



BAR
STANDARDS
BOARD

REGULATING BARRISTERS

Welcome

to the Bar of England and Wales.

An introduction to the Bar Standards Board
and the rules you need to know.

Your core duties as a barrister:

- 1 to observe your duty to the court in the administration of justice;
- 2 to act in the best interests of each client;
- 3 to act with honesty and with integrity;
- 4 to maintain your independence;
- 5 not to behave in a way which is likely to diminish the trust and confidence which the public places in you or in the profession;
- 6 to keep the affairs of each client confidential;
- 7 to provide a competent standard of work and service to each client;
- 8 not to discriminate unlawfully against any person;
- 9 to be open and co-operative with your regulators; and
- 10 to take reasonable steps to manage your practice, or carry out your role within your practice, competently and in such a way as to achieve compliance with your legal and regulatory obligations.

These core duties are outlined in the BSB Handbook, along with all the rules of professional conduct and guidance. You can find the BSB Handbook on our website at: <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/for-barristers/bsb-handbook-and-code-guidance/the-bsb-handbook.html>

A personal message from our Chair, Kathryn Stone OBE



Congratulations on being called to the Bar of England and Wales.

Barristers play a vital role in our justice system and in our society. As your regulator, the BSB is responsible for promoting and safeguarding the highest standards of practice in order to protect the public and to maintain trust in the profession. One of the key reasons we exist is to help you adhere to your professional duties as a barrister. We want to help every barrister to meet their core duties rather than having to resort to enforcement action if they fail to do so.

Many of your professional duties as a barrister start from the moment you are called to the Bar and apply whether or not you go on to pupillage and practice. As soon as you are called to the Bar you become an “unregistered barrister” and you therefore become subject to our regulation. So we have included information about the rules that apply to you as an unregistered barrister in this leaflet.

Below, you can find listed the ten core professional duties of a barrister. We hope they will become your guiding principles throughout your career. The BSB Handbook contains further guidance as well as the detailed rules with which you are expected to comply as both a practising barrister and as an unregistered barrister.

Within this leaflet, you will find further important information relating to the next stages of your career. This includes information about:

- what you can and cannot do as an unregistered barrister
- obtaining pupillage; and
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

As Chair of the Bar Standards Board, I am committed to regulating the Bar in the public interest. I want to ensure that the profession values and promotes equality and diversity, that we and your profession support your development throughout your career, and that our Handbook and guidance help you to maintain high standards.

Congratulations again on your being called to the Bar. I wish you every success in your future career.

Kathryn Stone OBE

Why regulation matters

Many people assume that barristers only become regulated by the BSB when they have completed pupillage and actually start to practise as a barrister. But you become a barrister from the moment you are called to the Bar of England and Wales. This means that our regulatory oversight begins when you become a member of the Bar and our rules for unregistered, non-practising barristers apply immediately.

There is good reason for this, because regulation offers important protection to the public as well as to the profession itself.

Our regulation is about safeguarding the high standards expected of all barristers. This ensures that the value of the term “barrister” is protected and that the profession can continue to enjoy its reputation for excellence around the world. At the same time, our aim is to ensure that when they engage the services of a barrister, the public can expect their barrister to act with the highest possible standards of professional conduct at all times. This trust and confidence is at the very heart of our legal system.

The BSB's approach to regulation

As well as acting in the public interest, we aim to support those whom we regulate.

We take a risk-based approach to regulating the Bar meaning that we focus on the aspects within our rules that can have the biggest impact on our regulatory objectives. (See box panel).

Amongst other things this means that we seek to work closely with the barristers whom we regulate to take steps to prevent things from going wrong. It means our approach is NOT about waiting for you to make a mistake and then taking disciplinary action against you, although we will of course take enforcement action where necessary. We want you to understand our rules and regulations, and to apply them during your professional practice and, where appropriate, during your time as an unregistered barrister. We are a proactive and proportionate regulator.



17,418
registered barristers
regulated

At 31 March 2023 we were responsible for regulating 17,418 practising barristers and around a further 58,000 barristers who were not practising

(we regulated 17,170 practising and around 56,000 non-practising barristers in 2021-22)

Our Regulatory Objectives

The work that we do is governed by the Legal Services Act 2007 (the Act) as well as a number of other statutes.

Our objectives are laid down in the Act. We share them with the other legal services regulators. They are:

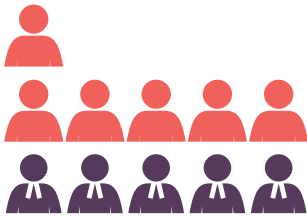
- protecting and promoting the public interest;
- supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law;
- improving access to justice;
- protecting and promoting the interests of consumers;
- promoting competition in the provision of services;
- encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession;
- increasing public understanding of citizens' legal rights and duties;
- promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles; and
- promoting the prevention and detection of economic crime.

Independent regulation

The BSB has a robust governance structure overseen by a Board made up of a combination of lay people and barristers. It has a lay majority and a lay Chair.

We act strictly independently of the Bar Council and the profession that we regulate. This is important, as it helps to assure the public that regulatory action is taken in their interests rather than in the interests of individual barristers or the Bar as a whole.

