



The Bar Council

Barristers in the international legal market 2025 to 2027



Introduction

Barristers play a vital role in international legal markets. Whether you're facing litigation, arbitration, or seeking specialist legal advice, this guide provides a comprehensive look at how barristers can assist you. Inside, you'll find essential information on how to instruct a barrister, the advantages of their services, and a directory of chambers offering international legal expertise. If you need a trusted advocate or an expert legal strategist, this guide will help you navigate the process efficiently and confidently. As lawyers in independent practice, barristers can offer their services at competitive rates and be instructed on a flexible basis as and when their services are required. The Bar of England and Wales is an outward looking profession

with an international reputation for excellence. Its services are increasingly in demand throughout the globalised legal market.

Lawyers from jurisdictions outside of England and Wales may instruct barristers directly, without needing to instruct a law firm, in a range of international transactions and disputes. This guide focuses on how barristers can help to provide solutions to a wide range of disputes and non-contentious legal problems, and how they are well placed to assist with many types of legal issues. The guide also explains how you can instruct a barrister and features a list of barristers' chambers that offer international legal services.

About us

The Bar Council is the voice of the barrister profession in England and Wales. Our nearly 18,000 members – self-employed and employed barristers – make up a united Bar that is strong, inclusive, independent and influential.

We lead, represent and support the Bar in the public interest, championing the rule of law and access to justice by:

- Providing advice, guidance, services, training and events for our members
- Inspiring and supporting the next generation of barristers
- Drawing on our members' expertise to influence policy

and legislation that relates to the justice system and the rule of law

- Promoting the Bar of England and Wales to develop career and business opportunities for barristers at home and abroad

As the General Council of the Bar, we're the approved regulator for all practising barristers in England and Wales. We delegate our statutory regulatory functions to the operationally independent Bar Standards Board (BSB) as required by the Legal Services Act 2007.

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About barristers

A barrister is an expert advocate who represents clients and argues their cases before courts, arbitrators, adjudicators and tribunals. Barristers draft written statements of cases and other pleadings, advise on evidence, and present arguments in writing and orally.

They provide expert legal advice in connection with legal proceedings and for transactional or other non-contentious work. Barristers specialise in specific areas of law, bringing extensive knowledge and expertise to their practice.

The main focus of most barristers' work is advocacy and advising on disputes, whether in court or arbitration. Because barristers are recognised for their expertise in advocacy, their services

are in high demand in the international legal market. Like consultants, barristers can be instructed on a case-by-case basis. They are professionally obliged to promote fearlessly the best interests of their client, without regard to their own interests or any consequences to themselves. Barristers are obliged to protect the confidentiality of their clients' affairs and will carry out any instructions they receive personally, unless they are working as part of a team or their client expressly allows them to delegate work to others.

As lawyers in independent practice, barristers can offer their services at competitive rates and be instructed on a flexible basis as and when their services are required.

In 2025, over 2,100 barristers in

England and Wales hold the rank of King's Counsel (KC). To become a KC, a barrister must go through a rigorous and transparent selection process. The mark of KC is internationally recognised as demonstrating that a barrister has achieved the highest standards as an advocate.

The Bar of England and Wales is an outward looking profession with an international reputation for excellence. Its services are increasingly in demand throughout the globalised legal market.

Lawyers from jurisdictions outside England and Wales may instruct barristers directly, without needing to instruct a law firm, in a range of international transactions and disputes.

Majority of barristers are self-employed professionals, operating independently while often sharing office

space and administrative resources in chambers. Unlike law firms, chambers are not partnerships, meaning barristers do not share profits or financial interests. This independence ensures that barristers can act without conflicts of interest, even if they are working on opposite sides of a dispute from the same chambers.

When barristers from the same chambers act for opposing parties, strict confidentiality measures—such as information barriers—are implemented to maintain professional integrity. This system allows barristers to provide unbiased, client-focused legal representation.

Code of conduct

Barristers practise under a code of conduct which is enforced by the independent regulator - the Bar Standards Board (BSB).

We are proud of the very high professional standards at the Bar of England and Wales, which is evidenced by the fact that both client complaints and disciplinary sanctions remain at consistently low levels.

Practising barristers are also required to maintain adequate professional indemnity insurance.



