

# Family Client Care



May 2025



## Booking a Barrister

Upon booking counsel, we will send you an acknowledgment email confirming the details of the hearing, including the parties' names, venue, start time, and expected duration. This email will also include information on our standard payment terms, estimated fees, timelines for the delivery of papers, and a link to our client care letter. We kindly ask you to review this email carefully and let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

If you have instructed a barrister to provide an advice or any other drafting, our standard timeframe for completion is 14 days. If you require an earlier response, please discuss this at the time of booking or clearly state it in your covering letter or email.

Occasionally, particularly at short notice, we may not have counsel available. In such cases, we may be able to arrange for a barrister to "double-up" and handle more than one case, depending on the types and complexity of the hearings, the consent of both clients, and the court's listing. If the cases are scheduled in two different courts, we may still be able to provide coverage if you obtain the court's approval in advance. If we are unable to provide counsel due to availability, the geographic location of the hearing, or any other reason, we will do our best to assist you in finding suitable cover.

## Delivery of Papers

Our barristers are in court most days and must balance case preparation with other professional commitments and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Therefore, we request that all papers be delivered according to the timelines outlined in our booking acknowledgment letter. For longer or more complex cases, we may need to agree on specific timelines with you on a case-by-case basis.

We understand that delays in providing papers can occur for many reasons, often beyond your control, and we appreciate your cooperation in managing these situations. To help facilitate this process, we will send you a reminder email before the hearing to confirm the deadline for the delivery of papers:

- If you believe the papers will be delivered within our standard timelines, you may disregard the email, and we will assume that there are no issues and that the case will proceed as planned.
- If you anticipate any delays, for any reason, please let us know as soon as possible.

We generally require that papers be delivered at least five working days before the hearing. For more complex cases, we may agree to a different timeframe. If the deadline is reached and we have not received the brief and/or bundle, our clerks will contact you to discuss and agree on the appropriate course of action.

## Private Fee Agreements

Upon retaining our services, we will provide you with an estimate of fees and will seek to agree upon the final fee with you following the delivery of the brief.

You will receive an invoice within seven days of the completion of the work, with payment due within 30 days. All services are provided in accordance with our standard contractual terms, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

While we maintain standard fee scales, payment terms, and procedures, we are open to discussing customized arrangements. If you would like to explore alternative options, please contact Ped McKinstry, Practice Manager.

## Fixed Fees Provision

Our clerks are pleased to offer fixed fees at the time of booking for most cases we handle. These fixed fees are based on the information provided to us at the time of instruction. Should the brief reveal more complex issues or require the barrister to spend additional time on the case than initially anticipated, we will reach out to you to discuss a revised fee. Such situations are rare, and we kindly request that you provide as much detailed information as possible at the time of booking to help avoid any adjustments.

For certain cases, we may not be able to offer fixed fees. These typically include complex matters, cases involving international elements, and those with substantial documentation and evidence.

Fees for paperwork are determined based on the barrister's hourly rate and the time required for preparation and drafting. We will be able to provide a clearer estimate of the likely fee for paperwork upon reviewing the relevant documents.

## Standard Payment Terms

Counsel's services are provided in accordance with the Standard Contractual Terms for the Supply of Legal Services by Barristers to Authorised Persons 2012 ("the 2012 Terms"). At the time of booking, our clerks will advise you of the anticipated fees for the work to be completed, enabling you to secure funds on account from your client. Following the completion of the work, an invoice will be issued within seven days, and payment is due within 30 days from the date of the invoice.

At the time of booking, we will send an email requesting your confirmation of our standard payment terms or inviting you to propose an alternative arrangement. If we do not receive a response within seven days, we will consider this as acceptance of our standard terms.

## Booking Cancellations / Adjournments

If a case is removed from counsel's diary on short notice, a fee will typically be charged. This fee compensates for the preparatory work already undertaken by counsel and for the loss of work that cannot be replaced. Due to the nature of a barrister's self-employment, it is often not possible to secure alternative work at short notice, resulting in a potential loss of income for the barrister. Cancellations may occur due to various reasons, such as an agreed adjournment between the parties, the court removing the matter from the list, settlement of the case, or other unforeseen circumstances.

The cancellation fee is determined based on how close the date of cancellation is to the hearing date, as well as the estimated length of the hearing. Please see the tables below for an overview of our deemed/abated fee rates.

### Hearings up to one day

Working days before hearing removed from diary	Percentage of fee payable
1 day	100%
3 days	75%
5 days	50%
6+ days	0%

### Hearings over one day and up to three days

Working days before hearing removed from diary	Percentage of fee payable
1 day	100%
3 days	75%
7 days	50%
8+ days	0%

Terms for hearings over three days will be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

## Fee Payment

The barristers in the Family Team at Nine Chambers are self-employed and depend on a regular cash flow for their income. Therefore, we kindly request that all fees be paid within 30 days of receiving the fee note. If you anticipate any difficulty meeting this payment timeline, please contact the accounts team at [accounts@ninechambers.com](mailto:accounts@ninechambers.com). Likewise, if you have any concerns or disputes regarding the fee amount, please bring them to the clerks attention within the 30-day period.