



LIBRARY FEES: VALUE FOR MONEY

THE BAR *of*
NORTHERN
IRELAND

BAR COUNCIL STRATEGIC AIM

One of the priorities for the Bar Council, its Committees and Bar Library management is to ensure that Bar Library membership subscriptions represent the best possible value for money. This aim is clearly articulated in the Bar Council Strategy:

“Adding unique value and being responsive to our members”.

In delivering value for money the objective is to provide each barrister with the quality services, help and support necessary to thrive in their practices which will ultimately benefit the consumers of the services they provide.

THE BAR LIBRARY

The Library model, which has been in existence since 1933, has proven to be a success for those it serves, that is barristers and consumers. As of 2023 there are approximately 700 full members which represents nearly all Northern Ireland based barristers in independent practice. Each of those members benefit from the advantages that stem from such a large collective and collaborative structure.

Each member of the Library has the benefit of a secure, staffed and fully serviced, modern city centre office environment which is open 7 days a week and in close proximity to all of the Belfast courts. Each member benefits from use of the prestigious Bar Library postal and email addresses which can be replicated on electronic and hard copy personalised professional stationery.

The Library provides members with a GDPR compliant access controlled environment. Qualified GDPR staff support services include provision of Data Protection awareness training, compliance guidance and practical tool kits. These benefits are invaluable in assisting members meet the challenging compliance requirements of the GDPR legislation, thus avoiding potential significant financial penalties and preventing reputational damage.



COST COMPARISONS

The Legal Services Review Group recognised when considering alternative business structures in its report on Legal Services in Northern Ireland [TSO, 2006, para 6.42] that “...the Bar Library offers benefits to consumers through providing barristers with economies of scale.”

The tables below highlight that Bar Library subscriptions do represent value for money.

Table 1 illustrates the costs of purchasing facilities commensurate with those available within the Library, without the benefit of collective buying power. The Library resources that form the basis of the comparison in the table allow members to build diverse practices as they are not restricted to resources in any one practice area alone, thus enabling flexibility in a rapidly changing legal marketplace.

The Professional Indemnity Insurance group policy offered to Bar Library members offers a significant saving when compared to what would be available on an individual basis in the market with the same level of cover.

Table1:

Facilities Commensurate with those available to Members of the Bar Library	
Practice Management Software	360
Access to Legal Databases	16,995
Access to Printed Materials	1,394
DX Service	500
Access to Confidential Shredding	220
Access to Secure e-mail & storage (Office 365)	400
Secure managed internet & wi-fi	300
CPD	330
Light & Heat Overhead	500
	20,999

Table 2 compares the total cost shown in Table 1 to the tiered costs of Library membership.

Table 2:

Seniority	Bar Fees	Cost of acquiring Service in open market	Saving
Year			
1	412	20,999	20,587
2	727	20,999	20,272
3	1,147	20,999	19,852
4	1,637	20,999	19,362
5	2,339	20,999	18,660
6	3,184	20,999	17,815
7	4,093	20,999	16,906
>7	5,356	20,999	15,643
KC	7,457	20,999	13,542

These tables do not include the many other unquantifiable benefits available to barristers in independent practice who are members of the Bar Library, such as:

Convenience of access to the court estate for members appearing in Belfast

- Within 2 minutes of the Royal Courts of Justice and Laganside Courts;
- Within 2 minutes of the Law Society headquarters;
- Within 5 minutes of the Legal Services Agency headquarters, and most Belfast based solicitors;
- Within 5 minutes of the Resolution Centre

Fees Collection Service

- In the most recent Membership Survey, this service was considered to be of great benefit to many practitioners. Since implementation, the service has recovered more than £2.8m for members who use the service and at no additional cost to those individuals.

