

**clerksroom** | *Barristers & Mediators*

**information pack for barristers**  
*Clerking Arrangements*

the **service**  
the **people**  
the **quality**

# what is clerksroom?

Clerksroom is a national provider of Barristers & Mediators providing advocacy, advice and mediation throughout England & Wales. Established in 2001, we are also one of the largest and most flexible mediation providers in the UK, committed to total client satisfaction. Our service is available 24 hours a day by telephone, email or online at our website [clerksroom.com](http://clerksroom.com)

- ✓ **Fast & multi-track advocates for every court**
- ✓ **No travel costs** for fast-track matters
- ✓ **Experts for advocacy, advice & drafting**
- ✓ Leading **national chambers**
- ✓ UK's most **flexible mediation provider**
- ✓ Always **flexible** with fees or budgets
- ✓ We offer **expertise, integrity** and **value for money**
- ✓ Our **barristers work from home**

## the quality

The Clerksroom service is unique, because our counsel, mediators and staff work together to ensure that quality of service is consistent throughout everything we do.

We take great pride in the quality of service we deliver, and we are always looking to see how it can be improved.

- We operate a **rigorous recruitment process**
- Continuous **feedback, monitoring and assessment of all counsel, mediators and staff**
- **Ongoing training** programmes
- Practice reviews to **rectify any under achievement** that may be identified
- **Every mediator** we promote has achieved **“Certified Mediator”** status
- We have been committed to **Investors in People** since 2002



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**clerksroom**

**Administration:**

Equity House  
Blackbrook Park Avenue  
Taunton Somerset TA1 2PX  
**DX:** 97188 Taunton Blackbrook

**T:** 0845 083 3000  
**F:** 0845 083 3001  
[www.clerksroom.com](http://www.clerksroom.com)  
[mail@clerksroom.com](mailto:mail@clerksroom.com)

## Professional Practice Management

Clerksroom was launched in 2001 after three years of planning and research. It was based on the knowledge and experience of senior clerks, the leading Bar software provider and close cooperation with the professional bodies. We are a commercial organisation with a modern business structure.

Clerksroom has an established track record of successfully managing and promoting the practices of senior and junior barristers in England and Wales.

Members are clerked by dedicated barristers' clerks who provide the usual services, together with many unique features. These are available over the telephone and online, anywhere in the world.

### The advantages to barristers are very significant -

- **Marketing:** Clerksroom offers a first rate marketing structure
- **Time:** Barristers can access their diaries at any time and anywhere
- **Library:** Clerksroom subscribers have access to an exceptional online library at discounted rates
- **Information:** Barristers can access all information about every case including their full financial records / aged debt anywhere, and at any time.
- **Online:** Barristers have their own e-mail address and web page presence
- **Anti-discrimination:** All staff are Equality and Diversity trained and are committed to its principles
- **Cost:** Barristers are clerked at a flat rate of 12% of fees collected subject to a standing order of £750 + VAT per month

Of course the information held on computer is sensitive so Clerksroom has the highest security protocols. These are built in by Meridian Law who provide practice management software and are the Internet Service Provider. Standards of Data Protection and confidentiality have been checked by the Bar Council.

Clerksroom undertakes to protect the confidentiality of the information held in respect of each user, they also undertake to ensure that there is no improper use of the information held in respect of each user. In addition, to ensure that all users of the facilities are aware of which other barristers or sets of Chambers have information held by Clerksroom, a list of all users is maintained and available on our website [clerksroom.com](http://clerksroom.com)

Clerksroom offers remarkable value for money, state of the art software and service, as well as an understanding approach to a barrister's professional needs and requirements. The Clerksroom team are widely regarded as leading lights in the development of contemporary practice management.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**clerksroom**

#### Administration:

Equity House  
Blackbrook Park Avenue  
Taunton Somerset TA1 2PX  
DX: 97188 Taunton Blackbrook

T: 0845 083 3000  
F: 0845 083 3001  
[www.clerksroom.com](http://www.clerksroom.com)  
[mail@clerksroom.com](mailto:mail@clerksroom.com)

## Marketing

Whilst Clerksroom has an unrivalled amount of marketing power, it is not a reason to join. Clerksroom staff work with new counsel to develop their existing practices and strengthen their existing professional relationships. Joining with a view to being handed an instant practice is simply not realistic. Clerksroom counsel are motivated self-marketers, they know what they want to achieve and they have realistic expectations. The Clerksroom team will help work with counsel to achieve their ambitions.