Specialist advocates

Barristers are trained in case presentation and cross-examination. They refine these skills through years of advocacy experience. Unlike other lawyers, barristers focus heavily on advocacy. Their experience helps them guide clients through the complexities of international litigation and arbitration.

Some of the services barristers can provide include:

- Presenting oral and written arguments to a court or tribunal on their client's behalf
- Expertly cross-examining witnesses where oral evidence is given

- Drafting pleadings and other documents setting out their client's case
- Assisting with the preparation of witness statements and other evidence in English and Welsh law, and international law, in the courts and tribunals of other jurisdictions

At all stages a barrister will:

- Give objective and independent advice as to the prospects of success
- Identify any weaknesses in the case
- Advise on the evidence necessary to prove their client's case.

Advisory work

Barristers often advise on contentious and non-contentious legal matters across all areas of commercial and non-commercial life, including international law.

Their extensive experience as trial lawyers makes their expertise particularly valuable in areas where a client needs advice about the approach that a court or arbitral panel is likely to take to a proposed decision. But, they are equally comfortable advising in purely non-contentious areas such as company or trust structures,

or tax planning. Barristers are able to ground their advice not only in their specialist legal knowledge and expertise but also in the experience gained from dealing with a wide variety of clients and from running their own practices. Some barristers specialise in complex legal issues, becoming recognised experts in their fields. English and Welsh solicitors, along with foreign law firms, often seek barristers' expertise on complex legal issues.



Specialist arbitrators and mediators

The Bar is a leading profession in the field of international arbitration. Barristers are instructed not only as legal representatives but also as arbitrators, in the UK and other major arbitration centres around the world such as:

- The London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA)
- International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)
- The Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC)
- The Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC)
- Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC)

Their expertise in alternative dispute resolution has also led to barristers being appointed as mediators, adjudicators and on dispute boards.

Expert witnesses

Barristers can provide expert evidence on the law and court procedure of England and Wales for overseas courts and arbitration proceedings. This expertise may be in written or oral form and may include attending court or in proceedings overseas. It can be on any aspect of the law, ranging from jurisdictional issues to substantive legal questions.

Working as part of a team

Barristers are flexible in their work, they communicate effectively with legal and lay clients and facilitate positive working relationships. Whilst barristers often act as the lead on a client's case, they are also instructed to work as part of a larger team, providing specific advice and assistance alongside other legal professionals.



How barristers can help you

Barristers often advise or appear as advocates in international disputes, They:

- May also serve as arbitrators, adjudicators, or mediators in a quasi-judicial capacity
- Can advise clients on both contentious and non-contentious matters
- Can help with the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments and arbitration awards in England and Wales, and of relevant judgments and arbitration awards both nationally and internationally

Apart from international litigation in the courts of England and Wales, barristers regularly appear in international arbitrations (see [page 10](#)) and international courts and tribunals, these include:

- The International Court of Justice
 - The European Court of Human Rights
 - The International Criminal Court
- All barristers have full rights of audience, which means they are permitted to appear before all courts and tribunals in England and Wales. Subject to obtaining local call, several international commercial courts allow barristers in England and Wales to appear before them. Many barristers are qualified in other jurisdictions, such as Hong Kong, Dubai, Singapore and parts of the Caribbean, where they have rights of audience in courts of international financial centres and can advise on the law of that jurisdiction.

Why choose England and Wales as a centre of dispute resolution?

English and Welsh law is by far the most popular choice of law in the commercial field worldwide. Parties often choose England and Wales as the legal jurisdiction where they want to resolve disputes arising from international contracts, even when the subject matter and the parties may have no other connection with the location. English and Welsh law is by far the most popular choice of law in the commercial field worldwide.



Established system

It's a highly developed, precedent-based system, where the courts rely on previously decided cases to guide them in their decision-making. It's usually possible to find the answers to international legal questions under English and Welsh law by reference to the reasoning applied in earlier cases. This means that the legal system offers greater legal certainty than many other jurisdictions, both before and after a dispute arises. English and Welsh law has a strong international reputation not only for its transparency and predictability but also for its ability to adapt to modern commercial needs.

