



Garden Court North Chambers

Public Access Policy

Public Access at Garden Court North Chambers

The Public Access team of barristers at Garden Court North Chambers accept instructions from the public on terms that are strictly compliant with the latest version of the [Bar Standards Board Handbook](#), and the [Public Access Scheme Guidance for Barristers](#). Barristers who may accept instructions from the public may be found at the [Bar Council Direct Access Portal](#).

Under the rules, barristers are not usually allowed to 'litigate' unless they have applied for and been granted an extension to their practising certificate that allows them to litigate; this means that, in most cases, barristers are only entitled to advise you and represent you in court and are not allowed, for example, to file documents at court or to exchange letters with the other side in the case. Because of these limitations you may be advised that your case is not suitable for Public Access. For further information please see the [Public Access Scheme Guidance for Lay Clients](#) especially at paragraphs 4-8 under the heading "**Is my case suitable for public access?**".

Please note that the 'Cab Rank Rule' that requires barristers to accept instructions in certain circumstances does not apply to public access work. Public access barristers are not required to accept instructions from a member of the public in any circumstances and may refuse to accept your case.

If you are unsatisfied with the service you have received, Garden Court North has a [Complaints Procedure](#). Information on the complaints procedure will also be provided to you with your Client Care Letter.

If you instruct a Garden Court North barrister on a public access basis, then we will follow the procedure set out below, in strict compliance with the Bar Standards Board Handbook.

Allocation, Agreement, Appointment

Allocation

After you have filled out the [Public Access Enquiry Form](#) and sent it to clerks@gcnchambers.co.uk, our clerks will allocate your case to a barrister who is licenced to take instructions directly from the public, ie a public access barrister. If you have asked for a specific barrister, that person will be asked to consider taking on the case first. If he or she is unable to take the case for whatever reason, the clerks will ask if any other appropriately qualified barrister is available, unless you tell them not to. You will normally be told within two clear working days of making your enquiry if someone is available to take your case. For example, if you enquire on a Monday at any time before 5pm, you will normally be told by the end of business on Wednesday of the same week whether a barrister is available; if you enquire on a Friday, you will be told before the end of the next Tuesday, etc.

You may be asked for further details about your case, or further documents. If your case is complex, or if there is delay in obtaining the further information from you, then allocation may take longer than two days. Please do not contact chambers while you are awaiting a response unless you are asked to provide further details. Repeated enquiries about your case may delay allocation.

Agreement

If you choose to instruct a barrister that is available, you will be sent a Client Care Letter that sets out the problem you have described, what you have asked for, the steps the barrister will agree to take, and what he or she will charge you for that work. Please read the Client Care Letter carefully.

You must sign and date one copy of the Client Care Letter and send it back to us, along with payment in the full amount as set out in the Client Care Letter. **The barrister cannot begin work on your case until you do this.** All work that the barrister agrees to perform must be paid for in advance.

The Client Care Letter is a contract between you and the barrister for the work described in it. Any further work will require a new Client Care Letter and further payment. Usually, the Client Care Letter will break down your case into stages which may be agreed and paid for separately, or, you may want to agree a fee for your whole case and pay for it right away.

Appointment

The Client Care Letter will contain advice on the next steps in your case. The barrister may ask you to make an appointment for a conference by contacting the clerks. Or, if there is no need for a conference, the barrister may ask you to send in your case papers by post or as scanned attachments to an email (but not by fax). *Please note that a reasonable charge for printing will be included if you expect us to print your case papers.*

You may need to gather certain documents or information, or to contact people for other evidence. Also, you may need to send certain documents to the court, or to the other side in the case. The Client Care Letter will explain what you need to do.

The Client Care Letter will also explain what the barrister will do after you have returned a copy of it with payment. Remember that the barrister cannot begin work on your case until you return the Client Care Letter with the full payment.