

CLAPHAM LAW LLP

Office Manual & EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Version 1.0 – 2018 (Revised)

SECTION A: ACCESS TO SERVICES

A1 Business Planning

A1.1 A current business plan is available that sets out in detail for the current year, and in outline for the following two years, the key objectives of the organisation. This plan contains the following:

- ◆ Description of the client groups that we serve
- ◆ Details of services to be delivered
- ◆ Details of opening hours and access arrangements
- ◆ A summary of caseworkers areas of expertise and professional legal qualifications
- ◆ A Finance plan / budget
- ◆ A SWOT analysis
- ◆ How we will promote our services

A1.2 The current business plan will be reviewed, at least every six months, and a record of that review is kept until the next scheduled Specialist Quality Mark Audit as follows:

- Specific projects, action proposals, finance and service targets will be reviewed (against actual performance) at least every six months, while background information about Clapham Law LLP , external influences, opportunities for development and clients will be reviewed at least annually.
- Evidence of review will be made available to the SQM auditor and we will demonstrate that action has been taken (or there is a timetable for pending action) wherever required changes to the plan have been identified.

A2 Promoting Our Service

A2.1 The Legal Aid Agency and in the future Legal Aid Agency will be provided with details about the type of work we do and we will take action to amend this and any other information we distribute, where there is any change that has an impact on access and/or the services offered.

A2.2 The relevant Quality mark logo is displayed in accordance with the guidance contained in Appendix 1 of related guidance.

A3.1 Non-Discrimination in the provision of services

At Clapham Law LLP we do not discriminate nor do we accept or tolerate discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, sex, marital status or sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief; in the provision of services to clients,

instructions to counsel or other experts or suppliers, the selection, treatment (including promotion) and behaviour of staff, or in the planning and provision of services.

All staff and the Principal have been made aware of the firm's policy. Any breaches that occur will be dealt with in accordance with the firm's complaints, grievance and/or disciplinary procedures. Specific action to be taken will be agreed by the Principal, the manner of which will depend on the nature and intent of the breach.

This non-discrimination policy precludes the following types of discrimination:

1. Direct discrimination (including harassment) - where a person is treated less favourably on the basis of the grounds already listed above.
2. Indirect discrimination - Where a requirement or condition, which cannot be justified, is applied equally to all groups, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group.
3. Victimisation - Where a person is treated less favourably on the basis of action they have taken against the organisation (including grievances) under one of the grounds listed in our policy.

A3.2 Clapham Law LLP do not target any specific client groups and a description of the client groups that we serve can be found in our business plan.

SECTION B: SEAMLESS SERVICE

B1: Signposting and Referral

B1.1 When enquiries are made to the firm we will consider whether they are within the scope of work we undertake and within the competence of the advisor assigned. The supervisor will ensure that advisors work within their competence levels through the supervision procedures we have in place. Where there is a clear need identified for signposting or referral, all members of staff will know when to use signposting and referral and will decide which method to use within the following guidelines:

- ◆ Referrals will be made where we have established client relationships in a current matter, where we have undertaken work on the client's current case and where we hold case information (or documents) that need to be passed on to the new provider.
- ◆ Signposting will be the appropriate course of action where at an early stage it is clear, for example, that the enquiry concerns a subject outside the advisors area of expertise, there is potential for conflict of interest, or current caseload would affect the advisors ability to progress the case properly. Further assistance will be provided up to and including referral, where the client has special needs, when they appear to be particularly distressed or where the case seems unusually complex and it may be difficult for the client to make contact with a provider by themselves.

B1.2 As a minimum all staff will signpost any individual whom the firm cannot help and this will involve at least one or more of the following:

- ◆ Providing the CLS/CDS directory and an offer of assistance to guide the client through it.
- ◆ Providing a list of local (or specialist) organisations by area of law, or providing a recommendation of our own, making sure that preference is given to organisations that hold a Quality Mark
- ◆ Providing the CLS/CDS (local rate) call centre number (telephone: 0845 608 1122) and the Website address <http://www.clsdirect.org.uk>

B1.3 When carrying out referrals, the staff member will contact alternative service providers from the firm's referral list and or the CLS/CDS directory and or any other suitable sources of information until one is found that is able to take the case. Preference will be given to quality mark providers. If appropriate, an appointment will be made on the client's behalf.

A copy of the firm's referral form and covering letter will be sent to the receiving organisation detailing:

- ◆ The advice and assistance given up to that point
- ◆ The client's financial details (if provided)
- ◆ The next expected course of action if any
- ◆ Any comments that the client wishes to be included
- ◆ Any additional information pertinent to the client's matter.

A copy of the completed referral form will be given to the client for their information explaining the reason for the referral and any other relevant information. A copy of the referral form will then be kept on file. In all instances the client will be told what role Clapham Law LLP will take and what service(s) they should expect from the new service provider. Any feedback that is later given by the client on the service provided by the new service provider will be recorded and reviewed during the annual review of referrals or sooner. Any cost implications identified will also be discussed with the client.

Referral information will be recorded and kept in the firm's record of referrals. The records will be analysed at least annually by the Quality Representative and will contain the following:

- ◆ Name of the client or case
- ◆ Matter type
- ◆ Organisation to whom the client was referred
- ◆ The reason for the referral
- ◆ Records of unsuccessful attempts to refer a client on after a referral need had been identified.

B1.4 The latest edition of the CLS directory will be made available (if published by the LEGAL AID AGENCY) and the firm has an up to date source of alternative service providers to use. As already stated above, these alternative non-CLS suppliers will only be used in the event that it is not appropriate to use a CLS supplier. There are many instances where it will

be appropriate to use a non-CLS supplier and each matter must be dealt with on its own unique merits and on a case by case basis. Whenever a non-CLS supplier is used, the decision must be carefully justified in writing in the Central record of Signposting and referral and a copy kept on the clients file. Below are a few defined circumstances in which it would be appropriate to use a non-CLS supplier

- ◆ There is no qualified CLS supplier available and the client has been fully apprised of their rights to public funding and consented to being referred/signposted to a non-CLS supplier.
- ◆ The most qualified and suitable supplier is not a CLS supplier and the client has indicated a desire to fund his case privately despite the fact that he has been fully informed of all his/her rights to public funding under the CLS/CDS.
- ◆ The client the client has been fully apprised of their rights to public funding but has specifically asked for advice on a shortlist of suppliers that he/she wishes to use, non of which are CLS suppliers.
- ◆ The clients matter is beyond the scope of public funding/legal aid.

B2: community legal service partnership protocols

- B2.1 Where the local CLSP is active and a protocol has been produced by our local CLSP, the quality representative and or the Principal will make themselves aware of what it contains and will be able to show that the protocol has been incorporated into the firm's procedures and processes or give reason why it has not.

SECTION C: RUNNING THE ORGANISATION

C1: Staff and Management Structures, Organisational Standards, Status Enquiries and Independence

- C1.1 An organogram is available to all members of staff that identifies them their current jobs and lines of responsibility as follows:

CLAPHAM LAW LLP SOLICITORS

James Ramdhun
Solicitor – Advocate
Consultant Part Time/COLP & COFA
Quality Representative/Complaints
Manager/ Equality Representative
Overall Financial responsibility
Supervisor (Overall)
Risk Management
MLRO



Suparna Sircar
Partner/Solicitor
General Supervisor

Godwin Ehujor
Consultant
Immigration/Family
Law/Litigation
Tort
Landlord and Tenant

Claude Tene
Caseworker
Personal Injury
Immigration



Naomi Ajibade
Caseworker
• Housing
• Family Law



Office Administrator
Jenny Hope

- C1.2 The organogram also identifies those with key roles and decision making responsibility, further details of their main responsibilities are to be found in their job descriptions. Where individuals have more than one role they can be both subordinate and superior at the same time depending on the role they are performing at that moment, this is difficult to indicate on an organogram without unnecessary duplication.
- C1.3 Clapham Law LLP has membership of and is regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and can therefore satisfy the Legal Aid Agency of its suitability to join the Community Legal Service.
- C1.4 Clapham Law LLP provides the Legal Aid Agency with information, and provides authority to obtain information from third parties, about the status of the organisation and all individuals working in Quality Mark departments. In addition current practicing certificates will be made available (for all practicing solicitors) on request.

Clapham Law LLP will advise the Legal Aid Agency, within 28 days of any adverse findings made or formal investigations undertaken by the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors (OSS), the ombudsman or one of the recognized representative bodies. Details of all professional indemnity claims paid out (in the last six years) will also be disclosed with updates available at audit or on request.

- C1.5 Clapham Law LLP confirms that it is a member of and is regulated by a recognized representative body (The Solicitors Regulation Authority) and thereby demonstrates that it meets the requirements to provide independent advice through compliance with the Solicitors Regulation Authority's requirements.

C2: Financial Control

- C2.1 James Ramdhun has overall responsibility for financial control at the firm
- C2.2 Clapham Law LLP has financial processes in place that ensure the accurate production of the following financial information:
- An annual profit and loss /income and expenditure account
 - An annual balance sheet
 - An annual budget covering income and expenditure
 - A quarterly variance analysis of income and expenditure against budget
 - Running records of costs incurred on each publicly funded case

Clapham Law LLP will use the services of a bookkeeper to maintain all the firm's financial records/books on a daily basis and produce management information for the Principal on a monthly basis. The bookkeeper will report to James Ramdhun who will regularly inspect the books and will carry out a variance analysis with the help of the bookkeeper once every quarter. At the end of the financial year the firm will use the services of Certified Accountants to produce a profit and Loss Account and a balance sheet. The firm's case management system will be used to ensure that there is an accurate running record of cost on all the firms cases at all times.

- C2.3 Clapham Law LLP will provide independent confirmation from an independent accountant that the organisation's accounts have been either certified or audited to their satisfaction for the last accounting period.
- C2.4 Clapham Law LLP produces a quarterly variance analysis of income and expenditure against budget and the overall financial position is reviewed, alongside the review of the business plan at least every six months, and a record of the review content and outcome is kept.
- C2.5 Clapham Law LLP meet the relevant requirements concerning indemnity insurance set by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and is indemnified against loss of up to £2 million in each and every claim. The Principal are responsible for maintaining the PII cover for the practice in accordance with s.37 Solicitors Act 1974. The firm keeps details of such cover in the form of an insurance policy certificate and schedule.

SECTION D: PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

D1: Roles, Responsibilities, Recruitment and Equal Opportunities for Staff

- D1.1 A current job description is available for every member of staff, and a job description and person specification is available for every post to be recruited.
- D1.2 All staff know their current responsibilities and objectives, and these are documented.
- D1.3 At Clapham Law LLP we do not discriminate nor do we accept or tolerate discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, sex, marital status or sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief; in the provision of services to clients, instructions to counsel or other experts or suppliers, the selection, treatment (including promotion) and behaviour of staff, or in the planning and provision of services.

All staff and the Principal have been made aware of the firm's policy. Any breaches that occur will be dealt with in accordance with the firm's complaints, grievance and/or disciplinary procedures. Specific action to be taken will be agreed by the, the manner of which will depend on the nature and intent of the breach.

This non-discrimination policy precludes the following types of discrimination:

4. Direct discrimination (including harassment) - where a person is treated less favourably on the basis of the grounds already listed above.
5. Indirect discrimination - Where a requirement or condition, which cannot be justified, is applied equally to all groups, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group.
6. Victimisation - Where a person is treated less favourably on the basis of action they have taken against the organisation (including grievances) under one of the grounds listed in your policy.

- D1.4 At Clapham Law LLP we will operate an open recruitment policy as follows:

Permanent Vacancies will be advertised where it is appropriate to do so, alternatively, we will review any CV's we have already received from previous recruitment rounds or from speculative applicants. These will then be short listed before the next stage of the recruitment process. Where due to staff shortages, volume of work, absence or other unforeseen work pressures, it is impractical to use any of the above methods, in keeping with the principles of our open recruitment policy, we will use relevant recruitment agencies to recruit staff.

Our open recruitment procedures will be tailored to suit the requirements of the post we are seeking to fill but they will always ensure that by the time final interviews are completed, each of the requirements of the post will have been properly addressed and an assessment of each candidate made. This will usually be done in stages and from different sources, for example, assessing qualifications and written communication skills from initial application forms or CVs and letters, while using interviews to assess verbal skills and relevant past experiences. Depending on the post, we may also choose to conduct additional tests, such as typing or telephone exercises, psychometric, verbal or numerical reasoning tests, or even group exercises.

Job adverts, whether internal or external, will be informative and honest about the post and about the person we are seeking to recruit. Where appropriate, we will include a summary of the key responsibilities and tasks, and possibly required attributes, taken directly from the job description and person specification). Alternatively, we may use a more concise style of advert backed up with further information about the organisation or even a full copy of the job description and person specification).