## Staff

Clerksroom staff are divided into specific work areas. At present we have staff that accept responsibility for the following areas of business:

- Marketing
- Administration
- Diary Management
- Billing
- Credit Control
- Mediation
- Client Care
- I.T. & Websites
- Reception & Meeting Rooms
- Cheque Processing and Banking

## I.T. Systems

Clerksroom's I.T. system is state of the art and under continuous development. The backbone of the Diary/Case management is the recognised Meridian Law case management system. Clerksroom's I.T. is managed by IRIS Software and is completely web enabled. The simplicity of the system means counsel can log into their diary, cases, aged debt, payment summaries or any other professional information via a simple Internet connection, pda or email enabled mobile phone.

## Logistics

Counsel work from home. The clerks operate from the UK Case Management Centre based in Taunton, Somerset where all staff are based and communications are handled on a 24 hour basis. The clerks manage all incoming telephone calls, incoming faxes, email, DX and post. Briefs are entered onto the computer system and forwarded to counsel's home DX boxes, unless urgent, when they may be scanned and sent direct by email. Faxes, emails and non-urgent messages are dealt with by the staff or forwarded to counsel via email as appropriate. Telephone enquiries that require a response from counsel are transferred directly to counsel's home or mobile telephone from our switchboard. Cheques are banked directly into counsel's bank weekly. We make full use of the latest high-speed scan to email technology by converting all incoming paper to image files in .tif or .pdf formats where appropriate.

## Conferences

In practice, conferences are arranged at venues suitable to the lay or professional client. Most solicitors are content for conferences to be held at their offices and we welcome this as an opportunity to market our counsel within the firms themselves.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**clerksroom**

**Administration:**

Equity House  
Blackbrook Park Avenue  
Taunton Somerset TA1 2PX  
**DX:** 97188 Taunton Blackbrook

**T:** 0845 083 3000  
**F:** 0845 083 3001  
www.clerksroom.com  
mail@clerksroom.com

## Service Level Agreement

Clerksroom members sign a Service Level Agreement prior to joining. The Service Level Agreement sets out the basis of service and the terms on which it is offered.

## Service Standard

Details of our services for lay and professional clients are set out in our brochure which can be found on our website. The “service standard” as set out in the brochure applies to all counsel and performance is monitored against it. The standard has been developed with the Bar Council’s Bar Mark in mind and also the Legal Service Commission’s Quality Mark.

## Areas of Work Undertaken

Clerksroom counsel undertakes private client civil, family & childcare work. We do not accept instructions for crime.

### We currently have the following practice groups:

- Commercial, Chancery & Property
- Credit Hire
- Employment
- Environmental
- Family & Children
- Inquests
- Family Finance
- Mediation
- Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence
- Road Traffic Claims
- Costs
- Local Government & Planning

## Our Charges - 3 options are available

**1. Minimum rate** - A variable monthly fee calculated at the rate of 12% of fees received plus VAT payable monthly in arrears and subject to a minimum payment on the 10th day of each month in the sum of £750 plus VAT.

**2. Fixed rate** - A fixed monthly fee calculated on the basis of 12% of fees plus VAT received in the previous 12 month period, to be re-assessed on 1st January each year. Fixed fees are payable by standing order on the 10th of each month. The payment is fixed, there are no additional changes until the next review.

**3. 15% of fees received, no monthly fee**

Members can change the basis at any time.

### Additional options if required:

- Digital Library – All Lexis Nexis Digital Services - £100 pcm + VAT



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**clerksroom**

#### Administration:

Equity House  
Blackbrook Park Avenue  
Taunton Somerset TA1 2PX  
DX: 97188 Taunton Blackbrook

T: 0845 083 3000  
F: 0845 083 3001  
www.clerksroom.com  
mail@clerksroom.com

## Practice Development Programme

Clerksroom was established to support Barristers with their own regular practice and client base. Our charging rates of 12% with a standing order or 15% pay as you go were set accordingly.

