be informed of their confirmed place at the BDABar Two-Way mentorship scheme. The mentees will then be asked to complete an Equality and Diversity monitoring form and also disclose any accessibility requirements they have; BDABar wants to ensure that the Two-Way mentorship is accessible to everyone. Additionally, the mentees will be asked once



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again to confirm their preferred area of law which they are aiming to pursue a career in. BDABar Schemes Team will then attempt to allocate them a mentor who is in that area of law; however, this will not be guaranteed.

Once a mentee has been allocated their mentor, the two will arrange a preliminary meeting. Furthermore, BDABar Schemes Team will encourage all mentors to be aware of key Bar deadlines; these deadlines include, but are not limited to, Bar Course application deadlines, GDL deadlines, Scholarship application deadlines, and Pupillage deadlines. During the preliminary meeting, and mindful of Bar's calendar of deadlines, the mentor and mentee will agree on a bespoke set of aims towards which they will work over the course of their mentorship. This set of aims may be adjusted over the course of the mentorship if required, but the mentor and mentee will be encouraged to return to the set of aims on a regular basis to review their progress. Overall, there is an expectation that mentors will be virtually meeting their mentees once per month. It is important to also note that the BDABar Schemes team will be sending a survey every 12 weeks in order to monitor the progress of the mentorship and receive any feedback on how to further improve the mentorship experience.

The decision of mentees on whether to disclose their experiences of living with a disability/disabilities is entirely voluntary. Any information disclosed by the mentee, which relates to their personal condition will be disclosed under the strictest confidence and it would not be disclosed by the mentor without their expressed consent. It is hoped that the strict confidentiality agreement will help form a relationship of trust which will lead to the free-flowing conversation, which will provide for the best form of two-way mentorship which the scheme strives to achieve.

### **The length of a BDABar Two-Way Mentorship cycle:**

Once the bespoke mentorship plan has been formulated, it is expected that a mentorship will last approximately 10 months (July- May). The length of the mentorship relationship will depend on what the aims are and what the capability of the mentor or mentee is.

### **Number of mentees per mentor**

The BDABar Schemes team will allocate a maximum of two mentees per mentor in order to ensure the smooth running of the scheme and the best quality of experience.

### **Complaints**

Any complaints regarding the mentor or the mentee may be raised with the Schemes Team and an internal investigation will take place.



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Step 1 of the complaints procedure includes a written complaint sent to the BDABar Schemes team ([mentorship@bdabar.org](mailto:mentorship@bdabar.org)).

Step 2 consists of a meeting between the person making the complaint, Head of Schemes, a Schemes' Officer and the Chair of BDABar.

Step 3 involves a meeting with the person who the complaint is made against.

Step 4 involves a review and consideration on next steps.

Throughout the complaints process, BDABar will endeavour to offer well-being checks with the complainant.

### **What happens if a mentorship pairing is unsuccessful?**

If it is deemed that a pairing was unsuccessful and a mentee was unable to benefit from the experience, the Schemes Team will endeavour to match the mentee with a different mentor and the process will start all over again.