Notes will be taken at each stage of the recruitment process that will show that the selection process was based directly on the requirements of the job description and person specification, and was applied consistently. These notes will also be made for each requirement assessed, and will be sufficiently detailed to show what evidence each candidate provided and to demonstrate how well they met each requirement. A degree of standardisation will be used in order to facilitate fairness and consistency throughout the process and to enable proper assessment of each candidate according to the requirements of the role.

Applicants will be informed that following the interviews and tests, feedback will be given to any short-listed candidates who request it. Staff carrying out recruitment should note that as well as allowing us to demonstrate fair assessment of applications and to give feedback, these notes will also help us to remember each candidate more clearly when considering selection and assessment. The notes should also be used as a basis for the initial training and development plan of the individual selected.

Assessment notes (covering interviews) will be retained for at least 12 months for all short-listed candidates (whether recruited or not), and will be made available at audit at the discretion of the auditor.

D2: Induction, Appraisal and Training

- D2.1 Induction for all new staff will begin within two months of joining (unless justifiable reasons have been recorded), and the process will cover the areas listed below:

- The organisation's aims.
- The management/staff structure and where the new post fits into it.
- The recruit's role and the work of their department or team.
- The organisation's policies on non-discrimination, quality, customer care and complaints.
- The office procedures manual and/or other work instructions/processes relevant to the post
- Terms and conditions of employment, and welfare and safety matters.

Records confirming induction (content and date(s)) for each individual will be kept on individuals' personnel files or in an appropriate central record.

D2.2 Annual appraisals will be conducted for all members of staff (including, managers and external supervisors) except where the Account Manager or a representative of the Legal Aid Agency has given an exemption from this (e.g where the exemption can be justified on the grounds that the process is of no value). Appraisal records will detail existing and future objectives, be signed by both parties and records will be kept on individuals' personnel files or in an appropriate central record. All appraisals will be able to demonstrate that they are:

- Able to relate individual performance to the needs of the service
- A two-way communication process
- Able to identify training needs and development opportunities as well as to set objectives

D2.3 Individual training and development plans will be produced, and reviewed at least annually, and the review recorded and kept in the employee's personnel file or an appropriate central record.

The training and development Plans will include any training needs and/or development opportunities identified:

- During appraisals, file reviews and supervisory sessions.
- From business or service reviews.
- As a result of recognising that a required skill is not available in the organisation.

The plans will outline what is to be achieved (i.e. aim), how it is to be achieved (i.e. method), and over what timescale.

Assessment of training needs and development opportunities will cover organisational, managerial and/or legal competence, as necessary.

D2.4 Both internal and external training will be recorded on a training record and kept in the individual's personnel file or an appropriate central record.

D3: Supervisors

D3.1 A named supervisor is available to supervise caseworkers in each Quality Mark category of work.

- D3.2 Each supervisor meets the relevant legal competence standard and has completed the category-specific supervisor standard set out in Annex A of the Specialist Quality Mark Standard and submitted same to the Legal Aid Agency.
- D3.3 At all times every category specific supervisor at Clapham Law LLP will meet at least one of the following supervisory skills standards:
1. Assessed as working at Level 3 or higher (within the NVQ framework) in relevant elements of the national standards.
 2. Training covering key supervisory skills completed in the 12 months immediately preceding the Quality Mark application.
 3. Able to demonstrate experience as an effective supervisor (covering supervision of all of the work being done in the department) of at least one full-time member of staff (or equivalent) for at least one year in the last five years.
- D3.4 Training records will show that supervisors maintain and extend technical legal knowledge to a minimum level of six CPD hours (or equivalent) per year, and that this part of their training relates directly (or can be applied directly) to the area of law being supervised.
- D3.5 All supervisors will ensure that time is designated for supervision and be able to justify the number of caseworkers being supervised such that they are able to conduct their role effectively.

D4: Operation of the Supervisory Role

- D4.1 Supervisors will allocate cases and assignments such that they will be able to demonstrate that staff are only allocated work that is appropriate for their role and that it falls within their limits, in terms of skills, experience and available time.

Supervisors will ensure that supervision is tailored to each member of staff according to their knowledge, skills and experience, they will also be able to demonstrate control over the quality of work produced by the staff they supervise and be able to demonstrate how they ensure that staff skills and knowledge are being developed continuously through effective supervision. The methods through which this will be done include:

- Checking and allocating incoming post.
- Checking samples of outgoing post.
- Regular supervisory sessions to discuss:
 - New cases taken.
 - Progress in existing cases.
 - Tactics, options, use of undertakings, and content of complex case plans where necessary.
 - Outcomes of cases completed since the last session.
 - Training needs and professional development.
- Monitoring central records (e.g. for solicitor undertakings and for feedback following use of an approved supplier).
- Monitoring attendances

- Team meetings
- One to one meetings
- Staff shadowing supervisors / assisting with cases

- D4.3 All staff are aware that they must ensure that work is not conducted for clients where it falls beyond their level of competence or where, for any reason, the case would not be conducted with diligence. The supervisory arrangements in place should prevent this from happening but if despite all of the safeguards in place it does occur, then staff should immediately inform their supervisor so that the case can be reallocated. Only the category supervisor or someone appointed by him/her should undertake cases of a complex nature, cases involving judicial review procedures, very high cost cases, or cases involving a novel, complex or emerging point of law.
- D4.4 All staff have access to relevant legal material, the office manual and relevant LEGAL AID AGENCY publications. Access is maintained through various means including, a firm library, access to local law libraries, online databases, membership of relevant bodies and legal periodicals and reference material.
- D4.5 Supervisors will ensure that they maintain their knowledge through regular updates on law, best practice and procedure and will make sure that changes are not overlooked and this knowledge is cascaded to the staff under their supervision. This may be done by: Subscription to relevant publications containing law updates, which are reviewed by the supervisor before being circulated or used as a basis for discussion. It may also be done through membership and regular attendance of a national or regional practitioners' association or similar groups depending upon meeting frequency and content. Where changes in legislation or updates have been identified then the supervisor will attend an update course and promptly cascade their knowledge to relevant staff members who will then record the same on their training record.

D5: Individual Competence

- D5.1 Training records show that, in each 12-month period, every casework member of staff receives a minimum of six hours' training, of which 50% (or 100% for Family caseworkers) relates directly to the relevant category of law.
- D5.2 All caseworkers have a professional legal qualification or conduct a minimum of 12 hours' casework per week (or equivalent).

SECTION E: RUNNING THE SERVICE

E1: File Management

- E1.1 We have a file management system in place, which produces detailed lists of open and closed cases.

E1.2(a) Conflict of Interest Checks

Each time a new matter or case is opened or a new instruction received, a conflict of interest check will be carried out and dated. The person carrying out the check must use their own discretion and satisfy themselves before progressing the case but at the very least they must

begin by cross checking the register of clients for names. Thereafter, if it is decided that no conflict of interest exists, the fee earner must continue to exercise diligence and vigilance and be prepared to recognize any further conflicts of interest that may arise as the case progresses and if necessary to carry out further formal dated conflict of interests checks.

Where it is decided that a conflict of interest does exist, the fee earner responsible for the case will notify their supervisor and a decision will be made as to whether the firm can continue to act for the clients involved. If the decision is such that the firm cannot continue to act then a further decision will be made as to which if any of the clients should be retained. At this point all the relevant clients will be immediately notified of the conflict of interest and the decision about whether to continue to act for them or not.

There are many instances where a conflict of interest will be likely to occur but a few are mentioned here as a guide for fee earners carrying out conflict of interest checks:

1. The fee earner is acting for both sides in a civil dispute or co-defendants in a criminal matter
2. The case involves action against the firm or, a member of staff.
3. The fee earner is aware that the case is based on false information

These will all be managed using the procedure already outlined above.

E1.2(b) Locating Files and Tracing Documents

All correspondence files in open cases will be stored on-site and we will be able to access other parts of open files if and when necessary and will be able to produce any batch of files whenever they have been selected by the Law Society/SRA/Legal Aid Agency for file audit purposes.

All closed files will appear on the firms closed file list and will be retained for up to six years but will be archived off site in order to make the best use of available office space.

Back-up recording of key dates

E1.2(c) The firm maintains a back-up record of key dates. All fee-earners record key dates on the client's file and in their own individual diaries. A Central Diary is also held by Reception and the fee earner must arrange for Reception (or the office manager/supervisor) to be advised appropriately whenever they are made aware of a key date and record it.

Key dates include, dates which if missed (or not adequately prepared for) could lead to an allegation of negligence against the firm, or could be detrimental to the client's case for instance:

- * Dates to appear before appellate bodies
- * Expiry of a limitation period;
- * Review dates for lease renewals;
- * Litigation limitation dates
- * Court/tribunal hearing dates
- * Hearing dates in litigation matters;
- * Time limits in probate matters;
- * Dates relating to undertakings.
- * Time limits for appeals

* Other Court dates

All key dates will be monitored by the category supervisor who will act as the default backup by making sure that all fee earners are alerted on a weekly basis to their key dates for the week. The category supervisor must also act as a back up stand-in whenever a fee earner can not attend to a key date and must find a replacement promptly or deal with the key date themselves making sure to keep the client fully and promptly informed of any change in the personnel dealing with their matter.

E1.2(d) Undertakings

Undertakings must not be given except when absolutely necessary and even then, only if authorised by the Principal of the firm. All undertakings must be recorded in the Central Undertakings File showing a copy of the undertaking, who authorised it and the date that the obligation was fulfilled. The Principal will monitor the undertakings by reviewing the undertakings file every quarter (this need not be documented) to ensure that all undertakings are still current or have been properly satisfied.

E1.2(e) Inactivity Checks

Upon opening a file, the relevant fee earner will make an entry in their diary to review the file for inactivity on the three month anniversary of when the file was opened. At this anniversary the fee earner will review the file for inactivity and then repeat the procedure by making another entry in their diary three months from the date of last activity. This procedure will be continued until the file is closed in order to make sure that file never has a period of inactivity longer than three months. Alternatively, this can also be done electronically using the firm's case management software or other software such as Microsoft Outlook, which will be set to automatically up any files that have not been worked on for 2-3 months for the attention of the supervisor and the fee earner with conduct.

E1.2 (f) Identifying Relevant Matters and Linking Files

The firm defines a relevant matter as any matter containing information material to the current case which may be identified from previous or other current dealings with the client or other previous or ongoing cases. These matters can be identified from the relevant file reference(s) and the key information sheet on the file which will contain relevant summary information.

Where relevant matters are ongoing at the same time, Each file should note the existence of another relevant matter, together with key information about the case and its status, this will enable all the matters to be linked without the need for unnecessary duplication of work.

E2: File Reviews

E2.1 File Review

The number of cases to be reviewed in each category of work, and the frequency, and method of review documented in the table below, have been determined according to the Legal experience, expertise, quality of work and knowledge of the firms operating practices of all fee earners. Where a fee earner does tolerance work or works in more than one category, at least one file from each category will be reviewed.

The reviewer or category supervisor will be able to demonstrate that the sample of files reviewed is representative of the reviewee’s overall caseload. The reviewer or category supervisor will usually select files at random except where this continues to produce a statistically unrepresentative sample or there are training and development issues which the reviewee and or reviewer wish to address. If a random sample is not used to select files then the reviewer needs to be able to justify the reason why an alternative method of file selection was used if required to do so by the Legal Aid Agency/ Legal Aid auditor. At least every quarter, the supervisor will ensure that a minimum of 50% of file reviews will be carried out and communicated by face to face method in the Family category.

The reviewer will use the firm’s designated file review sheet to record all formal file reviews and the findings (both positive and negative) of the review will be communicated promptly to the reviewee, who will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings and the proposed corrective action. The supervisor or reviewer must clearly indicate on each file review whether it was carried out and communicated by face to face method or on paper.

It is the responsibility of the reviewee to carry out all corrective action within the time specified on the file review sheet and the responsibility of the reviewer to ensure that the corrective action is carried out to the requisite standard and within specified time limits. Both the reviewer and the reviewee need to complete the relevant section of the file review sheet and sign off all corrective action after it has been completed by the reviewee and approved by the reviewer.

File Review Guide

Experience of individuals	Number of files to review (per person, per category), per month	Number of files to review (per person per category), per quarter
Experienced category supervisor	1	3
Category supervisor (for less than two years.)	1-2	3 – 6
Experienced caseworker in the category (over two years’ experience)	2	4 – 8
Caseworker in the category (1 – 2 years’ experience)	3	6 – 10
Trainee/ Probationer	3 - 4	8 – 15

E2.2 The category supervisor will manage the file review process and will have overall responsibility at all times, whether or not file reviews are delegated to other qualified reviewers or to staff carrying out procedural checks.