We will now offer a 3rd category of membership for Barristers wishing to join Clerksroom without a regular client base or existing work.

As with our existing members, we are looking for applicants who can demonstrate a total commitment to customer care and the highest quality of service, and are prepared to “go the extra mile”. The new membership will be the “Practice Development Programme” and open to junior or senior members of the Bar who are entitled to practice in England & Wales as approved by the Bar Standards Board. The programme will last 12 months then full membership may be offered upon successful completion.

We recognise that some Barristers need a helping hand to launch their practice, learn about self marketing techniques and build a regular and loyal client base.

In addition to our regular 24/7 regular clerking and practice management service, our new membership will offer the following benefits to Barristers wishing to join:

1. Dedicated senior level clerk with experience of successfully developing practices
2. Marketing support & guidance
3. Access to loyal clients and direct promotion
4. Monthly features in news updates and promotional material
5. Unallocated work in the areas of law being promoted
6. Profile service helping to draft, circulate and promote the web profile
7. Business networking support and guidance
8. Social media support and guidance
9. BSB qualified person provided where required
10. Mentor system provided by senior members of chambers

The cost of the practice development programme is £1,000 + VAT per month for 12 months, a total of £12,000 + VAT. There will be no other fees payable during the 12 month period.\* Barristers wishing to sign up to the practice development programme should contact Jennie Walker using [walker@clerksroom.com](mailto:walker@clerksroom.com) or DDI: 01823 704 074

\*not including home DX, business cards and library membership,

## Transfer of Aged Debt

Clerksroom accept the transfer of aged debt from previous chambers. Clerksroom charge 12% of fees when collected for this service. Our team are particularly skilled in collection of outstanding fees due. Credit Control are always happy to discuss particular requirements or circumstances.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**clerksroom**

**Administration:**

Equity House  
Blackbrook Park Avenue  
Taunton Somerset TA1 2PX  
**DX:** 97188 Taunton Blackbrook

**T:** 0845 083 3000  
**F:** 0845 083 3001  
[www.clerksroom.com](http://www.clerksroom.com)  
[mail@clerksroom.com](mailto:mail@clerksroom.com)

## **Practicalities** \_Barristers work from home. It is therefore recommended for barristers to have the following:

- **Good quality laser printer** – HP works best with NT servers. Toner lasts approx 50,000 sheets so whilst a toner may cost £50 to replace, its cost per copy is much cheaper than ink-jet printers. You will need the capacity to print a high volume of papers that arrive by email or fax. Our faxes are all also converted to email files and forwarded.
- **Broadband** – Recommended as a basic working from home tool. Anything less than Broadband will be impractical.
- Home DX box is recommended. The current cost of a DX box at home is in the region of £250 + VAT for the 1st year and then a small reduction in subsequent years.
- **PDA or mobile phone** with diary/email allows you to view your diary and email in real time on your mobile phone. (Please check with our I.T. support team before buying)

## **Allocation of work procedure and policy:**

### **Where specific counsel is requested:**

- (1) Counsel requested is booked, if available, and confirmation is sent by email and post.
- (2) If counsel is not available, the existing booking is checked and confirmed.
- (3) If the client wishes the booking to be entered and remain as a double booking, the entry is made and confirmed in writing as a double booking.
- (4) If there is specific reason for counsel being required, the possibility of moving the existing or the new booking is explored, if appropriate. All options are discussed and a decision made in consultation with counsel and solicitor.

### **Where no named counsel is requested, the following aspects are considered before allocation:**

- (1) The nature of the work and experience of counsel
- (2) The seniority required (e.g. Multi-Track, Fast-Track, Small Claims)
- (3) The level of fee or budget proposed
- (4) The geographical location of counsel in relation to the court.
- (5) Feedback and level of service offered by Counsel
- (6) Specific panel requirement (i.e. Accident Exchange)
- (7) Taking account of any other request made (within Anti-Discrimination guidelines – i.e. race or gender)

## **Specialist Practice Groups & Brochures**

Counsel may join specialist practice groups when they can demonstrate that over 50% of their work relates to a specific practice group in line with their bar mutual return. Requests for inclusion to a practice group must be accompanied by positive feedback relating to that area of practice. The head of the practice group will approve any application to join a group or to be included into a specialist group brochure.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**clerksroom**