The court system of England and Wales is divided into six regions, known as circuits, all of which are home to expert barristers and in any of which legal proceedings can be issued before an exceptional collection

of judges. There are specialist business court centres in

- Birmingham
- Bristol
- Cardiff
- Leeds
- Liverpool
- London
- Manchester
- Newcastle

London is one of the leading financial and commercial centres in the world, where many high-value transactions are concluded in fields such as:

- Banking and financial services
- Insurance
- Energy
- Aviation
- Shipping
- International trade

it has long enjoyed a pre-eminent reputation in all types of dispute resolution and is particularly renowned for its expertise in commercial and business cases.

The Rolls Building: a world-class commercial court

At the heart of London's dispute resolution offering is the Rolls Building, the world's largest and most advanced centre for handling commercial and business disputes. Housing the Business and Property Courts of England and Wales, it brings together the:

- Commercial Court (handling international trade, banking, insurance, and energy disputes)
- Technology and Construction Court (specialising in complex engineering, IT, and infrastructure disputes)
- Chancery Division (covering insolvency, intellectual property, fraud, and trust litigation)

The Rolls Building offers cutting-edge facilities, including:

- 31 courtrooms (including three 'super courts' for exceptionally large cases)
- Specialist judges with expertise in international finance and commercial law
- A dedicated financial list to resolve complex, high-value financial disputes with speed and consistency

For businesses operating in global markets, access to the financial list ensures disputes are resolved by judges with extensive financial expertise, making the courts of England and Wales particularly attractive for banking, derivatives, and structured finance litigation.

A global legal hub

London is an unrivalled centre for international dispute resolution. Home to leading financial, commercial, and legal institutions, it offers a stable and sophisticated legal system that attracts litigants worldwide. The courts of England and Wales are globally respected for their impartiality, efficiency, and ability to handle multi-jurisdictional disputes with commercial insight.

English law is the foundation of international commerce. More international and cross-border contracts are governed by English law than any other legal system. Its clarity, predictability, and well-developed body of case law provide businesses with the certainty they need to operate across borders.





Specialist judges and court facilities

The judges of the courts in England and Wales have a worldwide reputation for quality and independence, and their judgments can be widely enforced in many other jurisdictions. The commercial court's global appeal is clear—68% of cases involve at least one international party.

One of the main advantages of the legal system in England and Wales is the judiciary. Judges are drawn from the most experienced practitioners,

and have an established and worldwide reputation for efficiency, speed, consistency and incorruptibility.

Judges in England and Wales are well versed in dealing with other systems of law. Where the law governing all or part of a dispute is not common law, they will receive and evaluate evidence of that law and decide the dispute accordingly.

A judiciary respected worldwide

The judiciary in England and Wales is recognised for its independence, fairness, and commercial expertise. Judges are appointed from the most experienced and distinguished legal practitioners, ensuring that complex commercial disputes are handled by professionals who understand business realities.

- Judicial decisions from England and Wales are

frequently cited in courts around the world

- The courts apply a predictable, precedent-based system, reducing uncertainty and legal risk
- English court judgments are widely enforceable internationally, making them a powerful tool in cross-border disputes



Arbitration and alternative dispute resolution (ADR)

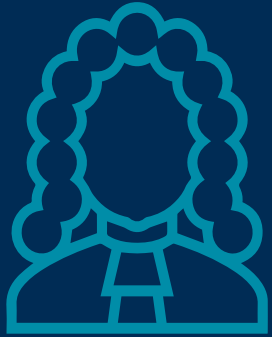
England and Wales is also a global leader in arbitration and ADR. The London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) is one of the most prestigious arbitral institutions, providing a neutral, efficient, and flexible

forum for international dispute resolution. The courts of England and Wales are also known for their pro-arbitration stance, offering strong support for arbitration agreements and enforcement of arbitral awards.

The preferred choice for global businesses

With its combination of a respected legal framework, specialist courts, world-class judges, and cutting-edge dispute resolution facilities, England and Wales remains the gold standard for international dispute resolution. Whether through litigation, arbitration, or mediation, parties can rely on a system that offers certainty, fairness, and commercial pragmatism.

Facts and figures



17,863

practising barristers in
England and Wales



of cases in the
commercial courts
were international in
nature between April
2023 and March 2024



of the world's 320
legal jurisdictions
use English common
law and English
law remains the
most popular choice
governing law
in contracts

84

countries used the
commercial courts
in England and
Wales in 2024



£47.1bn

total revenue derived from UK legal
activities. The UK is the largest
legal services market in Europe and
globally is second only to the US

Over
2,475

members of the Bar now
receive instructions from abroad
(a number that has more than
doubled over 10 years)

404

chambers across
England and Wales



28,601

disputes were resolved
by alternative dispute
resolution in the UK in 2023



How to instruct the right barrister

There are no restrictions on barristers receiving instructions from international lawyers. Overseas law firms and in-house lawyers can instruct barristers easily and directly, without the use of a domestic law firm. This allows direct access to legal expertise without unnecessary delays or

intermediary costs.