E2.3 All file reviews are carried out by a suitably qualified individual and the minimum frequency and number is as follows:

Family, Housing, Employment File Reviews

REVIEWEE	REVIEWER	NO. OF MATTERS	FREQUENCY
		1	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		3	Monthly
		1	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		3	Monthly
		1	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		3	Monthly
		1	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		2	Monthly
		3	Monthly

E2.4 All files that have been reviewed will contain a copy of the completed file review sheet which, as a minimum, will confirm the date of review and the identification of the reviewer and the reviewee. Where corrective action has been identified the completed file review sheet will also include details of the action to be taken and the timescale within which it has been completed.

E2.5 The firms file review sheet is a comprehensive record and as a minimum contains the following:

- File reference.
- Date of review.
- Quality Mark category (or case classification)
- Caseworker and reviewer identification
- Method (where it may be other than file content only, e.g face-to-face)
- Quality of legal advice given
- Action proposed or taken
- Adherence to organisational procedures etc.
- Comments from the reviewer in respect of the following:
 - Quality of legal advice given.
 - Action proposed or taken
 - Adherence to organisational procedures.
- Evidence about corrective action.

E2.6 As a minimum all file review records will be reviewed at least once a year to identify recurring or emerging trends in performance.

F: MEETING CLIENTS' NEEDS

F1: Individual Cases at the Outset

- F1.1 Clapham Law LLP operates client care work practices, such that at the outset of cases and in all cases of one-off advice, the caseworker records and, unless one of the specified exemptions applies, offers written confirmation of:
- (a) The requirements or instructions of the client.
 - (b) The advice given and /or action to be taken by the organisation, including where necessary advice on any limits on our willingness or ability to act.
 - (c) The name and status of the person dealing with the matter and whom to approach should the client be dissatisfied with the service provided.
 - (d) Information given and received about methods of case payment and /or case funding.
- F1.2 Clapham Law LLP operate work practices such that wherever a file is opened, unless exceptional circumstances apply, the caseworker confirms the above records (F1.1(a)–(d)) in writing to the client at the earliest opportunity, together with the following:
- (a) The name of the individual with whom, and how, the client should raise any problem(s) (complaint(s)) concerning the service provided.
 - (b) Key dates in the matter.
 - (c) Advance costs information, including, as applicable: likely overall costs, the organisation's charges/fees, cost-benefit and risk, and any potential liability (if legally aided, in contentious (and potentially contentious matters and for any third party costs in non-contentious matters). This advance costs information will be provided at the outset, other than

- Where the client has already been advised that you will not be making a charge in this case.
- In criminal cases (although for cases that progress to the Crown Court, see F2.3(d) regarding Recovery of Defence Costs Orders).
- In civil cases where there can be no potential liability for costs (i.e. certain legal aid funded, cases including legal help (other than where the statutory charge applies), non-means/ non-merits tested cases (public law/childcare), Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985 cases, and registration of certain foreign orders and judgement proceedings).

(d) Further costs information (applicable where F1.2 (c) applies), including the arrangements for

updating costs information (as required in F2), and any reasonably foreseeable payments that the client may have to make to the organisation or a third party.

F2.1 In all complex cases, a plan (for a complex case) will be produced as soon as it is clear that any of the following applies to the case:

- It meets the Legal Aid Agency's (Legal Aid's) definition of a multi-party action (see the Legal Aid Manual, paragraph references 1c-029 to 1c-031).
- It is subject to High Court jurisdiction (unless evidence is provided to justify no plan being prepared).
- Total costs (in any civil or criminal defence case) are likely to exceed £25,000, including disbursements and VAT.
- It is to be submitted to the Legal Aid Agency's Special Cases Unit (for civil funding) or the Criminal High Cost Cases Unit (for criminal funding).

All such complex case plans must also include the review frequencies, and ensure that the plan updates have been made available to the client at appropriate stages, and not less than every six months.

F2.2 Clapham Law LLP operate systems such that issues raised in the case and any subsequent changes and proposed action are explained to the client, and progress generally (or reasons for lack of progress) is confirmed in writing to the client (unless exceptional circumstances apply), at appropriate stages, but not less than every six months.

F2.3 Clapham Law LLP operates work practices such that clients are informed, in writing (unless exceptional circumstances apply), of costs as the case progresses, including:

(a) Actual costs to date and disbursements incurred (including VAT). This information will be provided at regular intervals (and not less than every six months), and, in appropriate cases, interim bills will be delivered at agreed intervals.

(b) Any changed circumstances that will, or that are likely to, affect the overall amount of the costs, the degree of risk involved, or the cost-benefit to the client of continuing the case.

(c) The overall costs estimate and any upper limit that has been agreed with the client (or

confirmation that the previous estimate/limit remains appropriate), at regular intervals (and not less than every six months) or as soon as it seems likely that the estimate/limit may be exceeded.

- (e) Any potential cost liability, including being alerted to or reminded of this, and of its effect In criminal cases, this includes providing overall cost estimates at the earliest
- (f) opportunity, once it appears likely that an RDCO (Recovery of Defence Costs Order) may be made (unless one has been provided at the outset and at intervals thereafter).

F2.4 All fee earners will exercise their duty to advise their clients about their legal aid eligibility and they will be aware that this duty applies throughout the case (other than for Legal Help once eligibility has been established), and so fee earners must consider eligibility wherever and whenever they become aware of a material change in the client's financial circumstances.

F2.5 Clients will be informed in writing if the fee-earner(s) dealing with their case change(s) or if the person with whom they should raise any problems or complaints with the service changes. The details given to the client must include the name and status of the new person (handling the client's case or dealing with any problems) and give a reason for the change.

F3.1 At the end of the client's case all fee earners will ensure that the client receives written confirmation, unless exceptional circumstances apply, of:

- (a) The outcome of the case, any further action the client is required to take in the matter and what, if anything, will be done next. Fee earners must either confirm, that they are ceasing to act and closing the case (e.g. where you receive no further instructions), or confirm the result of the case including any necessary explanation of terms and consequences (e.g. the meaning of terms such as "decree nisi" or what might happen if the client doesn't "keep the peace").
- (b) The arrangements for storage and retrieval of papers and other items retained. Fee earners must confirm what the firm is keeping and tell the client how long their case papers (including copy documents) will be stored, what costs (if any) would be involved to retrieve them, and what steps they would need to take to do this at any point and where appropriate:

- (c) An account to the client for any outstanding money, involving the complete reconciliation of all accounts at the end of the case.

- (d) Return to the client of original documents and other property belonging to the client (except for items that are, by agreement, to be stored by the organisation).

- (e) Information about whether the matter should be reviewed in future and, if so, when.

Fee earners should note that this requirement at F3.1 excludes ***cases that do not progress beyond one-off advice***. This means that unless you have "formally opened a file", you are not required to provide the client with written confirmation of the above information unless otherwise required. However, fee earners may choose to do so as a matter of good practice.

F4.1 At Clapham Law LLP, the duty of confidentiality is ***fundamental to the relationship*** between our organisation (or, in practice, the caseworker) and the client. It exists as an

obligation in law (because of the nature of the contract we enter into in accepting the client) and as a matter of conduct (generally, and as required by our recognised representative body, The Solicitors Regulation Authority. Circumstances in which this duty of confidentiality can be overridden are rare, and **powerful justification is required** wherever a breach of confidentiality is to be considered.

The duty of **confidentiality applies to all information** about the client's affairs, regardless of the source. It starts the moment the client first approaches us to provide instructions or information (i.e. before we formally accept them as a client), covers even the fact that you have been instructed (unless this is a matter of public record), and extends beyond the end of the case (or the death of the client). In certain exceptional circumstances, fee earners will need to consider whether to override this duty of client confidentiality but this must be done in conjunction with the category supervisor or in their absence a deputy or external supervisor if applicable.

Circumstances in which the fee earners should consider whether to override client confidentiality include the following (as set out in The Guide to the Professional Conduct of Solicitors, eighth edition, 1999), where:

- Information used by the client to facilitate the commission of a crime or fraud is concerned.
- Express consent has been given by the client (or personal representatives of a deceased client) to disclose information (including express consent to disclose files for audit.
- It is considered necessary to reveal confidential information to prevent the client or third party from committing a crime that is likely to result in serious bodily harm.
- In exceptional cases involving children, information of a serious nature (e.g. sexual, mental or physical abuse) should be given to an appropriate authority.
- In proceedings under the Children Act 1989, experts' reports (for the purpose of proceedings) are not privileged.
- A court orders that material should be disclosed or where a warrant permits a police officer or other authority to seize confidential material.
- An act of terrorism could be prevented.

Any unauthorised or inappropriate breaches of this duty of confidentiality will be treated very seriously and will be promptly dealt with under the firm's disciplinary procedures.

- F4.2 Although it is not a requirement for us to obtain consent from the client for the LEGAL AID AGENCY to audit Legal Aid files or other auditory bodies, we will seek to obtain consent from the client if it is considered appropriate to do so. Where it is deemed necessary for the LEGAL AID AGENCY to audit the files of private fee-paying clients, their consent will be obtained before the files are made available to the LEGAL AID AGENCY.
- F4.3 The privacy of our clients must be respected at all times and all fee earners must use the designated meeting rooms, conferences rooms and where appropriate their own offices to ensure that client privacy is maintained at all times.
- F5.1 At Clapham Law LLP we do not discriminate nor do we accept or tolerate discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, sex, marital status or sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief; in the provision of services to clients,

instructions to counsel or other experts or suppliers, the selection, treatment (including promotion) and behaviour of staff, or in the planning and provision of services.

All staff and the Principal have been made aware of the firm's policy. Any breaches that occur will be dealt with in accordance with the firm's complaints, grievance and/or disciplinary procedures. Specific action to be taken will be agreed by the Principal, the manner of which will depend on the nature and intent of the breach.

This non-discrimination policy precludes the following types of discrimination:

1. Direct discrimination (including harassment) - where a person is treated less favourably on the basis of the grounds already listed above.
2. Indirect discrimination - Where a requirement or condition, which cannot be justified, is applied equally to all groups, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group.
3. Victimisation - Where a person is treated less favourably on the basis of action they have taken against the organisation (including grievances) under one of the grounds listed in our policy.

F5.2 Suppliers will be selected on the basis of objective assessment except in exceptional cases where it would not be appropriate to do so. Supplier's details will be kept in a register of approved suppliers based on the following criteria:

- Quality of service
- Cost or value for money
- Speed of response
- Expertise
- Holders of the Quality Mark
- Holders of other recognized quality standards
- Reasonable fees
- Client care
- Success rate

F5.3 Evaluations will be undertaken for all counsel and experts performances observed, and for all opinions and reports received and any adverse findings will be recorded so that the fee earners who want to instruct any counsel, experts or other suppliers in the future will be aware of any relevant issues. Any adverse findings for barristers who hold the Quality Mark must also be sent to the individual barrister concerned, other than in exceptional circumstances.

F5.4 Where appropriate, clients should be consulted about the use of suppliers, and advised of the name and status of the individual, for what purpose they are being instructed, how long they might take to respond, and where disbursements are to be paid by the client, the cost involved.

F5.5 At Clapham Law LLP, instructions to the supplier will précis the facts in the case and identify issues as they are perceived, detail and attach relevant documents, and include instructions on what is to be provided and how. Arrangements for the payment of fees will be covered and instructions will alert the supplier if a response is required within a certain

timeframe (e.g in accordance with an agreement or due to a pending limitation period or court hearing). At all times instructions will be clear accurate and comprehensive.

G: COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

G1: Complaints

G1.1 Complaints information

At Clapham Law LLP, all clients will be given information about what to do if they have a problem with the service provided or any other aspects of the firm. This is also in keeping with Solicitors practice rule 15.

G1.2 Complaints Procedure

At Clapham Law LLP, we define a complaint as any reasonable expression of client dissatisfaction or grievance.

Complaints will be identified by the member of staff who first comes in to contact with the complaint or expression of dissatisfaction or grievance however it is expressed. If it is in written form, this is likely to be the person who opens the post or reads the fax; if in electronic form, the person who opens the email and if verbal or via the telephone, the person to whom the client is speaking. The following applies to all complaints received by the firm:

- They will be recorded in a central file
- They will be acknowledged and the client notified of when they will receive a substantive response which should be within two weeks of when the complaint was first received.
- The complainant will be informed of the person to whom they should take matters if they remain dissatisfied at any stage.
- Options for redress and for correcting any underlying problem or unsatisfactory procedures will be provided.

As soon as a complaint is received, it will be brought to the attention of James Ramdhun who will carry out the following steps:

- Identify the cause of the complaint and the reason for the grievance
- Discuss the case and the complaint with the relevant fee earner
- If not already in writing, try to obtain a detailed written version of the complaint from the complainant.
- Determine if the complaint has merit
- Decide what action needs to be taken to prevent the complaint happening again
- Decide what action needs to be taken to satisfy the complainant.