#### **Administration:**

Equity House  
Blackbrook Park Avenue  
Taunton Somerset TA1 2PX  
**DX:** 97188 Taunton Blackbrook

**T:** 0845 083 3000  
**F:** 0845 083 3001  
www.clerksroom.com  
mail@clerksroom.com

## Joining Clerksroom

Clerksroom would not suit everyone, neither would Clerksroom accept anyone. If having read this information you feel the service is what you are looking for, we would be delighted to arrange a meeting at our Taunton HQ to discuss the service face to face. At the meeting it would be helpful for you to have available a list of existing solicitors, current examples of work being undertaken and a good understanding of your practice as it currently stands. We normally ask counsel to discuss with us a 12, 24 and 36-month business plan explaining what they would like to achieve in this time. This is essential as it demonstrates that counsel have a clear understanding of their personal and professional objectives. We cannot assess if we are able to help you achieve those objectives if they are not clear and measurable. Clerksroom prefer counsel to spend a half day at the case management centre to allow sufficient time to understand the service being offered, to meet the staff and to fully appreciate the modern team environment. It is not recommended for any counsel to join Clerksroom without having spent time discussing their own personal circumstances with the staff. If this modern, friendly and dynamic approach to practice is appealing, we would like to hear from you. Martin Davies, our Chambers Director would be happy to have a confidential conversation, at any time, and can be contacted on **0845 083 3000**.

## Our barristers say:

*It was not the 10% which was the principal attraction to me and hence I do not believe that it should head the list. Marketing was the nearest - but really only as a reflector of the excellence of the system of clerking employed and the attitude and genuine enthusiasm of the team.*

**Dr Michael Powers Q.C.**

### Clerksroom counsel joining us in late 2007

*As you know (but it's worth repeating), I have really enjoyed these last 3 months. Now that is not a word one often uses in connection with work, but it is true. I have felt really supported and invigorated by joining Clerksroom: the work is interesting, the facilities fantastic and the support from the team is great. Thank you.*

*When I'm not in court I like working from home as I have 2 children. I am instructed by the same solicitors I worked for before and of course we return work in chambers so I do exactly what I used to do in a traditional set where I was paying a much higher percentage of my gross income – here I pay 10% - I can also pay to use all the facilities at 218 Strand – opposite the High Court. All the law material is online. There are no office politics as we do not get involved with the running of chambers at all.*

**Tina Villarosa**

*I really enjoyed my time with Clerksroom. It was a pleasure to enjoy first rate technology and friendly clerking from an innovative chambers unswervingly dedicated to the support of their members.*

**Simon McCrossan**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**clerksroom**

**Administration:**

Equity House  
Blackbrook Park Avenue  
Taunton Somerset TA1 2PX  
**DX:** 97188 Taunton Blackbrook

**T:** 0845 083 3000  
**F:** 0845 083 3001  
www.clerksroom.com  
mail@clerksroom.com



## **The UK Legal 500 Comments:**

*"In Devon and Cornwall, several good sets meet the demands of the local market and the first serious 'e-chambers' Clerksroom has established its terrestrial base in Taunton."*

Further

*"Taunton-based, but with wider, cyber, ambitions, Clerksroom has attracted some excellent and independent-minded practitioners."*

*"Thanks Greg, Clerksroom provides an excellent service!"*

**Paul Willoughby - Consultant** Foot Anstey Sargent 1/2/05

*"Whilst I have not been involved in many mediations thus far (my tally is four including this one) this mediation was by far the most successful and the best managed."*

**Regards, Genevieve Hardy,** Linklaters

*"We were very impressed with the previous service received."*

**Kind regards, Zoë Howrey LLP** - [www.howrey.com](http://www.howrey.com)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**clerksroom**

**Administration:**

Equity House  
Blackbrook Park Avenue  
Taunton Somerset TA1 2PX  
**DX:** 97188 Taunton Blackbrook

**T:** 0845 083 3000  
**F:** 0845 083 3001  
[www.clerksroom.com](http://www.clerksroom.com)  
[mail@clerksroom.com](mailto:mail@clerksroom.com)