



## The Direct Access Scheme and Business

To use a healthcare analogy, barristers are the ‘specialists’ of the legal world. Solicitors will consult barristers for detailed legal opinions on cases and commission them to represent their clients in Court hearings.

Thanks to the Direct Access Scheme, business owners and managers can now approach barristers direct for certain services. We can offer you legal advice and guidance, draft documents for you and represent you in legal proceedings.

We are not permitted to do some things your solicitor would normally undertake, including corresponding with the other party in a dispute, lodging court documents or handling money (for example paying court fees or expert witnesses).

This means that you and your business will have a greater role to play in progressing your case - but provided you are happy to handle case administration (with our full technical support and guidance), you will very likely reduce your legal costs.

### Accessing our legal services

The Direct Access Scheme is better suited to simpler legal matters and disputes. If we believe you would be better off involving a solicitor to work with us, we will tell you when we explore your requirements.

To begin with, either contact our practice managers to discuss your case or, if possible, please fill in our online questionnaire. This is structured to give us the basic information we need to ascertain whether or not we can help you.

If we can, we will match your requirement to the most suitable barrister and will give you a choice wherever possible. In the case of disputes, we will arrange an initial case conference with you or if you are seeking legal advice we will call you to make an appointment.

At this point our work will become chargeable and we will send you an engagement letter, which will set out clearly what we will do for you, the barrister and practice manager responsible, and what the costs will be.

Once you instruct us, we aim to achieve your goals as quickly as the circumstances, and law, allow.

### What does Direct Access cost?

As previously mentioned, we can in many cases agree a fixed fee arrangement with you, based on the complexity of your case and the amount of work involved.

Fixed fee means that you can call or email us without paying for the privilege by the minute and without any surprises when it comes to the bill. We believe this is vital to our service.

Some cases involve greater uncertainty. In this situation we will try to offer a fixed fee arrangement for elements of it, along with an hourly rate for the rest.

In this situation we will keep you updated on the costs and ask permission before incurring further expense.

#### **Your costs**

Under the Direct Access Scheme there are certain costs you will need to pay direct, including court fees and any charges from forensic accountants or other expert witnesses.

Consider also your management time and resources, as there will be administrative tasks for you to complete, from compiling evidence and lodging Court papers to updating your barrister on developments, such as correspondence received.

## **Working with us**

The beauty of the Direct Access Scheme is you will deal directly with the barrister advising on your case and representing you in any action.

We aim to answer questions free of jargon and our barristers understand the need to provide a high standard of service, alongside expert advice.

On this point, a Practice Manager will be assigned to your case. They will provide an efficient point of contact and ensure things progress smoothly.

Depending on your requirements, we can meet you face-to-face or video / tele conference if this is more convenient. Distance is no object. We work for clients throughout the country.

Should you ever have any concerns, please tell us and we will rectify things immediately. You are also welcome to contact our Head of Chambers or complain formally.

Naturally we will work hard to exceed your expectations. Many businesses choose us time and again for legal advice and representation. This, ultimately, is our ambition.