

# SERVICE STANDARD

## OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We are focused on providing clients with a cost-effective quality service. This document sets out the details of what we will be seeking to achieve. These are the minimum levels we should achieve but you will appreciate that there may be circumstances outside our control which prevent us from meeting these standards. These levels do not form part of our contract with you and are indicative only. If, however, you feel the service levels are not being met adequately in your case, please contact us, we will be happy to discuss your concerns.

### 1 YOUR MAIN CONTACT

- 1.1 All our clients will have a main contact who has overall responsibility for overseeing the instructions you give us. This person will typically be the lawyer you deal with most frequently.
- 1.2 Your contact will be identified in the Engagement Letter but may change over time, depending on the type of work you are instructing us to do.
- 1.3 The intention is that your contact will be aware of all the work we are carrying out for you and the progress made on your files. He or she will be in a position to discuss in general terms any concerns you may have on any instructions you may give us.
- 1.4 Having a main contact allows us to co-ordinate the work we carry out for you so that you know who to contact if you have any query about any ongoing instructions.

### 2 TELEPHONE CALLS/VOICEMAIL/MESSAGES

- 2.1 If, for any reason, the person you wish to contact is not available to speak to you when you call, you can either leave a message on their voicemail or with their secretary as you prefer.
- 2.2 All telephone messages are returned on the working day received or, where this is not possible, the following working day.
- 2.3 If the person you wish to speak to is likely to be unavailable, someone else will return your call to explain when they will be available or to arrange for another lawyer to deal with your enquiry.
- 2.4 If your message is urgent please see the procedure set out below for urgent enquiries.

### 3 LETTERS AND E-MAILS

- 3.1 All letters and e-mails will be acknowledged on the business day they are received, or on the following business day, by the person to whom they are addressed or by another member of that person's team unless it is clear that no formal acknowledgement is required.
- 3.2 All acknowledgements will indicate when action is being taken or, if substantive action is required which cannot be carried out immediately, will give an indication of when the person concerned will be able to carry out the work required.
- 3.3 If there is likely to be any change in this, you will be contacted by the person who is carrying out the work for you or by another member of the same team to discuss this further.

### 4 ABSENCE OF PERSONNEL

- 4.1 On occasions the person who is dealing with your work may be absent from the office by reason of holidays, illness or other commitments.

- 4.2 Where such absence is expected you will be informed of the probable duration of the absence and the expected date of return. If your matter needs to be progressed during that time, you will be told whom you should contact or who will be acting for you during that period.
- 4.3 If matters did not initially require to be progressed during the absence of the person acting for you but circumstances change and you need action to be taken for you, you can contact the secretary of the person who is absent.
- 4.4 Where the person who is working for you is unexpectedly absent and your matter is due to be progressed during their absence, you will be contacted by another person in the team who will either progress matters for you or make suitable alternative arrangements.

## **5 PROGRESS OF MATTERS**

- 5.1 We will always try to progress your matter as quickly as possible.
- 5.2 If a delay occurs or is likely to occur or there are other circumstances which arise which may impact on any timescales which have been indicated, these will be discussed with you by the person who is carrying out your work or by another member of their team or by your main contact, as appropriate.

## **6 URGENT MATTERS**

- 6.1 If you need to contact someone urgently and that person is not available for any reason you should ask to speak to that person's secretary or another member of their team. You should give full details of the reasons for your call and indicate the urgency of the matter.
- 6.2 It may not be possible for the person you wish to speak with to deal with the matter. If the matter is urgent then another person may be asked to help you.
- 6.3 Urgent matters may on occasion attract a higher charge than the normal charging rate where matters have to be dealt with in a very short timescale or outside normal business hours.

## **7 QUALITY OF ADVICE**

- 7.1 If you have any concerns about the quality of the advice you are receiving you should contact our office.

## **8 COSTS**

- 8.1 The question of costs will be dealt with in the Engagement Letter and agreed with you as part of your decision to instruct us.
- 8.2 Where it is not possible to give you a fixed quote for the work we will carry out for you, you will be regularly updated on the level of costs incurred.
- 8.3 If the updated level of costs causes you concern, and you do not receive a satisfactory explanation from the lawyer acting for you, then you should contact our office.
- 8.4 We appreciate that problems over costs can sometimes be the cause for a solicitor-client relationship turning sour. We are, therefore, aware that we need to liaise closely with you on costs and make sure that your expectations are met.

## **CLIENT FEEDBACK FORM**

We do appreciate your feedback. If you wish to be sent a client feedback form so that you can comment on the service you have received, please contact our office.