

How do I get the best out of my 4PB direct access barrister?

The most important thing when using a direct, or public access, barrister is to be scrupulously organised. This means having your papers in order (more information on getting your papers in order can be found on this page) and ensuring that deadlines are strictly adhered to within the court process – as unlike when you use a solicitor, these deadlines remain your responsibility. You should make sure that your barrister has all of the information he or she needs in order to put your case to the court, including all the information that you consider may not support your case, so that there are no surprises during the hearing.

It's also helpful if you can be as specific as possible about what you want to achieve, thinking carefully about what aspects of a solution matter most to you, and why. This will help your barrister tailor his or her approach to your aspirations, or alternatively to let you know if he or she thinks they may not be appropriate and discuss different possibilities and strategies with you.

Finally, it helps to remember that barristers are specialist court advocates and are not general litigators in the way that solicitors are. You employ them just like a solicitor would, to come in and do a specific job in court. When using a direct access barrister, you remain technically a litigant in person within the court system – there are some advantages conferred by this status, but it will be unrealistic if you expect the same level of involvement in your case on an ongoing basis from a barrister to that which you would receive from a retained solicitor. The more confident you are in your own ability to manage the ins and outs of your case on a day-to-day basis, the better your experience with a direct access barrister will be.

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