

Direct public access: HOW TO INSTRUCT A BARRISTER

Please note that this document applies to Pendragon Chambers only.

DIRECT ACCESS CLIENT INFORMATION PACK

Welcome

Thank you for considering instructing Chambers under the Direct Access Scheme.

Direct Access allows members of the public, businesses and organisations to instruct a barrister directly without first engaging a solicitor. This can provide a cost-effective and efficient way of obtaining specialist legal advice and representation.

This information pack explains how the Direct Access process works, what you can expect from your barrister, and what will be expected of you as a client.

What is Direct Access?

The Direct Access Scheme allows clients to instruct a barrister directly in many areas of law without first instructing a solicitor.

Your barrister can:

- Advise you on the law and merits of your case.
- Draft legal documents.
- Prepare written advice and opinions.
- Assist with negotiations and settlement discussions.
- Represent you at court, tribunals and hearings where permitted.
- Provide strategic guidance regarding your case.

In some circumstances, your barrister may advise that a solicitor should also be instructed. This may be necessary where extensive document management, witness handling, disclosure obligations or litigation administration is required.

The Direct Access Process

Step 1 – Initial Enquiry

You will be asked to complete a Direct Access Details Form outlining:

- Your contact details.
- The nature of your case.
- Any important dates or deadlines.
- Relevant documents.

This information enables Chambers to identify the most suitable barrister for your matter.

The barrister may recommend:

- A conference (meeting).
- Written advice.
- Drafting work.
- Representation at court or tribunal.
- A short preliminary telephone discussion.

Step 2 – Fee Quotation

Once the barrister has reviewed your enquiry, Chambers will provide a quotation for the proposed work.

The quotation will specify:

- The work to be undertaken.
- The fee payable.
- Any additional anticipated costs.
- Payment terms.

You should carefully review the quotation before accepting it.

Money laundering / proof of identity form (copy form for individual provided)

It is a mandatory requirement that each new client completes this document and is checked before any services can be provided. This would normally be checked before a conference or if you are meeting your barrister for the first time before your court hearing.

No work can commence until the quotation has been accepted and payment arrangements have been completed.

Step 3 – Client Care Documentation

Before work begins, you will receive:

- A Client Care Letter or Contract for Services.
- Terms and Conditions.
- Information regarding fees and payment.

You should read these documents carefully and return any signed documents requested by Chambers.

Step 4 – Identity Verification

As required by law and professional regulations, Chambers must verify the identity of all new clients. This will be done via “Creditsafe” who also provide chambers with the necessary anti money laundering checks.

You may be asked to provide:

Proof of Identity

Examples include:

- Passport
- Driving licence
- National identity card

Proof of Address

Examples include:

- Utility bill
- Bank statement
- Council tax statement

Where court representation is required, original documents may need to be produced before the hearing if requested.

Failure to provide satisfactory identification may delay or prevent Chambers from acting.

Your Responsibilities as a Direct Access Client

When instructing a barrister directly, you take responsibility for tasks that would otherwise often be undertaken by a solicitor.

You are expected to:

Provide Complete Information

You must provide:

- Accurate instructions.
- All relevant documents.
- Any evidence that may assist or affect your case.
- Details of deadlines and hearing dates.

Failure to provide relevant information may affect the advice you receive.

Organise Your Documents

You should:

- Keep copies of all correspondence.
- Maintain your own case file.
- Ensure documents are provided promptly when requested.

Documents should be clearly labelled and supplied in an organised manner wherever possible.

Meet Deadlines

You remain responsible for:

- Court deadlines.
- Filing deadlines.
- Tribunal deadlines.
- Limitation periods.

If you become aware of any urgent deadline, you must notify Chambers immediately.

Communicate Promptly

You should respond promptly to requests for information and provide instructions within any timescales requested.

Delays in responding may affect the progress of your matter.

What Your Barrister Will Do

Your barrister will:

- Consider your instructions.
- Advise you on the legal merits of your case.
- Explain your available options.
- Draft documents where instructed.
- Prepare for hearings.
- Represent you at hearings where agreed.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Act independently and in accordance with professional obligations.

Your barrister will always act in your best interests whilst remaining bound by professional and ethical duties.

What Your Barrister Will Not Normally Do

Unless specifically agreed, a barrister will not normally:

- Conduct extensive correspondence on your behalf.
- Hold client money.
- Manage large-scale disclosure exercises.
- Collect evidence.
- Interview witnesses.
- Issue court proceedings on your behalf.
- Act as your litigation manager.
- Perform administrative tasks typically undertaken by a solicitor.

Where such assistance is required, you may be advised to instruct a solicitor.

Conferences and Meetings

A conference is a meeting between you and your barrister.

Conferences may take place:

- By telephone.
- By video conference.
- In person.

During the conference, the barrister may:

- Discuss your case.
- Review evidence.
- Advise on legal options.
- Recommend next steps.

You should ensure that all relevant documents are provided before the conference wherever possible.

Court Hearings

If your barrister is instructed to attend court or tribunal:

- A separate fee quotation will usually be provided.
- You must provide all hearing details promptly.
- You should arrive in good time for any hearing.
- You must comply with court directions and orders.

Your barrister will explain the hearing process and what to expect.

Fees and Payments

Our fees are generally payable in advance.

You will receive:

- A written quotation.
- A fee note or invoice.
- Confirmation of payment upon receipt.

Work will usually commence once cleared funds have been received and all required documentation has been completed.

If additional work becomes necessary, a revised quotation may be provided.



Confidentiality

All information provided to Chambers is treated as confidential and handled in accordance with applicable professional and legal obligations.

Information will only be disclosed where required by law or professional regulations.

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, please contact Chambers as soon as possible so that we may attempt to resolve the matter promptly.

Details of our complaints procedure are available upon request.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need a solicitor?

Not always. Many cases can be handled entirely through Direct Access. However, in some matters a solicitor may be recommended.

Can a barrister represent me in court?

In many cases, yes. Your barrister will advise whether representation is available and appropriate.

What happens if more work is needed?

Additional work will usually require further instructions and may require a separate fee quotation.

How quickly will I receive advice?

Timescales vary depending upon the complexity and urgency of the matter. Any expected timescale will be discussed with you when instructions are accepted.

Contacting Chambers

If you have any questions regarding the Direct Access process, fees, or the services available, please contact Chambers and a member of our team will be happy to assist.



We look forward to working with you.