The first step is to identify a barrister or a set of chambers which specialises in the field of law relevant to the dispute or non-contentious legal problem. The list of chambers on the next page gives a starting point. Searching legal directories such as 'Legal 500' and 'Chambers

and Partners' will give you a wider range of barrister options based on your requirements.

In addition to the commercially available directories, many Specialist Bar Associations publish directories of their members on their websites. These are listed at the end of this guide.

Once you have identified a barrister or set of chambers, the chambers' clerks or practice managers are usually the first point of contact. You'll be able to check both the availability and the cost of your chosen barrister. Where necessary they can also advise on which individual barrister or team of barristers would be most

suitable for your case.

International clients frequently find that coming straight to a barrister when there's the prospect of a dispute saves considerable time and money. This is because barristers can efficiently and effectively advise on the strategic options, the chances of success, and the relevant evidence needed. They are also well placed to give independent advice on which law firms to instruct, should additional litigation or arbitration support be required.

Some barristers can receive instructions directly from lay clients via our direct access portal (www.directaccessportal.co.uk)

Chambers

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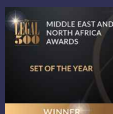
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- Energy & Natural Resources
- Financial Services
- Group Litigation
- Insolvency
- Insurance & Reinsurance
- International Arbitration
- Media & Entertainment
- Proceeds of Crime
- Professional Negligence
- Public International Law



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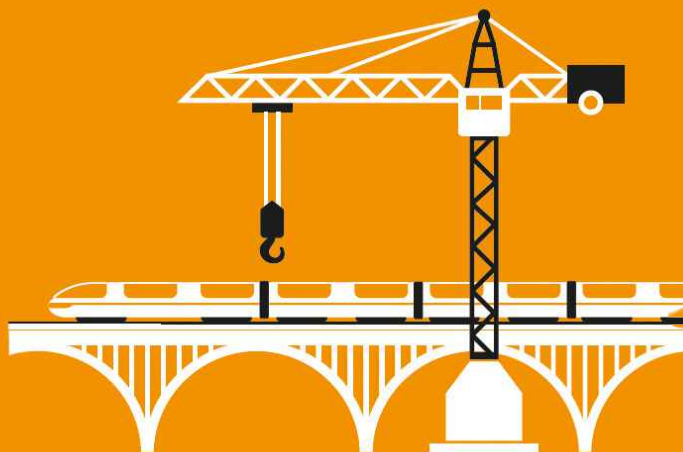
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Legal 500 2025

For further information please call John Stannard, Senior Clerk, or Edith Robertson, Chambers Director, on **020 7353 2484** or email **clerks@falcon-chambers.com**

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CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING

COSTS AND LITIGATION FUNDING

INSOLVENCY AND RESTRUCTURING

INSURANCE AND REINSURANCE

PERSONAL INJURY AND CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE

PRIVATE CLIENT

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY

REAL ESTATE AND PROPERTY



LEADING SET

Legal500
UNITED KINGDOM
2025



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Key contact:

James Donovan
Senior Clerk

+44 (0)207 415 7805

jdonovan@3harecourt.com

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4 Pump Court operates on a truly global basis- often instructed in arbitrations concerning construction projects in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Asia-Pacific region.

Barristers are noted in Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2025 as being "truly exceptional".



WINNER UK BAR AWARDS 2022



4 Pump Court International Arbitration Set of the Year



SHORTLISTED MIDDLE EAST AWARDS 2025

- Banking
- Commercial Disputes
- Construction
- Cross Border Investment
- Energy
- Financial Services
- Fraud
- Insurance
- Intellectual Property
- International Arbitration
- ISDS
- Professional Negligence
- Shipping
- Sports
- Technology
- Transport

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4 Stone Buildings has consistently been ranked as one of the top sets at the Bar in our core areas of expertise:

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- Commercial litigation
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- Company law
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- Insolvency
- Offshore



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Justin Wilson Senior Clerk jwilson@atkinchambers.com

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- Professional Liability
- Sports Law

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- Environment
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- Procurement
- EU

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LEGAL 500

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LEGAL 500

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New Square Chambers is a top-tier London set, trusted for clear advice, strong advocacy, and a forward-thinking approach across a wide range of legal work.

