



BAR
STANDARDS
BOARD

REGULATING BARRISTERS

Guidance for consumers about using and leaving feedback about barristers' services

Who is this guidance for?

This short guide is for you if you want to:

- Find feedback to help you choose a barrister;
- Instruct a barrister based on feedback you have received from someone or have seen somewhere else; or
- Give feedback on the service you have received from a barrister to help them improve their practice or to help others choose a barrister.

This guidance has been produced by the Bar Standards Board (BSB) which regulates barristers.

Why has the BSB produced this guidance?

We believe that providing access to reviews from previous clients and other feedback can sometimes be a useful way to help potential customers to judge quality. It could help you and others to make an informed decision about choosing a barrister.

Should I use an online feedback platform when choosing a barrister?

An online feedback platform is a website where you can find customer reviews of the service provided by barristers.

Using an online feedback platform may save you time as you will be able to see other people's views about the services provided by a particular barrister.

Currently there are no independent online feedback platforms exclusively for barristers although there are likely to be in the future. However, there are websites out there for other types of lawyers where you may be able to find reviews of barristers.

You should note that unlike other sectors (hotels, restaurants etc), it is more difficult for a client to assess whether or not their case has been well represented or whether they have been well advised because this usually involves the use of highly specialist skills and knowledge. Clients may sometimes simply equate the quality of their barrister with whether or not they won their case, for example. Online feedback platforms are also in an early stage of development within the legal services market so the reviews will not be as wide-ranging or as useful as you might expect.

It is important to be aware that online platforms are just one way to get information about a barrister. There are others which can also help you choose including the barrister's own website, the Barristers' Register on the BSB website which can tell you whether a barrister has incurred any serious disciplinary sanctions and the Legal Choices website (see below for more information about this).

Should I use an online feedback platform to leave feedback?

Online feedback platforms also allow you to leave your own review of the service you have received from a barrister.

Should you decide to use an online platform, we encourage you to leave honest and considered feedback on such platforms as we hope that the more these are used the more they will benefit future consumers in choosing a barrister.

How to give feedback

Apart from giving feedback on an online feedback platform, you may also receive a feedback form at the end of your case asking you to give comments about the service provided by the barrister. It is important to be aware that you do not have to wait until this point to provide feedback. Feel free to give feedback whenever you feel it is necessary, whether by word of mouth or in writing, either to the barrister themselves or to someone else in their chambers. There may also be a feedback tool on the barristers' website where you can leave feedback.

Where can I find more information on my legal problem?

The Legal Choices website aims to help you with decisions about legal issues and lawyers, including barristers; <http://www.legalchoices.org.uk/>. The website is not a platform for feedback but will give you information to help you understand the type of advice you might need and whether a barrister is the right person to help you.