We are funded by practising barristers who pay an annual Practising Certificate Fee (PCF) which also helps to fund the Bar Council, the Legal Ombudsman and the Legal Services Board. The PCF is an annual graduated fee which is set in accordance with a barrister's income.



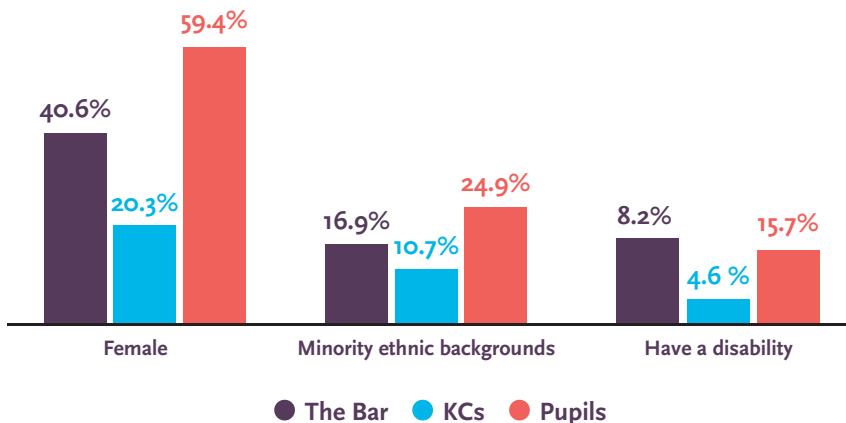
**Our Board has 6 lay members
(including the lay Chair)
and 5 barrister members**

Promoting equality and diversity

As the regulator of barristers, we have a statutory duty to promote equality and diversity throughout the profession.

One of the ways in which we do this is by setting out certain values and behaviours that we expect all barristers to exhibit. These include a duty not to discriminate unlawfully and to treat people with respect and dignity. There is more information about our work to promote equality and diversity on our website at <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity.html>

Diversity at the Bar



December 2023 (excluding non-responses)

Important regulatory information for unregistered barristers

Now that you have been called to the Bar, unless and until you have a valid practising certificate, you will be an “unregistered barrister”.

As an unregistered barrister you must comply with relevant parts of the BSB Handbook. The following list (which is not exhaustive) is designed as a helpful reminder about some of the most important of these rules:

- Only registered barristers (ie those with a valid practising certificate) are allowed to provide “reserved legal activities”, which are as follows:
 - the exercise of a right of audience;
 - the conduct of litigation;
 - reserved instrument activities;
 - probate activities;
 - notarial activities; and
 - the administration of oaths.
- As an unregistered barrister you may provide unreserved legal services, but you must not “hold yourself out” as a barrister (ie use the title barrister) when supplying or offering to supply legal services. If you provide unreserved legal services you must comply with all of the Core Duties; and
- You are not allowed to provide immigration advice and services unless you have been authorised to do by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).

You should also be aware that certain provisions within the BSB Handbook apply to you **at all times**, including when you are not providing legal services. These include the Core Duty not to behave in a way which is likely to diminish the trust and confidence which the public places in you or in the profession, and the Core Duty to be open and co-operative with your regulators.

You can read more about the rules governing unregistered barristers on our website at www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/media/1666521/1_guidance_for_unregistered_barristers_barristers_without_practising_certificates_-_supplying_legal_services_and_holding_out.pdf

We may take disciplinary action against unregistered barristers who do not comply with these rules, and we want to help you comply with our rules which are designed to protect the public interest. For help and guidance about our rules you can consult our Handbook <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/the-bsb-handbook.html> or contact the Bar Council's Ethical Enquiries Service at <https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/support-for-barristers/ethics.html>

Please do also subscribe to our monthly Regulatory Update email for the Bar. It contains essential regulatory news and updates for all barristers. To subscribe, please register as an “unregistered barrister” at www.mybar.org.uk



We authorised 145 specialised legal services businesses in 2022-23 (compared with 130 in 2021-22)

Some information about pupillage

Many of you will now be seeking pupillage. This is an essential component of qualification at the Bar, in which pupils gain practical training under the supervision of experienced barristers. Pupillage is divided into two parts: a non-practising period, normally lasting six months, where pupils shadow, and work with, an approved pupil supervisor and the second practising period, normally also lasting six months, where pupils, with their pupil supervisor's permission, can supply legal services and exercise rights of audience.

The way in which pupils are assessed reflects the requirements set out in the Professional Statement for Barristers <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/the-professional-statement.html>

Pupillage Advertising Requirements

Chambers and other organisations that offer pupillages must advertise all vacancies on the designated website www.pupillagegateway.com. They must also recruit pupils in line with the Pupillage Gateway timetable which runs from late November to early May. This prescribes the timelines for each stage of recruiting pupils, including the publication of adverts, submission dates for applications, shortlisting, interviews and making offers.

Pupillage Funding Requirements

From 1 January 2025 the minimum funding award for pupillage will be £24,203 for 12-month pupillages in London and £22,019 per annum for pupillages outside London.

