

JOB DESCRIPTION

FAMILY DEPARTMENT PRACTICE CLERK

This document provides a description of the roles and responsibilities of the Department Practice Clerk(s) at 18 St John Street Chambers.

A Department Practice Clerk works as a member of the respective clerking team within the clerk's room and reports to the Chambers Director, Department Senior Clerk or Practice Manager(s) in all matters.

This position is reviewed by the Chambers Director, Senior Clerk and Chambers Management Committee.

The Department Practice Clerk's position is divided into the following areas of responsibility and activity:

1. PURPOSE OF THE JOB

- I. To organise and manage the activities of all members of Chambers by liaison and under the direction of the Chambers Director, Department Senior Clerk and Practice Manager(s).
- II. To organise the efficient management of cases from cradle to grave, i.e. from the first approach into chambers through to the conclusion of the case.
- III. To promote the members of Chambers to existing and potential clients at all times.
- IV. As directed by the Department Senior Clerk and Practice Manager(s), assist in the prompt collection of outstanding fees.
- V. To implement and maintain Chambers' and departmental service and quality standards and to ensure client satisfaction with the services provided.

2. ACTIVITIES INVOLVED

- I. Managing the Departmental diary on a day to day basis in accordance with the Department Clerking Manual.
- II. Confirming court listings and where appropriate liaising with court staff and attending listing meetings or fixing appointments.

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- III. Working closely with all clerking departments in chambers to ensure the smooth running of chambers as a whole.
- IV. Liaising with Clerks, Counsel, The Court Service and Instructing Solicitors to plan a proactive diary and anticipate potential problems acting early to avoid a problem happening.
- V. Ensuring that each member of Chambers is aware of their commitments for the following day: anticipating double-bookings; administering reminders of outstanding paperwork.
- VI. To assist at and attend Departmental Meetings and/or functions as directed by the Department Senior Clerk.
- VII. As directed by the Department Senior Clerk, participate in any promotional events organised by Chambers or to which you are invited by clients and giving the best possible impression of yourself and of Chambers at such events.
- VIII. Assisting the Department Senior Clerk with the speedy calculation and dispatch of Counsel's fee notes (essential for regular cash-flow). This will involve being responsible for collating information about unbilled fees on a daily basis for discussion with the Department Senior Clerk. Private fees should be despatched upon completion of the work and Legal Aid fees must be despatched as soon as all relevant details are collated.
- IX. Close liaison with the Clerking team to ensure effective management of multi-disciplined barristers and to avoid over-booking of diary commitments.
- X. Recording of information. You will be responsible for ensuring that all essential information is obtained and recorded and that missing information is sought immediately from either solicitors or other sources.
- XI. Providing administrative support to the Clerking Team
- XII. Polite, concise and considered response to email and telephone enquiries from solicitors, their staff, the Court Service and, on occasion, lay clients. Relaying of all complaints to the Chambers Director & Department Senior Clerk immediately in accordance with the Chambers Complaints Procedure.
- XIII. Ensuring that all visitors to Chambers are treated with courtesy and kept informed of any delays with Counsel and that any problems are dealt with sympathetically.

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- XIV. Ensuring compliance with Chambers' telephone answering procedure so that calls are answered and dealt with quickly and politely and that accurate messages are taken and relayed to the person concerned.
- XV. The Department Senior Clerk must be kept up to date with work in progress and informed of any difficulties with your workload.
- XVI. In addition to the duties outlined above, there will inevitably be other tasks which occasionally arise out of the operation of a busy Clerk's Room, where teamwork and co-operation are required. Again, any concerns in this area can be referred to the Chambers Management Committee.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- I. Chambers operates a shift pattern meaning someone will be working between 8.30 and 18.00 every day. The senior clerk is responsible for making suitable arrangements and ensuring all staff are at their desk working by their appointed time.
- II. Follow the processes set out in the Department Clerking Manual (see generic summary below) and any instructions from the Chambers Director, Department Senior Clerk or Practice Manager(s).

4. GENERAL DAY TO DAY RESPONSIBILITIES

General

- I. Answer phones and deal with any bookings and queries accordingly
- II. Take messages where required and email barristers/clerks
- III. We often have to help in other practice areas and work closely with all departments
- IV. Deal with emails in the department and your personal inbox throughout the day
- V. Check any post and hard copy briefs.
- VI. Enter everything on LEX
- VII. Chase papers for cases in the future
- VIII. Plan the diary and manage the department efficiently
- IX. Ensure all papers are received for the next day
- X. Ensure all cases have terms of business agreed and fees for private cases are agreed and noted on the system

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- XI. Provide solicitors or other counsel with barristers availability
- XII. Book in sitting for members who sit part time as Judges
- XIII. Book in personal appointments
- XIV. Work closely with the clerking team to ensure the next day's diary progresses as planned for the future.
- XV. Check court listings (see protocol later in the manual)
- XVI. If we cannot cover all hearings we may need to return a case to another chambers

Run through, who knows and sign off

This is the most important job of the day and where we need to check everything is absolutely 100% correct. Attention to detail is enormously important and all clerks need to ensure everything is as perfect as possible.

At the run through the clerking team jump on a call and go down the diary to check:

- I. All cases are entered properly
- II. brief/instructions are received, entered, terms and fees agreed
- III. Court listings are checked and Judges confirmed removing **, court and time are correct
- IV. Double check those members who are doing more than 1 case can defiantly do what needs doing. We cannot have a member not turn up for court. We have to evaluate the risk and get it right.
- V. Members have access to their papers either by LEX/Email or hard copy
- VI. Members are notified of all professional commitments for the next day
- VII. Ensure members are notified of all personal appointments as well

The run through will highlight those members who know or don't know and before the clerking team is released to go home for the day all members must be called or emailed to confirm their diary for the following day. There will be occasion when the Department Manager and other members of staff are required to work after the official end time to ensure Chambers is run efficiently.