



GARDEN COURT CHAMBERS STANDARDS CHARTER

OFFICE HOURS

1. Chambers office hours are 8.45am to 6.15pm weekdays. In emergencies, clerks can be contacted on the numbers given on the answerphone.

TELEPHONE CALLS

2. Telephone calls are answered by the receptionists or a clerk if they are not available. Messages for Barristers or clerks can be left on their personal voicemails. These will be returned as soon as possible.

FAXES

3. The fax machines operate around the clock. During office hours the fax machines are checked regularly and barristers are notified by a message left on their voicemail of the receipt of any fax for them.

EMAIL

4. You can contact all our staff on their personal email addresses. Messages enter and leave chambers every minute. Messages sent to chambers' central email address are checked and passed to the recipients throughout the day.

DX AND POST

5. All mail and DX is opened, date stamped and distributed to barristers by 11 am on the date received. Mail that is addressed to the "Clerk to" will be opened, read and dealt with by the clerks. Mail addressed to a barrister is also opened unless it is marked "private and confidential" in which case it is immediately placed in the appropriate 'pigeonhole' "

6. Briefs will be acknowledged by letter dispatched on the day of receipt.

7. Other correspondence will be dealt with in 5 working days.

ACCEPTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR A HEARING

8. When a solicitor or other adviser requires advice on which barrister would be most suitable for a particular case the clerks are available to assist. A Barrister will not be double booked without the agreement of the solicitors concerned. However where a brief is not forwarded to chambers within 7 days of the telephone booking the barrister may be booked for another case unless the booking has been confirmed in writing by the solicitor.

PAPERWORK

9. 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.

10. If a solicitor requires the work to be completed earlier than 21 days from receipt then he/she should indicate this on the backsheet. If the brief needs to be completed within 5 working days of receipt then it should be marked "urgent" and if it is to be done within 24 hours of receipt then it should be marked "very urgent".

11. Instructions for work to be completed in less than 21 days should not be sent without the clerk's previous agreement.

12. If a time limit is to be exceeded then the barrister should inform the solicitor.

COMPLAINTS

13. Any complaints about a barrister or member of staff should be made to the Head of Chambers in writing. Chambers' complaints procedure is available on chambers' website. Copies can also be obtained from chambers reception or by phoning or emailing chambers.

COURTWORK

14. A barrister instructed to attend court will be present at least 30 minutes prior to the hearing unless other arrangements have been made.

CONFERENCES

15. Conferences usually take place in chambers, but where there is good reason, they can be held at other locations by arrangement. Disabled access for conferences is available within chambers by prior arrangement.

RETURN OF COMPLETED BRIEFS

16. Completed briefs will be returned promptly accompanied by a fee note.

FEEDBACK

17. Questionnaire surveys of clients are carried out twice a year in such a way that feedback is obtained on the work of all members of chambers as well as on chambers administration. Chambers will contact clients who have completed questionnaires to let them know what action has been taken on the points they raised.

Quality of service

Garden Court Chambers is committed to maintaining the Barmark, Quality Mark for the Bar and ISO 9001:2008 standards.

Equal opportunities

Garden Court Chambers is committed to the implementation and promotion of equal opportunities and to ensuring an absence of direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or political persuasion.

Data Protection

Garden Court Chambers is registered under the Data Protection Act.