



The Bar Representation Fee (BRF) Frequently asked questions

Why should I pay the BRF?

As the representative body for all barristers, the Bar Council's core work focuses on lobbying government and Parliament on matters concerning the condition of the justice system and the future of the Bar. We campaign on behalf of all practice areas. This is particularly important at present, after a decade of austerity has taken its toll on access to justice and Brexit provides its ongoing challenges to the rule of law. Paying the BRF means you are directly funding the Bar Council's core work in supporting and representing the profession.

How much does the BRF cost?

From 1 May 2019 the BRF costs £150 annually (which is £12.50 a month should you choose to pay by Direct Debit). This amount is tax deductible and includes VAT at 6.9%.

Why has the fee increased?

The BRF remained at an annual cost of £100 for 10 years. Given inflation over that period (which would, by today's figures, mean the BRF should be £169 per year), we have had to increase the fee to fund the support and representation needed to achieve and maintain a thriving profession.

How can I pay the BRF?

The easiest way to pay the BRF is to [log in to your MyBar profile](#). Alternatively, you can call the Bar Council Services team on 020 7611 1329 or email Services@BarCouncil.org.uk.

What does my BRF contribution fund?

The BRF funds much of our lobbying work, particularly in supporting the improvement of legal aid and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) fees and business development initiatives (including internationally). The BRF helps to fund our work on ethics, equality and diversity at the Bar, social mobility, wellbeing and support for the young Bar.

The BRF also funds the Bar Council's range of special projects. In 2019, the BRF will support:

- Further research into AGFS (Advocates Graduate Fee Scheme) and CPS fees.
- The Bar Mentoring Service, helping barristers develop their careers (to diversify practice areas and Silk and judicial applications).
- The Bar Placement Scheme, the Bar Council's social mobility programme promoting wider access to the Bar by working with talented students who might not otherwise have that access.
- Research and work into family VHCC (Very High Cost Cases).
- Promotion of Public Access and the benefits of directly instructing the Bar to gain access to specialist advisory and advocacy services.
- Research into Alternative Dispute Resolution.
- Support to help shape the entities and business models of the future Bar.
- Elements of our Ethical Enquiries Service and support material.
- Publications and newsletters covering important issues affecting the Bar, including BarTalk, the Bar Council's fortnightly e-newsletter, Brussels News, International Update, Training and Events Newsletter, Employed Bar Update and more.
- Aspects of our international business development.

How else is the Bar Council funded?

Seventy per cent of your Practising Certificate Fee goes to the Bar Standards Board to fund regulation of the profession, and 30% goes towards funding the Bar Council's representation work (along with an annual contribution from the Inns and income from business partners, sponsorship, training and events). Income from the BRF is essential to raise that funding to a level that allows us to represent and support the Bar.

Why is the BRF good value for money?

The BRF is the major source of funding for the Bar Council for projects that go beyond the "permitted purposes" of the Legal Services Act 2007. It enables us to invest in new initiatives which cater for the present and future needs of the Bar and to secure the capacity and resources vital to our representative policy work. In

addition, the BRF can save you money because the value of the benefits available (explained below) outweigh your annual subscription cost.

What direct benefits do I receive as part of my BRF subscription?

There are many benefits available to BRF payers including discounts on Bar Council training courses, events and CPD opportunities; unlimited Certificates of Good Standing (standard price £260.00 each); an annual subscription to the monthly Counsel Magazine (standard price £110); access to the Arbitration and Mediation Service and also an exclusive listing on the Direct Access Portal.

You can also access discounts on brands, travel and gifts through the Xexec member benefits platform (offering discounts on over 500 retailers) and discounts and preferential rates from a wide range of commercial partners.

[Log in to MyBar](#) to access the Xexec member benefits platform, and see the commercial partner offers currently available.

Does the BRF fund any of the Bar Council's commercial activity?

Some BRF funds are ringfenced for activities which can be seen as “commercial” (e.g. the Direct Access Portal), where those activities are aligned with the Bar Council's strategic aims.

I'm not sure if I pay the BRF already. How can I check?

If you're unsure if you have paid the BRF already or are unsure when your subscription expires, you can check by [logging in to MyBar](#). If you think you might have previously set up a BRF direct debit, please call our Services team on 020 7611 1329 or email Services@BarCouncil.org.uk.

Why should I pay by Direct Debit?

Paying by direct debit spreads the annual cost across manageable monthly payments.

Can I get a refund or cancel throughout the year?

The BRF is non-refundable but the cost can be split throughout the year by paying by direct debit. If you cancel your direct debit before 12 months have passed since you subscribed, we reserve the right to charge for subscriber benefits already received.

I am an employed barrister. Why should I pay the BRF?

Employed barristers also have an interest in the health of the justice system and the future of the Bar (especially if they are CPS employees). You can also take advantage of the commercial discounts available, stay up to date with news from the profession through Counsel Magazine, and access the supporting information and resources the Bar Council produce specifically for employed barristers.

I am not Direct Access qualified. Why should I pay the BRF?

The BRF is not just for direct access barristers – it's for anyone at the Bar who wants the Bar Council to continue to support and represent them and their profession. Any barrister can pay the BRF to support our work and receive the available benefits and discounts.

I am a non-practising barrister. Why should I pay the BRF?

All barristers, practising or not, can have an interest in supporting the work of their professional body. We work in various areas from Ethics to Equality & Diversity, Social Mobility, Legal Services, Law Reform, International Policy and Remuneration. We engage with government, Parliament, Specialist Bar Associations, international Bar associations, other legal and professional bodies, membership bodies and many other organisations on behalf of the profession.

Regardless of your practising status you can take advantage of the commercial discounts available as part of the BRF, stay up to date with news from the profession through Counsel Magazine, and get discounts on CPD courses if you are considering a return to the practising Bar.