These rates are set having regard to the Living Wage Foundation's recommended minimum hourly rates and are updated annually.

All pupil barristers should receive a written pupillage agreement to explain the rights and obligations of pupils and those providing their pupillage.

Preparing for Pupillage

Competition for pupillage is intense. Applicants are therefore advised to make sure that they are suited to a career at the Bar by visiting court, talking to people in the legal profession and undertaking work experience, such as mini-pupillages in barristers' chambers or "marshalling" with a judge. Applicants should also ensure that they have thoroughly researched the chambers or other organisations offering pupillage to which they have applied.

Pro Bono work during Pupillage

Taking on pro bono work during pupillage with the agreement of your pupil supervisor can be an excellent way to kickstart your career at the Bar by gaining exposure to real cases and developing your advocacy skills. Consider volunteering with Advocate, the Free Representation Unit (FRU) or any of the many pro bono organisations out there listed on this website: <https://www.nationalprobonocentre.org.uk/about-pro-bono/pro-bono-organisations/>. As soon as you start your second six, you can take on pro bono work with Advocate, the Bar's national pro bono charity. Find out more: <https://weareadvocate.org.uk/volunteer.html>

If you have begun or are about to begin a period of pupillage / work-based learning:

- you must register your pupillage before the pupillage begins
- you must notify the Bar Standards Board of any material changes to your pupillage (eg a change in date of commencement, a change in supervisor or a change in the proposed end date of pupillage)
- you must comply with the requirements of the organisation providing your pupillage; and
- if you undertake Youth Court work during your practising period of pupillage, you must register this fact with the BSB either before or within 28 days of undertaking the work.

All chambers are required to have an anti-harassment policy that covers pupils as well as practising barristers and staff. In addition, the Bar Council offers a helpline for pupils and produces a range of equality and diversity documents.

More support and advice for pupils including advice on gaining adequate experience during pupillage is available in our Bar Qualification Manual at <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/bar-qualification-manual.html>

If you do not yet have a pupillage:

- you must begin your pupillage within five years from the date that you passed the vocational component of Bar training
- until you have completed pupillage and obtained a practising certificate, you may not, in connection with offering or supplying legal services, hold yourself out as a barrister or exercise any right of audience as a barrister.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The BSB is committed to ensuring that barristers provide high-quality legal services, adapt to the needs of their clients, and succeed in an evolving and increasingly competitive legal services market.

So, all practising barristers must complete CPD. CPD is defined in the BSB Handbook as work undertaken over and above the normal commitments of your role to:

- Develop your knowledge, skills, and professional standards in areas relevant to your present or proposed area(s) of practice.
- Keep you up to date.
- Maintain the highest standards of professional practice.

After completing pupillage, you must meet the CPD requirements of the New Practitioners Programme (NPP) for the first three years of your practice. The NPP includes some compulsory elements and a minimum hours requirement.

Once you have completed the NPP, you must meet the requirements of the Established Practitioners Programme (EPP), which requires you to reflect on your practice, identify your learning objectives, plan your CPD activities accordingly, and keep a record of the activities you complete.

You may focus your CPD on the main areas of the [Professional Statement](#), which sets out the essential knowledge, skills, and attributes you should expect of yourself and other barristers.

Details of our CPD requirements and expectations, including CPD templates and examples of completed CPD records, can be found on our website at: <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/for-barristers/cpd>.

Strengthening your skills and expanding your practice

Pro bono work can be a fantastic way to develop your advocacy skills, in line with the requirements in the Bar Qualification Manual, allowing you to gain experience in the higher courts as well as expand your practice in new areas of law. Through Advocate, you can browse cases tailored to your specialist areas, as well as areas that you are seeking to try. You can even receive mentoring through Collaborate, Advocate's case-based mentoring scheme: <https://weareadvocate.org.uk/volunteer/mentoring.html>. Find out more out working with Advocate here: <https://weareadvocate.org.uk/volunteer.html>

“MyBar” and “Regulatory Update”

As you are now a member of the Bar of England and Wales, you have access to our “MyBar” portal at: <https://mybar.org.uk/>

“MyBar” is where you can manage your applications and authorisations with the BSB, including applying for your first Practising Certificate. It is a joint portal, meaning that you will also be able to access services provided by the Bar Council.

Please subscribe to our monthly Regulatory Update email for the Bar. It contains essential regulatory news and updates for all barristers. When you log in to MyBar for the first time, just choose your communication/data and social media preferences opting in to receive ‘Bar Standards Board Regulatory Updates & Information’. When you start the practising period of your pupillage, we will automatically send the email to you.

BAR
STANDARDS
BOARD

REGULATING BARRISTERS



Contact us

Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London WC1V 7HZ

DX: 240 LDE

Tel: 020 7611 1444

contactus@barstandardsboard.org.uk

www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

X (Formerly known as Twitter): [@barstandards](https://twitter.com/barstandards)

www.linkedin.com/company/the-bar-standards-board

<https://www.youtube.com/@TheBarStandardsBoard>

<https://bsky.app/profile/barstandardsboard.bsky.social>