James Ramdhun will be the person with overall responsibility for complaints.

- G1.3 The central record of complaints will be reviewed annually by James Ramdhun to identify any trends which will then be fed back to the other fee earners and a strategy devised to eliminate any negative trends.
- G2.1 The firm has adopted the client feedback template and procedure recommended by the Legal Aid Agency. Client questionnaires will be given out at least once a year in a sample sufficient to obtain meaningful data at the end of cases and as a minimum will cover the following:
- Whether the service was approachable and friendly
 - Whether the client was kept informed
 - Whether information and advice was explained satisfactorily to the client
 - Whether matters were managed in a competent manner.
- G2.2 The client feedback will be reviewed at least annually, and the review findings, trends and outcome will be documented and kept for at least three years.
- G3.1 James Ramdhun is the Quality Representative and the named person with responsibility for overseeing all quality procedures used by the organization and is responsible for:
- Updating all quality procedures
 - Being available to the LEGAL AID AGENCY auditor throughout all audits
- G3.2 All quality procedures will show the date they became effective and or the issue number and dates of amendments to procedures will be maintained. This will often be done by issuing a new version of the manual or creating an addendum to the manual.
- G3.3 As a minimum, all fee earners should ensure that in all instances in which processes (for which requirements have been given in the Quality Mark standard) have been identified as having failed, possibly leading to a Critical Quality Concern or General Quality Concern being raised at audit, must be brought to the attention of the Quality Representative.
- The Quality Representative will be able to demonstrate what response was made, which, where appropriate, must include action to avoid further repetitions (e.g. by requiring reviewers to target file reviews to consider certain issues, by checking that specific training is planned for certain staff, or by introducing a quality procedure to cover the relevant process.)
- G4.1 The firm has a current up to date office manual that collates information on organisational practices.
- G4.2 The office manual is available to all members of staff who are involved in delivering Quality Mark services and all members of staff know where to find the office manual, what it contains and the purposes for which they might need to refer to it.
- G4.3 All members of the firm will use the Quality Mark application and status forms specified by the LEGAL AID AGENCY, in the formats deemed acceptable by the LEGAL AID AGENCY.

- G4.4 All Quality Mark information and any appropriate updates received from the LEGAL AID AGENCY will be circulated to staff upon receipt, this includes articles in Focus, Focus on CDS, and updates on the LEGAL AID AGENCY Web site.
- G5.1 The firm has implemented a risk management strategy and the person responsible for overseeing it is James Ramdhun the firm's risk manager.
- G5.2 A current list of the main risks associated with the type(s) of work carried out will be made available to all relevant staff, which defines those cases that are likely to fall outside acceptable risk levels. This list will be constantly reviewed, however, at the moment the firm only intends to practice publicly funded Crime and no risks have yet been identified that fall outside acceptable risk levels. However, this risk review will continue on an ongoing basis. Further, should the firm start practicing other areas of law, this issue will immediately be reviewed in relation to those areas of law and then kept under review on an ongoing basis.
- G5.3 At the outset of a case and throughout the life of a case all staff must consider the case in the light of the unacceptable risks outlined by the firm and discovered by the fee earner. This can be done by scheduling risk reviews in the fee earners diary or in the course of events as the case progresses, such as during inactivity checks, file reviews or when work is being carried out in the case. However, it must be done whenever issues are raised that are pertinent to the risks identified by the organization.

All staff must also be aware that for all risks that are likely to fall outside acceptable levels the following steps must be taken:

- These are properly identified and the risk manager notified
 - A note of the potentially unacceptable risk is made on the file
 - A record is made and kept on the case file of the action to be taken.
- G5.4 At least once a year the risk manager will review the main operational risks identified by the firm (including those likely to fall outside an acceptable level of risk), to ensure that they remain relevant and comprehensive in light of any changes to work undertaken, relevant legislation, or claims or complaints made since the previous review was undertaken.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND POLICIES

FIRM RULES

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Whilst working for the Firm your overriding responsibilities are: -

- To observe all safety rules and to act in a manner that ensures your own health and safety and the health and safety of others; and
- To act wholeheartedly in the best interests of the Firm.

Any conduct that either puts your own health and safety at risk or the health and safety of others at risk will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

Any conduct that is detrimental to the best interests of the Firm or its relations with

customers/clients, suppliers or the general public will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

Your general duties include the following:-

- To work hard, conscientiously, safely and loyally on behalf of the Firm.
- Not to be involved in any work or activity which is in competition with the Firm or which might adversely affect the Firm's best interests.
- To obey the reasonable and lawful instructions of the Firm and to be flexible in helping the Firm achieve its objectives.
- To produce work of the best possible quality.
- To respect and care for the Firm's property.
- To respect and care for the Firm's staff in all interactions
- To strictly obey all Rules and Regulations relating to health and safety and report to the Principal any hazards to safe working arrangements.
- To comply with the Firm's equal opportunities policy and to co-operate with it to ensure a working environment that is free from discrimination and prejudice and the fear of harassment or violence.
- Whilst working for the Firm to devote all of your time and attention to your duties. You must not engage in any other business, activity or employment (either inside or outside your normal working hours) which interferes with this duty.
- To notify the Firm at the earliest opportunity about any change in your personal circumstances such as your name, address or telephone number.

ATTENDANCE AND TIMEKEEPING

The Firm expects excellent attendance and timekeeping.

Persistent lateness or repeated un-authorized absence will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

It is your responsibility to make sure that you are at work and ready to start work at your scheduled starting time.

If you are sick or injured and cannot attend work then you must comply with the Firm's sickness/injury rules. The sickness/injury rules are set out at part 3 of this Handbook.

If you arrive at work late you must immediately report to the Principal

If you need to leave work before your scheduled finish time you must obtain the prior authority of the Principal .

SICKNESS, INJURY AND SICK PAY

You are expected to be available to work during your normal working hours. You must make every effort to attend work.

If you cannot attend work you must comply with the following rules:-

- You must telephone either of the Principal within 30 minutes of your scheduled start time on your first day of absence. You should not leave a message at reception or with a colleague. If you cannot make contact with either of the Principal you should try to speak to the Admin staff. You must state the reason for your absence and the date on which you expect to return to work.
- If you are unable to return to work on the date expected you must call the Principal again as outlined above.
- If your absence lasts for less than 8 calendar days, on your return to work you must complete an Absence Self-Certification explaining the reason for your absence.
- If your absence lasts for 8 or more consecutive calendar days then you must:-
 - Get a medical certificate (MED3) from your GP confirming your inability to attend work. This form must be sent to the Principal.
 - If you cannot return to work when your medical certificate expires, you must obtain another medical certificate from your GP and send it to the Principal immediately. Certificates are required to cover the total period of your absence.
 - You must telephone either of the Principal at least one working day before you return to work so that arrangements can be made for your return.
 - If your last medical certificate does not specify a date on which you can resume your duties before you return you must supply the Firm with a medical clearance certificate confirming that you are fit to return to work.

DENTISTS, DOCTORS, OPTICIANS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

Whenever possible such appointments should be made outside of working hours. There is no right to time off for non-emergency check-ups. Where it is absolutely essential that such appointments be arranged during your working day, disruption must be kept to a minimum by arranging the appointment at the very start of the day or at the end of the day. Time off for such appointments will be unpaid unless:

- lost time is made up with the prior authority of the Principal ;
- you take the time off as holiday in which case you will need to comply with the Firm's holiday rules – see section 5, part 1 of this Handbook.

HOLIDAYS

Your annual holiday entitlement is set out in your contract of employment. A week for the purposes of holiday calculation is your normal working week excluding overtime. During your first year of employment you will accrue holiday entitlement at a rate of 1/12th of your annual entitlement for each complete month of service. You are not entitled to carry forward any holidays from one holiday year to the next except in exceptional circumstances and unless you obtain the express prior written authority from the Principal . No payments will be made in lieu of holiday not taken except in respect of your last year of employment as set out below. Holidays must be arranged at the mutual convenience of both you and the Firm. You must give the Firm reasonable notice of your intention to take your holiday.

For holidays of 5 days or more you must provide the Firm with at least one month's notice.

All applications for holiday must be made using the Firm's holiday application form. Forms may be obtained from the Principal . You are only allowed to take holidays if the Firm has approved them in advance.

You are required to retain up to 5 days of your holiday entitlement to be taken during the Firm's Christmas and New Year closure period. The dates of the annual closure will be notified to you in advance.

You are not allowed to take more than 10 consecutive working days holiday unless you have obtained the express prior written permission from the Principal to do so. Up to 5 days holiday entitlement may be taken in blocks of half a day.

The Firm may object to you taking holiday on dates requested by you and/or on bank/public holidays if it is inconvenient to it.

If you start or leave your employment during the holiday year you shall be entitled to pro rata annual entitlement for each week of service in that holiday year.

Upon termination of your employment you will be entitled to pay in lieu of any holiday accrued in your last holiday year but not taken. If you have taken holidays in excess of entitlement the Firm shall be entitled to deduct the excess pay from your final salary payment.

The Firm may require you to take (or not to take) any outstanding accrued holiday entitlement during your notice period.

If you are ill while on holiday you will nevertheless be considered to be on holiday leave and not on sick leave.

ACCIDENTS

Absences resulting from accidents at work are treated as sickness absence and the Firm's normal rules will apply to such absences.

If you suffer an accident at work however trivial this should be recorded in the Accident Book, which is maintained by the Firm. You (or someone on your behalf) must report the accident to the Principal or the Firm's nominated health and safety representative as soon as is practicable after the event.

SMOKING

In accordance with Government Legislation and directives regarding no smoking at work, the Firm does not allow smoking on Firm premises. The Firm has designated all public areas of the premises non-smoking areas. Employees are forbidden from smoking in any of these areas.

Visitors too should be asked not to smoke in these areas as it is illegal.

Smoking anywhere on the Firm's premises will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

FIRE

Details of the Firm's fire/emergency procedures, exit and assembly points, are clear from the layout of the premises. You must familiarise yourself with the Firm's emergency procedures to minimise the dangers caused by fire.

You must ensure that you are aware of the nearest fire exit, and its alternative.
You must ensure that you are aware of the nearest fire extinguisher to your work location, its type and know how to operate it.

Remember:

- On discovering a fire:
 - Operate the nearest fire alarm;
 - Alert other people within your immediate vicinity;
- Do not attempt to tackle the fire unless you have been trained.
- On hearing the fire alarm
 - Do not delay - evacuate the premises immediately;
 - Do not stop to collect personal possessions;
 - Remain calm and proceed in an orderly manner;
 1. Do not re-enter the premises or site until the Fire Brigade is satisfied that the premises and site are safe to re-enter.

Fire alarm

The office is fitted with a fire alarm system. Glass breakage points are located at each exit. As normal procedure, the fire alarm system is tested periodically. Staff will be notified if other tests or maintenance are carried out on the alarm system. From time to time fire drills will be carried out and no warning will be given.

Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are provided throughout the office buildings and extinguishers for use on electrical equipment are provided where required.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY

The aims of the Firm's disciplinary policy are:-

- To ensure that all employees comply with the Firm's rules and procedures.
- To ensure a fair and consistent approach when dealing with disciplinary issues.
- To bring unsatisfactory conduct or performance to your attention.
- To resolve problems of conduct or performance and wherever possible to avoid dismissal.

The Firm's disciplinary procedure is used to deal with issues of misconduct, gross misconduct and incapability.

The Firm's disciplinary procedure has three clear stages as follows:-

- **Investigation by the Firm.** Your contract of employment will continue whilst the Firm considers the allegations made against you. It might be necessary to suspend you from your employment during the period of investigation. Suspension will be either with or without pay depending on the circumstances of the case. If you are suspended, your contract of employment will continue but you will not be allowed to enter the Firm's premises or contact any of your fellow employees or any of the Firm's customers/clients without prior permission. You will only be suspended if the allegations made against you are very serious. The Firm will endeavor to complete its investigations as soon as possible.
- **Disciplinary hearings.** In most cases of misconduct the Firm will hold a formal disciplinary hearing. Before the hearing you will be given details of those

allegations made against you. At the hearing you will have an opportunity to respond to those allegations and (if appropriate) to call and question any relevant witnesses. You have a right to be accompanied at disciplinary hearings by either a work colleague or trade union representative. The decision of the disciplining officer will be confirmed to you in writing as soon as possible following the disciplinary hearing.

- **Appeals.** You have the right to appeal at any stage of the disciplinary procedure. You can exercise your right to appeal by writing to the person named in the letter confirming the outcome of the disciplinary hearing within 5 working days of receiving written notification of the disciplinary sanction. Your letter should state the grounds upon which you are lodging your appeal. If your appeal is against dismissal the dismissal decision will stand unless or until the appeal officer decides otherwise. The decision of the appeal officer will be notified to you in writing and will be final and binding.

