



Terms of business and basis of fees

The Chambers at Garden Court North aim to provide the highest possible standards of advocacy, advice and service. With this in mind, we set out below our client care policy which is sent to all of our new clients to set out in clear terms our policies and practices as they relate directly to the service we provide for you. We ask you to keep this letter on file and to contact our Senior Clerk should you have any queries that you feel remain unanswered by this letter or our other promotional materials / activities.

QUALITY STANDARDS

Paperwork : It is Chambers policy that, if at all possible, instructions should be dealt with within three weeks of receipt. This policy will be applied unless you agree to another deadline (shorter or longer) appropriate to your case. Any such agreement will be recorded on our computer system so that we can monitor progress against our commitment to you. Every attempt will be made to adhere to these arrangements but we will notify you as soon as possible in the unlikely event of our being unable to meet the deadline set. If a matter is required to be dealt with urgently, it would assist if you could contact us in advance and/or clearly mark the back sheet as 'urgent'.

Court Appearances : When you contact Chambers to book Counsel, we will advise you if the barrister of your choice has an existing commitment and establish your wishes as to use of alternative counsel. The size of Chambers, having some 23 members including 1 Queens Counsel means that we can provide a breadth of expertise in each of our specialist areas. Should you wish to double-book, we will keep you informed as to likely availability as the court date approaches so that you may reassess your options. In the unusual circumstance that acceptable cover cannot be provided within Chambers, we will, if required, assist in finding Counsel for you.

Briefs : It is vital to the smooth and effective handling of a case that we have sufficient time to prepare for court appearances. Many cases now require skeleton arguments to be lodged in advance of the hearing so it is therefore essential that instructions are sent giving ample time for preparation. For our part, we shall ensure that we

arrive at court at least half an hour before the scheduled start time to allow time for discussion with yourself and your client.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Members of Chambers practise under the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England & Wales and adhere to Chambers policies and procedures defined in our Quality Manual. This has been developed to ensure compliance with the Bar Council's Practice Management Standards. Related policies of interest to clients such as our Quality, Health & Safety and Equality Policies are available on request

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Quality Management System we operate incorporates continuous improvement mechanisms which allow us to monitor our effectiveness against our standards, procedures and policies and to instigate improvement initiatives where relevant. An important source of information for improvement comes from client feedback and we would ask you to inform us immediately should you experience any difficulty with our Chambers, its staff or its members. We have appropriate internal procedures for addressing clients' concerns and take their comments seriously.

THE FUTURE

The chambers at Garden Court North operates strategic development and annual planning processes to ensure that clear objectives are set and the services we provide keep pace with changing client needs in a rapidly changing world. We would welcome your views regarding our services.

BASIS OF FEES / TERMS OF BUSINESS

We strive to provide a very high quality service at competitive rates. The Senior Clerk is available to discuss levels and basis of fees with our clients, and our policy for fee calculation and terms of business is attached.

We will render a fee note as each item of work is completed, upon request, should there be a pause in proceedings or at an appropriate stage in on-going litigation. We request our private fees to be settled within 28 days of your receiving our fee note and



Terms of business and basis of fees

you are asked to contact us should this not be acceptable to you. For our part, we adhere to the Bar Council's Code of Practice in respect of progressing payment of our fees.

- All time spent is recorded on the Meridian System to ensure that the fees charged can be substantiated by specific work activities by the barrister. If requested, the Clerks will be able to explain further how the eventual fee was arrived at.
- We will render a fee note for our work upon conclusion of the case or on request, should there be a pause in proceedings or at an appropriate stage in on-going litigation.
- On privately funded cases, we expect our fees to be settled within 28 days of your receiving our fee note. You are asked to contact us should this not be acceptable to you.
- We adhere to the Bar Council's Code of Practice in respect of issue of payment reminders, progressing payment of our fees and credit control in general.
- Any solicitor whose name appears on the 'Withdrawal of Credit Scheme' List will be expected to pay fees in advance and for the cheque to have cleared prior to work being undertaken. Instructions will not be accepted without cleared funds unless the barrister concerned instructs otherwise.

COURT HEARINGS

The basis for fees to be charged will be agreed in advance of the hearing. Fees for court work take into account the following factors :

- estimated time required for preparation
- estimated time to be spent in Court
- case complexity
- the amount / issues at stake
- seniority of the barrister
- whether an abnormal workload was placed on the barrister through late instruction / urgency of the work etc.
- the degree to which specialist knowledge is required
- travelling / expenses likely to be incurred
- means of client

PAPERWORK

Normally fees for paperwork are not agreed in advance, however, if an estimate is required, the clerks (in liaison with the barrister concerned if necessary) will provide an approximate fee. The following factors are taken into account when providing such estimates and when compiling the fee-note:

- total time taken to complete the work
- complexity of the matter
- the amount / issues at stake
- seniority of the barrister
- the urgency of the work and the need to reschedule other matters
- the degree to which specialist knowledge is required
- means of client

As set out in our Standards Charter turnaround times are as follows:-

1. Solicitors can send instructions to counsel for paperwork without previously contacting a clerk but when this happens the nominated barrister may not be able to accept the instructions.
2. If a solicitor requires the work to be completed earlier than 21 days from receipt then he/she should indicate this on the instructions or covering letter. If the instructions need to be completed within 5 working days of receipt then they should be marked "Urgent" and if they are to be done within 24 hours of receipt then it should be marked "Very Urgent".
3. Instructions for work to be completed in less than 21 days should not be sent without the clerk's previous agreement.
4. If a time limit is to be exceeded then the barrister should inform the solicitor, or ask one of the Clerks to contact the solicitor.
5. An initial examination will be undertaken within 7 days, for acceptance of paperwork and to check for conflict of interest. Any problems will be notified to the client immediately and appropriate action agreed.