"The clerks go above and beyond to support instructing solicitors. They think outside of the box and support business development initiatives. I can't rate them highly enough..."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Impressive Chambers with bright, able barristers able to handle the most complex cases"

Legal 500 UK Bar 2025



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South Square is a leading set of commercial law barristers. Our members have acted in many of the most important restructuring, insolvency, banking, commercial, company and fraud-related disputes of recent times. We are the top-ranked set in offshore commercial disputes, with a significant presence in the BVI, Cayman Islands, Guernsey, Jersey, Gibraltar, ADGM, DIFC, and Hong Kong. We host annual conferences with the Recovery and Insolvency Specialists Association in Cayman and the BVI, with plans for a third in Bermuda.

- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Arbitration and Mediation
- Banking and Finance
- Civil Fraud
- Commercial Litigation
- Company Law
- Insolvency and Restructuring
- Insurance
- Offshore
- Sport
- Trusts & Property

"South Square offers great capability across a range of areas, with particular strength in offshore insolvency matters"

Chambers & Partners

"South Square are the leading restructuring and insolvency set. They have terrific quality across the board in that area."

The Legal 500

"The magic circle's barristers chambers of choice"

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XXIV

OLD BUILDINGS

Clarity in the complex

"Extremely complementary blend of private wealth, offshore, corporate and commercial expertise, which is well suited to heavyweight litigation."

Legal 500

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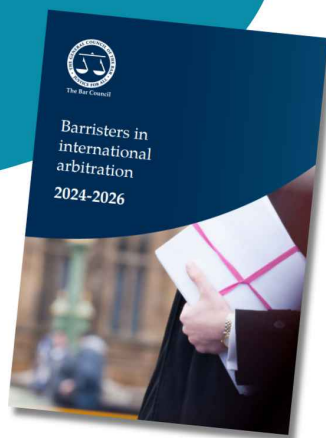
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GENEVA
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Read 'Barristers in international arbitration'

Our brochure provides a brief introduction to:

- Key features of international arbitration
- The challenges and opportunities international arbitration presents to disputing parties and their legal advisers
- The advantages of bringing barristers to international arbitration
- Services provided by barristers in international arbitration
- How to involve a barrister to assist in an international arbitration



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Specialist Bar Associations

Listed below are the Specialist Bar Associations (SBAs) together with website details. These SBAs represent barristers practising in particular areas, usually evident from the name of the SBA, together with contact details. Most SBAs also have websites which provide useful information about barristers and chambers and the areas of work they specialise in.

Administrative Law Bar Association

www.adminlaw.org.uk

Bar Association for Commerce Finance and Industry

www.bacfi.org

Bar Association for Local Government and the Public Service

Bar European Group

<http://bareuropeangroup.org>

Chancery Bar Association

www.chba.org.uk

Commercial Bar Association

www.combar.com

Criminal Bar Association

www.criminalbar.com

Employment Law Bar Association

www.elba.org.uk

Family Law Bar Association

www.flba.co.uk

Intellectual Property Bar Association

www.ipba.co.uk

London Common Law and Commercial Bar Association

www.lclcba.com

Midland Chancery and Commercial Bar Association

www.mccba.co.uk

Northern Chancery Bar Association

www.nchba.org.uk

Parliamentary Bar Mess

www.parliamentarybarristers.org.uk

Personal Injuries Bar Association

www.piba.org.uk

Planning and Environmental Bar Association

www.peba.org.uk

Professional Negligence Bar Association

Property Bar Association

www.propertybar.org.uk

Revenue Bar Association

www.revenue-bar.org

Technology and Construction Bar Association

www.tecbar.org



About our international work

Our international team, supported by our International Committee, provides a wide variety of services to support members of the Bar to develop, strengthen and maintain an international practice, including:

- Organising international visits and events
- Hosting overseas delegations
- Collaborating with international Bars to foster co-operation and open up market access
- Speaking out against rule of law crises around the world

Find out more: barcouncil.org.uk/international



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