At all stages of the disciplinary procedure you will:-

- Be given the opportunity to reply to all and any allegations made against you before any decision or disciplinary action is taken.
- Have the opportunity to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.
- Have the most appropriate level of management hear any disciplinary matter or appeal. Where the manager in question was directly involved in the issues in dispute or under review, an alternative person with appropriate seniority will deal with the matter.

Disciplinary action may take one or all of the following forms:-

- **Verbal Warning** recorded within your personnel file.
- **Written Warning** one copy of which will be retained by you and one enclosed within your personnel file.
- **Final Written Warning** advising you that a further offence or continued shortcoming will render you liable to dismissal. One copy of this will be retained by you and one enclosed within your personnel file.
- **Dismissal** with or without notice.
- If appropriate the Firm might give consideration to enforcing some other disciplinary sanction such as suspension without pay, demotion, transfer to some other place or type of work or loss of privileges.

All warnings lapse following the expiry of the period specified by the disciplining or appeal officer at the time of issuing the warning. If no period is specified the default period is 12 months.

The following acts are examples of Gross Misconduct and as such may render employees liable to Summary Dismissal (i.e. dismissal without notice). This list is not exhaustive:

- Theft;
- Falsification of client documents, complaints, reports, accounts, expense claims, time recording, self certification forms or any other Firm document;
- Refusal to carry out duties or reasonable instructions;
- Serious insubordination or the use of aggressive behaviour or excessive bad language on the Firm's or client's premises;
- Serious incapability or the potential for serious incapability whilst on duty brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Serious negligence which causes or might cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury;

- Serious breach or repeated breaches after warning or any material persistent breach of this Agreement or the Firm's rules;
- Unauthorised possession or disposal of or willful damage to the Firm's property or that of clients or other employees;
- Any serious breach of the Firm's Health and Safety, Harassment, Data Protection, Email/Internet and Risk Management and Anti-Money Laundering Policies;
- Fighting, physical assault, dangerous horseplay, actual or threatened violence including bullying;
- Abuse of confidential information or its release to unauthorised persons or any breach of the duty of confidentiality save for any disclosure or whistle blowing under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998;
- Loss of your driving licence when you are required to use a vehicle as an essential part of your duties;
- Any action or omission which would bring the Firm into serious disrepute whether during or outside of your normal working hours;
- Discrimination (including harassment) on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, religious or similar philosophical belief or disability or any other act which fundamentally breaches the dignity of people at work;
- Any other matter which in the reasonable opinion of the Firm constitutes gross misconduct.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

The Firm believes that grievances should be settled as quickly as possible.

If you have a grievance, it is suggested that you first raise it informally with the Principal. Every effort will be made to resolve your grievance at this stage. The Principal will endeavour to deal with your grievance within 5 working days.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or if you wish to make a formal grievance then you should raise the matter in writing to the Principal.

The Firm's formal grievance procedure has three clear stages as follows:-

- **Investigation by the Firm.** The Firm will carry out such reasonable investigation as necessary so that it can properly deal with your grievance.
- **Grievance hearing.** The Firm will hold a grievance hearing at which it will carefully consider those complaints made by you. You will have an opportunity to state your case and question any witnesses. The decision of the investigating officer will be confirmed in writing to you.
- **Appeals.** You have the right to appeal if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance hearing. You should appeal by writing to the person specified in the letter confirming the outcome of the grievance hearing within 5 working days of being notified of the outcome. Your letter should clearly state the grounds upon which you are lodging your appeal. A further hearing will then be arranged in order to consider your appeal. The decision of the appeal officer will be notified to you in writing and will be final and binding.

At all stages of the grievance procedure you will:-

- Be given the opportunity to respond to all information and evidence produced by the Firm.
- Have the opportunity to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.
- Have the most appropriate level of management deal with the hearing or appeal and where the manager in question was directly involved in the issues in dispute

or under review an alternative person with appropriate seniority will deal with the matter.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Firm is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that our workplaces are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender (including gender reassignment), sexual orientation, age, marital status, religious or other similar philosophical belief.

We aim to ensure that our employees achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria. We have adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

What is discrimination?

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage on discriminatory grounds in relation to his or her employment. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional.

Indirect discrimination occurs where one individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race/nationality finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision criterion or practice is 'neutral'.

For example, a requirement for GCSE English as a selection criterion. This would have a disparately adverse impact on people educated overseas and may not be justified if all that is needed is to demonstrate a reasonable level of literacy.

Commitment

We are committed to ensuring that all of our employees and applicants for employment are protected from unlawful discrimination in employment. Recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. Person and job specifications shall be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Interviews will be conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary and relevant.

All employees have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy.

Discrimination is a serious disciplinary matter which will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds should raise the matter through the Firm's grievance procedure.

TRAINING POLICY

It is the policy of the firm to maximise the job satisfaction and performance levels of all personnel through the provision of appropriate training.

Training needs are identified in appraisal interviews. All Principal and staff should also discuss any training needs which arise at any other time of the year with the Principal, who also maintains details of external training courses and has the responsibility for planning, co-ordinating and overseeing the firm's training needs and implementation.

The firm regards the training and development of all members of staff as being vital to its future and to achieving its overall objectives. It is the policy of the firm to ensure that all personnel are competent to perform all tasks that they are responsible for and are developed in a manner which is appropriate for a forward-looking professional practice.

All staff share responsibility for the planning, implementing and evaluating of their own training needs. Training will, therefore, be a particularly important subject for discussion at each person's annual appraisal and will cover also the skills and knowledge required for managing the practice.

HARASSMENT POLICY

Harassment pollutes the working environment and can have a devastating effect on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it. It may also have a damaging effect on other employees not themselves the object of unwanted behaviour who are witness to it or who have knowledge of the behaviour. All employees are entitled to a working environment which respects their personal dignity and which is free from such objectionable conduct. Harassment is a disciplinary offence and it will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

What is harassment?

Harassment is either:

- Unwanted conduct (whether verbal or not) which is of a sexual or racial nature, or other conduct based on someone's race or gender or marital status or disability or sexual orientation or religious or other philosophical belief which affects the dignity of men or women at work; or
- Bullying of colleagues by intimidatory behaviour; or
- Unfavourable conduct at work, whether verbal or non-verbal, towards someone based on his/her race or gender or marital status or disability or sexual orientation or religious or other philosophical belief which could affect his/her dignity at work.

A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.

Examples of harassment include:

- Insensitive jokes and pranks.
- Lewd comments about appearance.
- Unnecessary body contact.
- Displays of sexually offensive material, e.g. Pin-ups.
- Repeated instances of minor harassment acts.
- Requests for sexual favours.
- Speculation about a person's private life and or sexual activities.
- Threatened or actual violence.
- Threat of dismissal, loss of promotion, etc. for refusal of sexual favours.
- Bullying. Bullying is defined as any form of physical or verbal attack and/or threat of such, or the abuse of position, in order to attack or undermine the confidence or ability of another, or to place another employee under unreasonable pressure or subjecting another to detrimental treatment, by either act or omission.

Anyone who believes that he or she may have been the victim of harassment should raise the matter through the Firm's grievance procedure.

EQUAL PAY POLICY

The Firm is committed to the principle of equal pay for men and women. In this context "pay" includes not only remuneration but also other benefits of employment such as promotion and training opportunities and access to facilities provided within the employment package from time to time.

We are committed to introducing and maintaining pay systems which are transparent, based on objective criteria and free from sex bias.

Women and men employed by us are entitled to equal pay if they are undertaking work which is substantially similar or is of equal value to the organisation unless there are specific and clear reasons unconnected with their sex which explain and justify any differential in pay. In some cases individuals carrying out similar work may receive different salaries because of seniority, incremental points, qualifications and other such factors.

You should raise any query or grievance concerning your pay and its evaluation in accordance with the Firm's grievance procedure.

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

The Firm aims to ensure that all its employees have dignity at work. That means that there are some types of behaviour that are unacceptable, which will include the following:

- being offensive, abusive, malicious, insulting or intimidating to a fellow employee; or
- engaging in unjustifiable criticism towards a fellow employee; or
- imposing a punishment upon a fellow employee without reasonable justification; or
- changing an employee's duties or responsibilities to his or her detriment without reasonable justification.

This policy applies to all employees, regardless of their rank or seniority. Breach of this policy will be treated as misconduct.

If you feel that your dignity at work has been compromised you should raise the matter through the Firm's grievance procedure.

STRESS POLICY

Life and work have become much busier in recent times. There seems to be too much to do and too little time to do it in. As a consequence, more employees are experiencing stress at work.

Stress at work can come about for a variety of reasons. It may be excessive workload, unreasonable expectations, or overly-demanding work colleagues. As a reasonable Firm, we try to ensure that you are in a pleasant working environment and that you are as free from stress as possible.

If you experience unreasonable stress which you think may be caused by work you should raise your concerns through the Firm's grievance procedure.

RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

This policy covers all employees of the Firm. It is intended to provide guidance in areas where personal relationships overlap with working relationships and is intended to ensure that individual members of staff are not open to allegations of impropriety, bias, and abuse of authority or conflict of interest. It is also intended to set out employees' rights and responsibilities to one another.

The Firm values the integrity of professional relationships between its employees and in order that the Firm's business is conducted in a professional manner and perceived to be conducted in a professional manner it is necessary to distinguish between, and take account of, personal relationships which overlap with professional ones.

In the context of this policy, a personal relationship is defined as:-

a family relationship; or
a sexual/romantic relationship.

Both the Firm and any employees who are in personal relationships with any other Employee shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that personal relationships neither advantage nor unfairly disadvantage those involved.

If an Employee becomes involved in a personal relationship with a fellow employee, it is the responsibility of both individuals to deal appropriately with any potential conflicts of interest. Ideally, such relationships should be reported, in confidence, to the Principal, particularly where the relationship is between a manager and his/her subordinate.

Employees should take care that financial, familial or personal relationships entered into on a consensual basis do not advantage or unfairly disadvantage any member of staff or other individuals.

Employees involved in personal relationships should exercise due regard for the professional nature of the workplace and behave in a professional manner at all times paying due consideration to colleagues, customers and clients.

Where a personal relationship exists between employees who are in a line management or supervisory relationship at work they must not be involved in recruitment, selection, appraisal, promotion or in any other management activity or process involving the other party whereby there may be a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest as a result of the personal relationship. In such circumstances the relevant manager, senior manager or director should be informed and will, where appropriate, make alternative arrangements and confirm them in writing. The relevant manager, senior manager or director will treat these matters in confidence.

If there is any inequality or perceived inequality in the relationship, extra care should be taken and employees' attention is drawn to the Firm's Harassment Policy. Sexual harassment is defined as "any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which occurs with

the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment”. Employees involved in personal relationships at work should ensure that any such relationships are fully consensual and are not and cannot be perceived as an exploitation of one party’s position in relation to another.

Any employee who is, or who has been, involved in a sexual/romantic relationship with another member of staff, and who does not consider their involvement to be truly consensual, will have the right to complain under the Firm’s Harassment Policy or Grievance Policy.

Applicants for employment within the Firm will be asked to declare whether they are in a personal relationship with any existing employee of the Firm. The existence of a relationship between an applicant and an employee will not bar anyone from applying to the Firm for employment, but relationships must be declared at the outset.

External and internal applicants for posts will be asked to declare relevant personal relationships when applying for the post to ensure that the member of staff they are related to / in a relationship with, has no involvement in the application process.

Managers and staff who are uncertain about whether they should take action regarding a personal relationship (whether their own or someone else’s relationship that is affecting them) are invited to seek guidance in confidence from the Principal.

Employee should be aware that a breach of this policy could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

WORKING FAMILY POLICIES

Details of the Firm’s policies on maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave, time off for dependents and requests for flexible working are available on request from the Principal.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK AND OFFICE SECURITY POLICY

Health and Safety at Work

The Firm is committed to providing for the health, safety and welfare of all employees and to maintaining standards at least equal to the best practice.

The Firm is responsible for:

- Assessing risks to the health and safety of employees and identifying what measures are needed to comply with its health and safety obligations.
- Providing and maintaining locations, equipment, protective clothing and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health.
- Ensuring that all necessary safety devices are installed and maintained on equipment.
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision in safe working methods and procedures.
- Providing and maintaining a healthy and safe place of work.
- Promoting the co-operation of employees to ensure safe and healthy conditions and systems of work.

- Establishing emergency procedures as required.
- Monitoring and reviewing the management of health and safety at work.
- Keeping this safety policy under review and making any revision it deems necessary from time to time. All such revisions will be brought to the attention of employees.

