



No.18 SERVICE STANDARD

We are committed to providing our clients with high quality, specialist legal services through Barristers with the highest reputation for advocacy, knowledge and professional standards.

OUR COMMITMENT

Availability:

Chambers opening hours are 8.00am – 18.00pm during which time our professional clerking team are available and will deal with any enquiries in a friendly and efficient manner. Our Clerks are also available outside these hours on their mobile phones or via emails; these can be found on the profile pages.

Administration:

Telephone Calls:

- o Calls will be answered by a member of our clerking team who will deal with the enquiry or redirect the call to the appropriate member of staff or barrister. If the barrister that is required is unavailable s/he will be notified and return the call at the earliest opportunity.*
- o Messages may be left for the clerking team and the call will be returned as soon as possible.*
- o All telephone calls which cannot be dealt with immediately will be returned on the same day whenever possible, and in any case at the first reasonable opportunity.*

Faxes:

- o *The fax machine operates 24 hours a day. During chambers opening hours it is checked regularly and the necessary barristers notified by telephone call or e-mail if urgent.*

DX/Post & E-mails:

- o *All mail and DX is opened, date stamped and distributed to the appropriate counsel by 10am on the date received.*
- o *E-mails are checked continuously throughout the day. They are downloaded, forwarded, printed and distributed appropriately as soon as possible, with any urgent mail every effort is made that counsel is notified immediately.*

Correspondence:

- o *Correspondence will be dealt within three working days of date of receipt, unless otherwise agreed.*

Booking Counsel:

- o *When booking counsel our expert clerking team are available to discuss the particular needs.*
- o *Clerks are happy to advise on the most suitable counsel for a particular case.*
- o *A barrister will not be doubled booked without the agreement of the solicitor concerned.*
- o *A conflict check will be undertaken on the same day as receipt of papers*

Briefs for court hearings:

- o *It is our policy to work as a team with our professional clients and ensure that we communicate regularly.*
- o *In order to ensure that we are in a position to provide the best possible service to our clients we normally require that the brief be forwarded to chambers five days before a hearing.*

- o *We realise that, on occasions, there are extenuating circumstances, which require us all to work within very limited timescales. In these circumstances, we will endeavour to accommodate the request.*
- o *Briefs will be acknowledged by letter on the same day as receipt.*
- o *Clients may send briefs into chambers without previous contact, whereupon a clerk will call those instructing to discuss the appropriate counsel for the instructions.*
- o *An initial assessment will be undertaken by counsel with three days for acceptance of instructions and any issues notified to the client immediately and action agreed.*
- o *When a trial or other hearing in court is booked (subject to emergencies) we will ensure that Counsel has sufficient time for preparation.*
- o *Where a skeleton argument or other preliminary documentation is required we request that instructions are sent in good time to enable counsel to comply with the requirements of the court or practice direction.*
- o *Where requested briefs will be returned promptly accompanied with a fee note*

Court Work:

- o *Counsel will attend court at least 30 minute prior to the time ordered unless otherwise directed or other arrangements are agreed.*
- o *Counsel will contact the professional client as soon as possible after the hearing to provide an update.*
- o *Counsel will provide an attendance note following the hearing*

New dates and listing of cases:

- o *When appropriate counsel will do their utmost to list cases for their availability to ensure that the client benefits from continuity of representation.*
- o *Once a new date has been fixed instructing solicitors will be contacted by our clerking team to discuss counsel's availability and the client's requirements for that hearing.*
- o *Where a date can not be fixed at court and dates to avoid are to be filed the clerks will make every possible endeavour to ensure the barrister of choice is available for that hearing via liaising with the appropriate listing section*

Instructions for paperwork:

- o *Clients may send instructions into chambers without previous contact, where this happens the clerk will call those instructing to discuss the appropriate counsel for the instructions.*
- o *Very urgent instructions will be dealt with accordingly.*
- o *An initial assessment will be undertaken by counsel with three days of receipt of instructions and any issues notified to the client immediately and action agreed.*
- o *All papers are considered by counsel within seven days of receipt. Any requests for further information will be made within that time.*
- o *Instructions will be dealt within fifteen working days of receipt of instructions, unless otherwise agreed.*
- o *Where paperwork is required within a specified timeframe we ask that this be marked on the covering letter accompanying the instructions or on the front of the brief.*
- o *In the unlikely event of any delay clients will be kept informed by telephone or email as to the reason for the delay and revised timescales.*
- o *Paperwork can be provided by email and/or fax in addition to post or DX.*
- o *Where requested instructions will be returned promptly accompanied with a fee note.*

Conferences:

- o *Chambers has conference facilities.*
- o *We are happy to attend conferences at the location of client's choice. If this involves an extra cost this will be agreed when the conference is booked.*
- o *If an urgent conference is required we will make every attempt to ensure that this can be achieved around counsel's existing commitments.*
- o *Counsel will prepare a short note of advice following conference where required or agreed.*
- o *With use of latest technology we can arrange a conference by either by telephone or via internet video conferencing*

Conflicts:

- o *Any conflict will be brought to client's attention as soon as possible by our clerking team who will be able to discuss alternative counsel and options.*

Unavoidable Circumstances:

- o *In the event of an unavoidable circumstance, you will be notified as soon as possible and an alternate solution found.*

Fee notes:

- o *All fee notes will be issued and sent with the returned instructions and brief/ papers and in any event no later than fourteen days of the billing event.*
- o *Further where the case is legally aided a copy fee note will be sent out on payment from the Legal Aid Agency (although a draft fee note will be sent after the case has been billed).*

Data Protection:

- o *E18GHTEEN is registered under the Data Protection Act.*
- o *Each barrister is registered under the Data Protection Act.*
- o *We take our commitments to manage confidential information very seriously and aim to achieve the highest standards in keeping all data secure.*
- o *All barristers and staff at Chambers comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act.*

Complaints:

- o *We aim to provide the highest possible standards of all aspect of service at all times.*
- o *However Chambers has procedures in place to ensure that should there be any cause for complaint you can be assured that it will be given proper attention and an appropriate resolution found.*
- o *A full copy of our compliant procedure is available on request or on Chambers' website.*

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