IT Services

- Secure Hosted Email Service with dedicated @barlibrary.com email address
- IT purchasing advice and assistance including “try before you buy” service
- Discount on Apple Products
- Bring Your Own Device Setup and Configuration
- Hardware and Software upgrades and installation
- Cybersecurity and Data Protection Advice and Training
- Fast, Reliable and Secure Wifi Internet Access
- Secure Online Document Storage
- Secure Low-Cost Mono and Colour print and copy
- Indexed PDF scanning service
- Secure Internet Access in NI Courts using LP&C network
- 24/7 access to Barrister Portal
- Equipment Loans including Laptops, Cables, Phone Chargers, etc
- IP Telephony with very low call rates

Library & Information Services

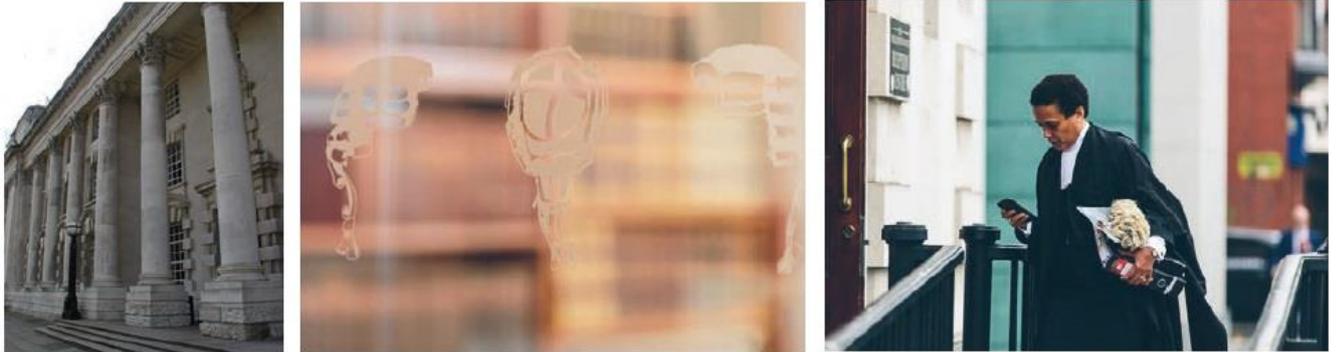
- Access to the Virtual Library & Information Service (VLIS)
- Provision of Practice Direction Compliant Bundles for Authorities (BLAG) and Court Materials (OBBS)
- 24/7 access to the Bar of NI catalogue through WorldCat Discovery
- Access to a comprehensive and relevant hard copy practitioner specialist library collection
- 24/7 access to LexisNexis & Westlaw UK & other commercially provided legal databases.
- A trade discounted Member Bookshop and Subscription Management Service
- Bespoke practice area Current Awareness Services and NI Case Law Compendiums
- Digitisation Services

Member & Client Support

- Consultation Room booking service
- Remote hearing/consultation booking service
- Resolution Centre booking service
- First level IT Assistance
- Member online profile service
- Barrister Availability Diary
- Catering & Refreshments
- Dry Cleaning Service
- Collar and Tab Laundry Service

Document & Business Support

- Postal, DX and Brief collection and delivery service
- Confidential waste collection and disposal
- Portering service
- Stationery and postal supplies
- Office & desk clearance assistance
- Paging & appointment reminder service
- Office, desk, locker and car parking allocation
- Bar Library business address, DX number, landline and email address
- Exclusive portfolio of member benefits offering exclusive discounts for members in local and national retailers, local restaurants and hotels and hairdressing salons.
- Private dining facility



Finance Department

- Specially negotiated deals in Professional Indemnity Insurance including free run off cover for life, and Private Health Insurance.
- Easy to manage Direct Debit Service
- Practice Management Software

Education

- Continuing Professional Development programme
- Unrestricted free access to online CPD resources
- Pupillage and Master Support
- Bar Association CPD events
- Advocacy training and seminars
- Pupil advocacy training programme
- Advanced advocacy training
- Outplacement and career opportunities

The Policy and Communications Office

- Work with Bar Associations and Bar Council to ensure the views of the Bar are conveyed by way of consultation responses and public engagement programme with local politicians and public bodies
- Branded personalised stationery
- Media enquiry services
- Event support, including bespoke programme & poster creation, professional printing, PowerPoint presentation design and emails to the membership (ezine, Association newsletters etc)

Collegiality

- Membership of the Library also provides an important benefit to barristers in the form of an open environment which facilitates ready access to experienced colleagues who, embracing the collegiality of the Northern Ireland Bar, are both willing and able to provide assistance, mentoring and guidance in the areas of practice in which they have experience and expertise.

For more information on any of the services available please contact the Bar Council Office on 028 9056 2349 who will put you in touch with the relevant department.