The above policy needs the full co-operation of all employees. You are expected to give all possible assistance to assume the successful implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care for your own safety and that of others. In order to achieve this end, you must:

- Comply with any safety instructions and directions issued by the Firm.
- Take reasonable care for your health and safety and the health and safety of other persons (e.g. other employees, contractors, customers, workmen, etc.) who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work, by observing safety rules which are applicable to you.
- Co-operate with the Firm to ensure that the aims of the Health and Safety policy are achieved and any duty or requirement on the Firm by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions is complied with.
- Report and co-operate in the investigation of all accidents or incidents that have led to or may lead to injury.
- Use equipment or protective clothing provided in accordance with the training you have received.
- Report any potential risk or hazard or malfunction of equipment to the appropriate authority.

Any failure by an employee to comply with any aspect of the Firm's health and safety procedures, rules or duties will be treated by the Firm as serious or gross misconduct.

You have a responsibility to observe all safety rules and to co-operate with the manager charged with responsibility for the implementation of the Firm's health and safety policy to achieve a healthy and safe workplace and to take reasonable care of yourself and others.

Security of offices

The offices are protected by a burglar alarm system. Details of the system will be given on a 'need to know' basis.

The front door to the building will remain open during normal office hours. The side door into the office is used only as a staff entrance. A key will be provided to all members of staff. The door is to be kept shut at all times.

Individuals are responsible for ensuring that windows in their offices are properly secured and lights and electrical appliances such as dictating machines or electric fires are switched off at the close of work and when applicable during lunchtime.

The person securing the offices at the close of work is responsible for double checking the security of the offices, turning off all lights and photocopiers, locking all of the main external doors by means of the security locks and also for setting the burglar alarm.

Central heating

The heating in the offices is by means of gas central heating. The system is regularly checked and if necessary overhauled. If anyone has any reason to suppose that any system is not working properly or if, for instance, there should be a smell of gas, he/she should inform the Principal immediately.

First aid

There is a first aid box in the kitchen, and an accident report book is kept by the Principal.

Any member of staff who has an accident whilst in the course of his/her employment should notify the Principal. It is important that a record of the accident is entered in the accident book.

Working on VDUs

The legislation dealing with VDU users covers the equipment itself, lighting, noise, provision of information and training, eye tests and ergonomics. All persons concerned will be given a thorough briefing by the Principal. Should anyone have any queries or concern about working with VDUs he/she should speak direct to the Principal.

Electrical equipment

We all use electrical equipment as part of our daily work. We must use common sense and caution when dealing with electrical equipment as we would in our own homes. If anyone suspects that equipment, plugs or the supply may be faulty he/she must report it at once to the Principal. Maintenance checks will be carried out periodically.

Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH)

There is legislation covering COSHH. Fortunately, in an office environment there are relatively few substances that might be hazardous to health but there are some such as photocopier toner, typing-correction fluids and kitchen cleaning materials. Where appropriate, we have endeavoured to store the main supplies of these substances separately and safely.

Private property

All personnel are responsible for the security of their own private property that is brought onto the firm's premises. The firm does have limited insurance cover under the office insurance policy but that cover is primarily provided for the property of clients when they are visiting our offices. It follows that individuals should be responsible for insuring their own property. Cover is usually included under the normal domestic house contents policies. Please refer to the office administrator if you are in doubt.

Safety procedure for female staff

Without wishing to be alarmist, the personal risk of attending meetings outside the office should be recognised. Lone female Principal or members of staff should not arrange to meet unknown contacts other than in public places. All members of staff should provide details to reception of where they are going, the purpose of the visit and their anticipated time of return. If there is any unexpected change to this, please telephone the office if possible.

There is a panic button in reception, which makes a loud continuous ringing. Should this be sounded, would any appropriate personnel available please go to reception immediately to offer assistance.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE POLICY

You must not drink alcohol on the Firm's premises or the premises of its clients.

Any employee who is found consuming alcohol on the Firm's premises or the premises of its clients or is found to be intoxicated at work will normally face disciplinary action on the ground of gross misconduct under the Firm's disciplinary procedure.

Existing and prospective employees may be asked to undergo a medical examination, which will seek to determine whether he/she has taken a controlled drug or has an alcohol abuse problem.

A refusal to give consent to such an examination or a refusal to undergo the screening will result in the immediate withdrawal of any offer made to prospective employees and may be treated as gross misconduct for employees.

The possession, use or distribution of drugs for non-medical purposes on the Firm's premises is strictly forbidden and a gross misconduct offence.

If you are prescribed drugs by your doctor which may affect your ability to perform your work you should discuss the problem with the Principal.

If the Firm suspects there has been a breach of this policy or your work performance or conduct has been impaired through substance abuse, the Firm reserves the right to require

you to undergo a medical examination to determine the cause of the problem. If, having undergone a medical examination, it is confirmed that you have been positively tested for a controlled drug, or you admit there is a problem, the Firm reserves the right to suspend you from your employment (with or without pay) to allow the Firm to decide whether to deal with the matter under the terms of the Firm's disciplinary procedure and/or to require you to undergo treatment and rehabilitation.

The Firm reserves the right to search you or any of your property held on Firm premises at any time if there are reasonable grounds to believe that this policy is being or has been infringed or for any other reason.

The Firm reserves the right to inform the police of any suspicions it may have with regard to the use of controlled drugs by its employees on the Firm's premises.

BEREAVEMENT POLICY

It is the Firm's policy to grant all employees up to seven days paid bereavement time off when a death occurs in an employee's immediate family (i.e. mother, father, wife/husband, live in partner, sister, brother, daughter, son or grandchildren). An employee will not be eligible to receive paid bereavement time-off benefits while off or absent from work because of holiday, sickness (paid or unpaid) or for any other reason.

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

The Data Protection Act relates to the handling of all data including employee information as well as client or customer related data. Data under the Act breaks down into two categories - ordinary personal data and sensitive personal data. The Act requires the Firm to take additional steps to protect sensitive personal data.

What Sensitive Personal Data Do We Hold?

The Firm believe that the vast majority of the information which it holds is not considered (under the terms of the Act) to be sensitive personal data. The Firm believe that the only exceptions to this are:

- racial or ethnic origin - which we hold for the purposes of equal opportunity monitoring;
- pre-employment health questionnaire and other information relating to your health and sickness absence - which the Firm holds so it we can monitor and control sickness absence and ensure that it can pay you sick pay; and
- any disciplinary or other records to the extent that they relate to criminal offences. For example, this would include criminal offences which you disclosed when you applied for a job with the Firm (and which are not exempt from disclosure under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act) and data created in the thankfully infrequent event of allegations being made against employees that involve or could involve a criminal offence, such as theft.

Subject to some exceptions, the Data Protection Act requires the Firm to obtain your explicit consent to hold and process sensitive personal data. Without this consent the Firm will not be able to process this data which would for example potentially produce the result that the Firm could not pay you if you were off sick.

What Other Personal Data Do We Hold About You?

In general terms, the Act entitles you, on making a written request and paying the required fee, to obtain access to the data that the Firm holds and processes about you. Precise details of what data the Firm holds will vary from person to person. Broadly, however, the types of data that the Firm will hold and process about you will include:

- **Personal Details**

Title, Name, Address - for contact purposes;

Home and mobile phone numbers (if supplied) - for contact purposes;

National Insurance number - for payroll processing and tax purposes;

Date of birth and age - in order to address benefit related queries where age is a relevant factor and for the purpose of applying our retirement policy;

Emergency contact (possibly next of kin) details - for emergency contact purposes and for administration of flexible benefits; and

Marital status - in order to address benefit related queries where marital status may be a factor and for tax purposes.

- **Employment record**

Start date and length of service - for processing and informational purposes and so as to determine employment rights and eligibility for some benefits;

Employment history - in order to monitor career development;

Holiday entitlement - for payroll processing and informational purposes;

Pension scheme member - in order to respond to enquiries;

Health and safety roles - if applicable;

Accidents at work - if applicable for health and safety reasons; and any current disciplinary warnings.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION POLICY

Aims and Objectives

Our aim is to operate a planned, organized, and controlled approach to risk management.

Our strategy will be to anticipate and manage the strategic, operational and interpersonal risks that face the business from within and outside in respect of clients, visitors and staff and to minimise and reduce their occurrence and effect.

Effective risk management, awareness and practice at all management and staff levels is a critical success factor in ensuring that risks are managed systematically and consistently.

It is a requirement of everyone who works within this firm, at all levels, to comply with the standards set and be proactive in identifying risks and more importantly, take prompt and appropriate action to reduce or eliminate them.

Our overall Policy objectives are to:

- Limit the number of files that can comfortably dealt with by fee earning staff
- Create a culture of mutual assistance so that all staff freely communicate with each other and the Principal about any difficulties without fear of recrimination
- Have all incoming and outgoing mail viewed by the Principal
- Train all reception/telephone staff to refer any problems with clients direct to the Principal
- Check fee earner commitments on a regular basis, particularly in relation to absence or holiday
- Encourage clients to call in without appointments
- Respond to telephone calls promptly so as to identify and anticipate any problems
- Allocate incoming work to the personnel most suited to deal with it, with appropriate backup
- Refer on work, which is beyond our capabilities e.g. heavyweight commercial matters and refuse Publicly Funded and Criminal matters.
- Train all staff to notice unusual features of clients or transactions and decline to act for them in cases where there are grounds for suspicion
- Consider clients and transactions individually on a costs/risk basis and, whenever unusual risks are observed tailor the correspondence appropriately.
- Consider all risks from a triune perspective i.e. viewing them from a strategic, operational and interpersonal standpoint and impact.

Operational risk management

It is the policy of the firm to recognise the importance of effective risk management at operational level. Risk management at this level concerns the minimisation of our risks of errors in our advice and services to clients. The firm's manager, James Ramdhun .

There will be an annual quality and risk management review each year by James Ramdhun who will review lists of generic risks associated with the work of the practice and will keep under review lists of matters that the firm will and will not under-take.

Annual risk audit

The risk manager will conduct internally or arrange for an external risk audit annually. The objective of the audit is to analyse trends in the risk profile of the firm and to determine improvements, which are deemed appropriate. Action, which might follow might include:

- changing procedures or practice in the firm as a result;
- instigating further training for groups or individuals.
- Revising the strategy, business and marketing plan.

The risk partner must be notified of all circumstances which could give rise to a claim in negligence or a complaint

Other provisions

A number of provisions in other parts of this Manual have a bearing on our risk management policy, in particular:

- post opening ;
- the need to take full client instructions ;
- the need to confirm instructions;
- key dates .

Acceptance and rejection of instructions

The firm is not obliged to accept all possible instructions. We may not decline instructions on grounds of discrimination since this would be unlawful and contrary to our anti-discrimination policy. The circumstances where it would be permissible to decline instructions could include:

- the work is not of a specialisation that we offer;
- resources would be inadequate to perform the work to the satisfaction of the client, or the quality of our service to other clients would be placed in jeopardy;
- it would be economically unviable for us to do the work and it is not felt appropriate to accept the instructions under our pro bono policy;
- we have inadequate matter starts allocated by the Legal Services Commission and either we do not wish to apply to increase the allocation or we could not succeed in so doing if we wished;
- unsatisfactory past experience with that client, such as their previous refusal to pay a bill or offensive or threatening behaviour to a representative of the firm;
- there is, or could reasonably be suspected to be, a conflict of interest in relation to the instructions and existing clients or instructions received.

On occasions we may receive instructions where a previous solicitor has represented that client on that matter to date. In such circumstances there must be noted on the file:

- the name of the previous solicitor and the firm;
- the reason for the transfer;
- the outcome of consideration of any special issues in relation to the instructions, such as outstanding complaints or claims or difficulties with costs and expenses to date. Any undertaking for costs to date must comply with the general procedure on undertakings.

Where instructions are declined the person concerned should be notified in writing of the firm's refusal to take on the work together with any reasons which can appropriately be given in the circumstances.

Attendance notes

Attendance notes are vital to provide a record of advice given, instructions received, or decisions made about which there may be a dispute. Attendance notes are also the primary evidence of time expended on a matter and are therefore vital for billing, notwithstanding the computerised time records.

Secretaries are frequently in direct contact with clients and others concerned with professional work, especially when a fee-earner is not available. It is therefore equally important that secretaries should record written attendance notes on all issues that progress a client matter. All attendance notes must be filed on the correspondence clip to date order as soon as possible.

Undertakings

An undertaking from the firm binds the firm absolutely. Only the Principal may give or authorise the giving of any undertaking. An undertaking is defined as 'an unequivocal declaration of intention addressed to

someone who reasonably places reliance on it and made by a solicitor or a member of a solicitor's staff in the course of practice'.

All other undertakings require the Principal's consent or approval. It is vital that we limit undertakings to those for which we are competent. For example, we may not give an undertaking to repay a loan if this depends upon a third party paying the monies to us. Do not give open undertakings: make each one for a specific amount and as detailed as possible.

When an undertaking is given an 'Undertaking' sticker must be placed on the outside front cover of the file and initialled by the partner giving or approving it. On the discharge of the undertaking the person doing so must initial to show that it has been discharged. No file may be archived until any undertaking has clearly been discharged. (In addition, a central register of undertakings is maintained by the Principal.)

Checking documents

All documents must be checked by or under the direction of the fee-earner for whom they are prepared. This applies to draft documents, which are prepared from other drafts as well as to engrossments. In appropriate cases the fee-earner may delegate the checking, but not the responsibility.

Where the checking is carried out by reading the document over with another person, the initials of the two checkers should be marked on the endorsements of the documents by the words 'XD' followed by the initials of the two persons checking in small capital letters immediately below the description of the document in the centre of the back sheet. The initials of the person reading the document should be placed first. Where no such initials appear it is presumed that the fee-earner checked the document.

It is the fee-earner's responsibility to ensure that the correct enclosures are included in any correspondence.

MONEY LAUNDERING POLICY

This Policy involves the use of the Firm's Client New Matter Form And Source Of Funds Record (Annex 1A which must be completed at the start of every new matter), Suspicious Activity Report (Annex 1B) and Client Transaction Record (Annex 1C). Staff must familiarize themselves with the contents of these documents and be continually aware of the need to review and update the information as the matter progresses.

Money laundering

Money laundering is defined by the Legal Aid Agency guidance on the topic as 'the process by which the identity of "dirty money" (i.e. proceeds of crime) and the true ownership of such funds is changed so that the money appears to originate from a legitimate source'. As solicitors we are an attractive target for such activities. We risk loss of professional reputation, being required to repay monies from our own funds and criminal penalties if we offend the law in this area.

The criminal offences comprise:

- *assistance*: including the situation where we suspect money laundering;
- *tipping off*: taking steps to prejudice due process by warning the client;
- *failure to report*: for certain activities this is also an offence.

The policy of the firm in such circumstances is to co-operate fully with the proper authorities and not to assist clients to achieve their aims if they appear to be involved in such activities.

The firm's money laundering reporting officer (MLRO) to whom report should be made as soon as any suspicions arise, is James Ramdhun who will:

- investigate fully the circumstances of each case reported to him;
- undertake the reporting to the proper authorities;
- keep under review the effectiveness of our policy and procedures in this area;
- ensure that all personnel are appropriately trained with regard to money laundering.

In appropriate cases we must insist on evidence of identity from new private clients. This could be from a passport or bank details. If these are not available a utility bill showing the address of the client would suffice. The evidence taken must be noted on the file summary sheet.

The signs to watch for are:

- **unusual settlement requests:** settlement by cash of any large transaction involving the purchase of property or other investment should give rise to caution. Payment by way of third-party cheque or money transfer where there is a variation between the account holder, the signatory and a prospective investor should give rise to additional enquiries;
- **unusual instructions:** care should always be taken when dealing with a client who has no discernible reason for using the firm's services, e.g. clients with distant addresses who could find the same service nearer their home base; or clients whose requirements do not fit into the normal pattern of the firm's business and could be more easily serviced elsewhere;
- **large sums of cash:** always be cautious when requested to hold large sums of cash in your client account, either pending further instructions from the client or for no other purpose than for onward transmission to a third party (current limit £500);
- **the secretive client:** be wary of a personal client who is reluctant to provide details of his or her identity. Be particularly cautious about the client in prison you do not meet;
- **suspect territory:** caution should be exercised whenever a client is introduced by an overseas bank, other investor or third party based in countries where production of drugs or drug trafficking may be prevalent.

Annex 1A

CLIENT'S NEW MATTER FORM AND SOURCE OF FUNDS RECORD

This form is to be completed by the Fee Earner either at the first meeting with the client or by telephone (with the client) at the inception of the matter and a copy submitted to the accounts department to be checked against the receipt of all funds from the client.

The form is then to be placed on the transactional file UNLESS a Suspicious Activity Report has been filed, in which case it (and the file) should be given to the MLRO.

NOTE: Details of the firm's client account and authority to the client to transfer funds by electronic transfer MUST NOT BE GIVEN until the client has been identified to your satisfaction AND you are satisfied that there is no cause to suspect a money laundering transaction

Details of Client/Matter

Name of Fee Earner:..... Department:

Name of Client: Date of Birth:

Client Partner:

National Insurance No:

Address (home):

.....

.....

Address (work):

.....

.....

Telephone Number (home):

Telephone Number (work):

Telephone Number (mobile):

Email:

File Name (If different from Client Name):

File Number:

Name of Company / Business / Trading name:

Details of Business / Company (as appropriate to the matter):

Names and addresses of all parties and their representatives:

Are you an existing client of the Firm? (Brief details – dates and matter names of previous work transacted for this client)

Summary of Instructions (to be updated by Fee Earner as matter progresses):

Details of timescale of this matter (as known at present – to be updated by Fee Earner as the matter progresses):

Date of Introduction

Identification

Is this a New Client post 1 December 2009? Yes No

If Yes, full details please of ID already held by this firm (including transaction details and type of ID provided) and date it was obtained:

If Yes, was the client recommended to the Firm? Yes No

Give details of the recommending party:

Name:

Address:
.....

Telephone number:

Other relevant information:

If No, have you provided full ID to the Firm previously? Yes No
(NOTE: If client's name/details have changed fresh ID may be required)

What forms (at least two) of original ID will be provided / have been provided? (copies attached)

Relevant ID for:	Individual(s)	Yes	No
	Company	Yes	No
	Partnership	Yes	No
	Other (please specify)	Yes	No

Company's Registered Office:

Company's Trading Address:
.....

Company's Telephone Number:

Company's Fax Number:

Company's Email address:

Company Number:

Company search obtained: Yes No

Name and Address of Business / Company Accountants:
.....
.....

Nature of Company's business:.....
.....

Copy of Last Company Accounts: Yes No

Director(s) Names:
.....
.....

Shareholder(s) Names:
.....
.....

Company Secretary's Name:

If client is acting as Agent

Full Name(s) of Principal:

Occupation of Principal:

Address of Principal (home):
.....

Address of Principal (work):
.....

Telephone No. of Principal (home):

Telephone No. of Principal (work):

ID evidence provided by Principal Yes No
(Copies of both forms of ID to be attached)
If client is a Trustee

Full Name of Trustee:

Name(s) of Beneficiary/ies:

Copy of Trust Deed: Yes No

Address of Trustee (home):

.....

Address of Trustee (work):

.....

Telephone of Trustee (home):

Telephone of Trustee (work):

Address of Beneficiary (home):

.....

Address of Beneficiary (work):

.....

Telephone of Beneficiary (home):

Telephone of Beneficiary (work):

Any other Relevant Information:

Funding for this transaction (Full Details):

Source of funding eg from Client's Bank account, from Lender, from third parties etc

Names, addresses and account numbers of Bank, Lender or other source of funding (eg third party)

If appropriate, has ID evidence been obtained for any third party funder? Yes No

Has authority been given for electronic transfer? Yes No

Name and status of person who has given this authority:

Anticipated Exchange of contracts/Completion Date or other date for payment or receipt of funds

Money paid "On Account of Costs"? Yes No

If Yes, full details (NB Maximum Amount Accepted) [£500]

Checklist and Fee Earner Confirmation

1. Are **you** satisfied that your client is who they claim to be? Yes No

(If not, explain what further action you have taken in respect of this client by obtaining in writing an exemption from the supervising partner and MLRO for this client, copy to be attached to this form)

NOTE: You may only continue to act for a client who has not produced satisfactory ID evidence if you have taken "all reasonable steps" AND acted with "all due diligence" in seeking to obtain this ID – and the client has still not been able to produce it. These would be exceptional cases and must be authorised by the MLRO in each individual case.

2. Have you met your client and been able to confirm your client's ID against his/her ID verification documentation? Yes No

3. If you have not met your client, have you taken into account the greater potential for Money Laundering? Yes No

4. Did you need to identify an associated party, for example, principal, parent company etc? Yes No

(If yes complete an additional form of this type attaching identification documents)

5. Have you considered the risk of money laundering in respect of :

(i) The client	Yes	No
(ii) Any associated party (including the "other side")	Yes	No
(iii) The transaction	Yes	No
(iv) The funding arrangement	Yes	No

6. Have you considered the “characteristics of a money laundering transaction”
Yes No
7. Do you know or suspect a money laundering transaction? Yes No
8. Are there reasonable grounds for you to know or suspect this?
No Yes
9. Do you know or suspect that the transaction may involve criminal property?
Yes No
10. If the answers to questions 7, 8, or 9 are “yes”, have you submitted a Suspicious Activity Report to the MLRO?
Yes No

If not, why not?

If so, a copy of the Suspicious Activity Report is attached Yes No

I (Fee Earner name).....confirm that I have personally examined the originals of the copy documents attached and referred to above

I have applied the Firm’s Anti-Money Laundering policy and procedure in the consideration of:

- a) Knowledge or suspicion of a money laundering transaction
- b) Whether or not the client or the transaction concerns “Criminal Property”

I have read the above information and can confirm that it is correct:

Signed (Client): Date:

Signed (Fee Earner): Date:

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORT FORM

The Firm will adopt the Suspicious Activity Report in this Appendix (which may be updated from time to time by the MLRO).

It is the responsibility of each Fee Earner and each staff member to have access to the current Suspicious Activity Report form. This can be found as a document on the Firm's computer system. For further information or in the event of any difficulty obtaining / understanding / completing this form you must refer immediately to the MLRO who will take the appropriate action.

NEVER PUT THE SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORT OR ANY COPY OF THIS ON CLIENTS' FILES. Should the client obtain the file and see those documents you may be guilty of "tipping off" the client. You must ensure that the documents which should accompany the Suspicious Activity Report are attached to it and submitted to the MLRO. The MLRO will decide which of these it is appropriate to retain, and which should be placed on the transaction file at the conclusion of any NCIS investigation.

Keep an accurate record of the date you submitted your Suspicious Activity Report to the MLRO, the date the report was submitted to NCIS and the projected dates under the NCIS procedure. **The record of these dates should never be kept on the transactional file. Keep them in a separate file or diary.**

The MLRO will notify all staff immediately of:

- i) the client's details where there is any intended / anticipated Suspicious Activity Report
- ii) the date any Suspicious Activity Report is filed with NCIS
- iii) the date of any response (if any) by NCIS as to actual or deemed "appropriate consent" (allowing this Firm continuing to act for the client)
- iv) any lack of "appropriate consent" from NCIS and how this firm (and you) should respond accordingly
- v) the date you may continue to act on the file

YOU MUST SUBMIT TO YOUR MLRO, IMMEDIATELY UPON ANY KNOWLEDGE OR SUSPICION OF MONEY LAUNDERING OR OF A TRANSACTION INVOLVING (THE CLIENT'S OR OTHER PARTY'S OR ANOTHER'S) CRIMINAL PROPERTY:

- 1 THE SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORT FORM accompanied by the Client's New Matter Form And Source of Funds Record
- 2 THE TRANSACTIONAL FILE

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORT FORM

Report submitted by:

Fee Earner: Yes No Non Fee Earner: Yes No

Name of Client:

File / Matter Name:

File Number:

Other Linked Matter Name(s) and File Number(s) for this:

 i) Client

 ii) Suspect

Suspect's Name:

Suspect's Address (home):

.....
.....

Suspect's Address (work):

.....
.....

Suspect's Telephone Number (home):

Suspect's Telephone Number (work):

Suspect's Date of Birth:

Suspect's National Insurance No:

Reasons for Suspicion / Knowledge: (Full Details)

Full details of any concerns regarding monies connected with the client / this matter generally:

Full Details of any Crime suspected:

Is urgent consent from NCIS required? Yes No

If yes, please state your reasons in full, including all relevant case dates presently anticipated (eg exchange of contracts, completion, Court or other tribunal hearings, mediation, movement or transfer of funds etc).

Have you considered whether the matter may be legally professionally privileged? Yes No

Is there any other information that you think may be relevant to the full and proper consideration of this matter? Yes No

If “Yes”, please given full details:

Client’s New Matter Form And Source of Funds Record Attached **Yes No**

The above information is true to the best of my knowledge and belief

Name of Person Reporting (Block Capitals):

Signed (person reporting):

Date:

Date Report Received by MLRO:

Signature of MLRO:

This transactional file has been submitted to the MLRO with this Suspicious Activity Report

Yes No

If “No”, give detailed reasons for this and MLRO is to sign below indicating approval

Signed:

Dated:

Date received by MLRO:

Signed (MLRO):

Date submitted to NCIS:

Date Report received by NCIS:

CLIENT TRANSACTION RECORD

This record is to be completed by the Fee Earner at the conclusion of the transaction / closure of the file and retained on the client’s file. A copy is to be sent to the MLRO. It (and the file) will be retained for at least 5 years after the business relationship with this client has ceased. In the event of any Suspicious Activity Report being considered / made this form will be completed as far as possible, forwarded to the MLRO and no copy will be put on the client’s file.

Fee Earner:

Name of Client:

File Name:

File Number:

Names and addresses of all other parties and their representatives:
.....
.....
.....

Details of the transaction, including: date instructed, date ID obtained, summary of instructions, any movement(s) of funds / property, details of any electronic transfers, any change in instructions or parties:

Funding of transaction

a) Source

(i) Synopsis

(ii) Completed “Source of Funds” form submitted herewith Yes No

b) Amount:

c) Names, addresses and account numbers of any Banks involved etc:
.....
.....

Third parties: (Full details to be provided)

Additional comments:

Completion Date / Date the matter concluded:

Was a Suspicious Activity Report submitted? Yes No

Date it was sent to NCIS:

Date it was received by NCIS (if known e.g. if by fax):

Details of the “appropriate consent” received from/on behalf of NCIS:

.....
.....

Details if no “appropriate consent” was received from / on behalf of NCIS

.....
.....

Name of Fee Earner (Block capitals):.....

Signature of Fee Earner:

Date:

Attachments: Copies of any correspondence from NCIS must be attached to this form

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is an Act which protects workers who 'blow the whistle' about wrongdoing. It makes provides for the kinds of disclosures which may be protected; the circumstances in which such disclosures are protected; and the persons who may be protected.

In general, workers should be able to make disclosures about wrongdoing to the Firm, so that problems can be identified and resolved quickly within the Firm.

Persons who may be protected by the new provisions against unfair dismissal or being subjected to detriment

The provisions introduced by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protect workers from being subjected to a detriment by the Firm. Detriment may take a number of forms, such as denial of promotion, facilities or training opportunities, which the Firm would otherwise have offered. Employees who are protected by the provisions may make a claim for unfair dismissal if they are dismissed for making a protected disclosure. Workers who are not employees may not claim unfair dismissal; however, if their contract has been terminated by the Firm because they made a protected disclosure, they may instead make a complaint that they have been subjected to a detriment.

Qualifying disclosures

Certain kinds of disclosures qualify for protection ("qualifying disclosures"). Qualifying disclosures are disclosures of information which the worker reasonably believes tend to show one or more of the following matters is either happening now, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future:

- a criminal offence;
- the breach of a legal obligation;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- a danger to the health or safety of any individual;
- damage to the environment; or
- deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above five matters.

In making a disclosure the worker must have reasonable belief that the information disclosed tends to show one or more of the offences or breaches listed above ('a relevant failure').

Protection under the provisions applies even if the qualifying disclosure concerns a relevant failure, which took place overseas, or where the law applying to the relevant failure was not that of the United Kingdom.

Disclosure of information by a worker is not a qualifying disclosure if in making it he commits an offence (e.g., if disclosure was prohibited under the Official Secrets Act 1989).

Circumstances in which disclosures are protected (a "protected disclosure")

Making a qualifying disclosure to the Firm

A qualifying disclosure will be a protected disclosure where it is made in good faith:

(a) to the Principal.

(b) to another person whom the worker reasonably believes to be solely or mainly responsible for the relevant failure.

You should make your disclosure in writing outlining full particulars of the alleged offence or breach. You will then be invited to a meeting to discuss the matter in confidence. The person chairing the meeting will provide you with a timescale in which the Firm will investigate the allegation and report back to you. If you are not satisfied by the response from the Firm, you may appeal the decision using the Firm's grievance procedure.

Making a qualifying disclosure to a prescribed person

Workers who are concerned about wrongdoing or failures can make disclosures to a person or body which has been prescribed by the Secretary of State for the purpose of receiving disclosures about the matters concerned. If a worker makes a qualifying disclosure to such persons, it will be a protected disclosure provided the worker:-

- makes the disclosure in *good faith*;
- reasonably believes that the information, and any allegation it contains, are *substantially true*; and
- reasonably believes that the matter falls within the description of *matters for which the person or body has been prescribed*. (For example, breaches of health and safety regulations can be brought to the attention of the Health and Safety Executive or appropriate local authority, or environmental dangers can be notified to the Environment Agency.)

A list of prescribed persons, the description of matters for which they are prescribed and contact details, is available on the DTI website – (www.dti.gov.uk).

Clapham Law LLP Solicitor's IT facilities and Policies

Reasons for having this policy

All Clapham Law LLP Solicitor's IT facilities and information resources remain the property of Clapham Law LLP Solicitors and not of particular individuals, teams or departments. By following this policy we'll help ensure IT facilities are used:

- legally;
- securely;
- without undermining Clapham Law LLP Solicitors;
- effectively;
- in a spirit of co-operation, trust and consideration for others;
- so they remain available.

The policy relates to all Information Technology facilities and services provided by Clapham Law LLP Solicitors. All staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to it.

Precautionary and Disciplinary Measures

Deliberate and serious breach of the policy statements in this section will lead to disciplinary measures which may include the offender being denied access to computing facilities.

Copyright:

Take care to use software legally in accordance with both the letter and spirit of relevant licensing and copyright agreements.

Copying software for use outside these agreements is illegal and may result in criminal charges.

Security:

Don't attempt to gain unauthorised access to information or facilities. The Computer Misuse Act 1990 makes it a criminal offence to obtain unauthorised access to any computer (including workstations and PCs) or to modify its contents. If you don't have access to information resources you feel you need, contact your IT Support person or provider.

Don't disclose personal system passwords or other security details to other staff, volunteers or external agents and don't use anyone else's login; this compromises the security of Clapham Law LLP Solicitors. If someone else gets to know your password, ensure you change it or get IT Support to help you .

If you leave your PC unattended without logging off, you are responsible for any misuse of it while you're away.

ALWAYS check floppy disks and flash drives for viruses, even if you think they are clean (contact IT

Support to find out how). Computer viruses are capable of destroying Clapham Law LLP Solicitor's information resources. It is better to be safe than sorry.

Information about people:

If you're recording or obtaining information about individuals make sure you are not breaking Data Protection legislation (your IT Manager or Line Manager can give you more information).

You are a representative of Clapham Law LLP Solicitors when you're on the Internet using email:

Make sure your actions are in the interest (and spirit) of Clapham Law LLP Solicitors and don't leave Clapham Law LLP Solicitors open to legal action (e.g. libel).

Avoid trading insults with other people using the Internet with whom you disagree.

Obscenities/Pornography: Don't write it, publish it, look for it, bookmark it, access it or download it.

'Electronic monitoring':

Any information available within IT facilities must not be used to monitor the activity of individual staff in anyway (e.g. to monitor their working activity, working time, files accessed, internet sites accessed, reading of their email or private files etc.) without their prior knowledge. Exceptions are: in the case of a specific allegation of misconduct, when the Management Team can authorise accessing of such information when investigating the allegation

when the IT Support section cannot avoid accessing such information whilst fixing a problem.

In such instances, the person concerned will be informed immediately and information will not be disclosed wider than is absolutely necessary. In the former case their access to IT facilities may be disabled pending investigation.

Email Policy

When to use email:

Use it in preference to paper to reach people quickly (saving time on photocopying / distribution) and to help reduce paper use. Think and check messages before sending (just as you would a letter or paper memo).

Use the phone (including voicemail if no reply) for urgent messages (email is a good backup in such instances).

Use Clapham Law LLP Solicitor's intranet (not email) to communicate all relatively static information (e.g. policy, procedures, briefing documents, reference material and other standing information).

Record information on the intranet in a well-structured manner, (consulting with the Web Systems Administrator as appropriate). Use email merely as a pointer to draw attention to new and changed information on the intranet.

Use of Distribution Lists:

Only send Email to those it is meant for; don't broadcast (i.e. send to large groups of people using email aliases) unless absolutely necessary since this runs the risk of being disruptive. Unnecessary (or junk) email reduces computer performance and wastes disc space.

Use the standard aliases for work related communication only.

If you wish to broadcast other non work related information or requests (e.g. information or opinions on political matters outside the scope of Clapham Law LLP Solicitor's campaigning, social matters, personal requests for information etc.) it is better to use a Webmail account or a personal email account at home; don't use the standard (work) aliases.

Keep Clapham Law LLP Solicitor's internal email aliases internal. If you are sending an email both to a Clapham Law LLP Solicitors alias and outside of Clapham Law LLP Solicitors, use the alias as a blind carbon copy (i.e. the bcc address option) so that the external recipient does not see the internal alias.

Don't broadcast emails with attachments to large groups of people - either note in the email where it is located for recipients to look, or include the text in the body of the email. Failure to do this puts an unnecessary load on the network.

General points on email use:

When publishing or transmitting information externally be aware that you are representing Clapham Law LLP Solicitors and could be seen as speaking on Clapham Law LLP Solicitor's behalf. Make it clear when opinions are personal. If in doubt, consult your line manager.

Check your in-tray at regular intervals during the working day. Keep your in-tray fairly empty so that it just contains items requiring your action. Try to decide what to do with each email as you read it (e.g. delete it, reply to it, save the whole email in a folder, or extract just the useful information and save it somewhere logical).

Keep electronic files of electronic correspondence, only keeping what you need to. Don't print it off and keep paper files unless absolutely necessary.

Use prefixes in the subject box whenever appropriate .

Treat others with respect and in a way you would expect to be treated yourself (e.g. don't send unconstructive feedback, argue or invite colleagues to publicise their displeasure at the actions / decisions of a colleague).

Don't forward emails warning about viruses (they are invariably hoaxes and IT Support will probably already be aware of genuine viruses - if in doubt, contact them for advice).

Email etiquette :

Being courteous is more likely to get you the response you want. Do address someone by name at the beginning of the message, especially if you are also copying another group of people.

Make your subject headers clear and relevant to your reader(s) e.g. Don't use subject headers like "stuff" Don't send a subject header of, say "accounts" to the accountant.

Try to keep to one subject per email, especially if the content is complex. It is better for your reader(s) to have several emails on individual issues, which also makes them easy to file and retrieve later. One email covering a large variety of issues is likely to be misunderstood or ignored.

Using asterisks at each end of a word (e.g. now) is common practice for highlighting text. Capitals (e.g. NOW) can also be used to emphasise words, but should be used sparingly as it commonly perceived as 'shouting'.

Don't open email unless you have a reasonably good expectation of what it contains, e.g. Do open report.doc from an Internet colleague you know Don't open explore.zip sent from an address you've never heard of, however tempting. Alert IT Support if you are sent anything like this unsolicited.

This is one of the most effective means of protecting Clapham Law LLP Solicitors against email virus attacks.

Keep email signatures short.
Your name, title, phone/fax and web site address may constitute a typical signature.
Understand how forwarding an email works.

If you forward mail, it appears (to the reader) to come from the originator (like passing on a sealed envelope).

If you forward mail and edit it in the process, it appears to come from you - with the originator's details usually embedded in the message. This is to show that the original mail is no longer intact (like passing on an opened envelope).

Miscellaneous

Hardware and Software: All purchases should be approved by the IT Manager, preferably through the IT budget.

Installing Software:

Get permission from IT Support before you install any software (including public domain software) on

equipment owned and/or operated by Clapham Law LLP Solicitors and check for possible copyright violation.

Data transfer and storage on the network:

Keep master copies of important data on Clapham Law LLP Solicitor's network and not solely on your PC's local C: drive, flash drives or floppy discs. Otherwise it will not be backed up and is therefore at risk.

Ask for advice from IT Support if you need to store, transmit or handle large quantities of data, particularly images or audio and video. These large files use up disc space very quickly and can bring your network to a standstill.

Be considerate about storing personal (non- Clapham Law LLP Solicitors) files on Clapham Law LLP Solicitor's network.

Don't copy files which are accessible centrally into your personal directory unless you have good reason (i.e. you intend to amend them or you need to reference them and the central copies are to be changed or deleted) since this uses up disc space unnecessarily.

Use of facilities for leisure or personal purposes (e.g. sending and receiving personal email, playing computer games and browsing the Internet) is permitted so long as such use does not:

Incur specific expenditure for Clapham Law LLP Solicitors.
Impact on your performance of your job (this is a matter between each member of staff and their line manager).

Break the law.
Bring Clapham Law LLP Solicitors into disrepute.

Care of equipment:

Don't re-arrange how equipment is plugged in (computers, power supplies, network cabling, modems etc.) without first contacting IT Support.

Don't take food or drink into rooms which contain specialist equipment like servers . Access to such rooms are limited to authorised staff.