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# TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

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## 1. OUR CONTRACT

### 1.1 Extent

These Terms of Business issued by Key Legal (North East) Limited ("the Firm"), as supplemented and/or amended by any relevant Client Care Letter; apply to each Matter we work on for you.

### 1.2 Variation

No variation of these Terms shall be effective, unless it is in writing and is signed by one of our Directors.

## 2. DEFINED TERMS

In these Terms of Business:-

**"the Firm"** the Firm means Key Legal (North East) Limited and any successor practice and any service company owned or controlled by or on behalf of the Firm or any of the Directors;

**"Credit Period"** means the period of thirty (30) days from the date of our invoice for our fees and/or expenses;

**"Documents"** means Documents Held For You, Our Documents and Your Documents;

**"Documents Held For You"** means documents we create or receive on your behalf (including communications from or with third parties, notes of conversations and meetings, draft and final documents, and instructions to and opinions of barristers);

**"Client Care Letter"** means, in relation to any Matter, the letter (or other agreement) recording the basis of our engagement;

**"Force Majeure"** means any circumstance beyond the reasonable control of the party affected by it and includes telecommunications failure, power supply failure, terrorism, fuel strikes, severe weather, computer breakdown, failure of suppliers to meet delivery requirements, industrial disputes and absence of personnel due to illness or injury;

**"Matter"** means any specific transaction, dispute or issue in relation to which you ask us to provide Services whether or not it has been defined in an Client Care Letter or other agreement;

**"Our Documents"** means documents (other than Documents Held for You) which we create or receive for our benefit (including copies of our letters to you, your letters to us, notes of telephone conversations and meetings with you for which we have not charged you, and our preliminary drafts, research materials and internal notes);

**"Director"** means a Director of the Firm;

**"Services"** means all services we provide to you in relation to the relevant Matter;

**"We", "us", and "our"** means or refers to the Firm;

**"You"** includes the addressee of the relevant Engagement Letter and any other person identified in the Client Care Letter as our client and "your" shall have a cognate meaning; and

## 3. OUR AUTHORITY AND SERVICES

### 3.1 Our Authority

3.1.1 You give us full authority to act for you to the fullest extent necessary or desirable to provide the Services. In particular, we may engage barristers and other third parties and otherwise incur on your behalf reasonable expenses of a type which it is necessary or desirable to incur in relation to the Services in question.

3.1.2 If we so require, you will contract directly with any third party so engaged by us and assume direct responsibility to them for the payment of their fees and expenses.

### 3.2 Our Services

3.2.1 The Director at the Firm named in any Client Care Letter as the "Supervising Director" will be the Director primarily responsible for the provision of our Services. That Director has complete discretion to deploy such of our lawyers, trainee lawyers, paralegals or other staff as she/he deems necessary or desirable to ensure appropriate delivery of the Services.

3.2.2 We only advise on the Laws of England and Wales. If you require advice on the laws of other jurisdictions, we will, with your agreement, instruct lawyers practising those laws to give such advice, on the same basis as we engage other third parties on your behalf.

## 4. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

You will (so far as you are practicably able to do so):-

4.1 provide us with timely instructions, information and materials necessary or desirable for us to perform the Services for you;

4.2 notify us promptly of any changes or additions to instructions, information and materials previously provided by you or on your behalf; and

4.3 ensure that all information provided to us is complete in all material respects and not misleading.

## 5. CLIENT CARE CODE

We set out below our complaints handling procedure. Thankfully, this has rarely been of interest to our clients, but we take this opportunity to ensure that you are fully acquainted with it.

### 5.1 Code

We want you to be happy with every aspect of our Service. We therefore operate a Client Care Code, the principles of which are as set out below:-

- 5.1.1 We are committed wholeheartedly to the professional standards laid down by the Council for Licensed Conveyancer.
- 5.1.2 You will be told clearly at the outset the issues and how we advise they be dealt with, and the immediate steps we will take on your behalf.
- 5.1.3 The Client Care letter (attached to this Terms of Business) notifies you of the following details:-
  - 5.1.3.1 the name of the person or persons who is/are dealing on a day to day basis with your matter; and
  - 5.1.3.2 the name of the Supervising Director;
- 5.1.4 You will be told the name of the new fee earner if the matter is transferred from one fee earner to another.
- 5.1.5 We cannot guarantee that the fee earner or Supervising Director will be available on demand, but we will do our best to get back to you promptly and efficiently.
- 5.1.6 You will be informed of the progress of your matter and the reason for any serious delay.
- 5.1.7 If you do not understand anything, please always ask. We will explain any important document; if you still are unclear as to the position, please say so. We want you to be fully informed and happy; you pay to leave the problem with us to solve.
- 5.1.8 Never be afraid to ask for an appointment to discuss your case. Since time is money, do not be afraid to bring a written list of questions and note the answers. This can also be helpful when telephoning so you do not forget any point.
- 5.1.9 There may be certain preparatory tasks that you ought to consider carrying out yourself to save costs. An example is putting the papers in order and flagging material items. This is helpful to us, and lowers your bill by saving the time we would otherwise spend.
- 5.1.10 At the end you will be sent a bill and a letter confirming the matter has been completed and, where necessary, summarizing any continuing consequences.
- 5.1.11 The Firm's policy is to only accept up to £500 in cash payments from clients. Please discuss directly with your Fee Earner if you are not able to pay the balance of the fees / disbursements via your bank account / cheque. Please **do not** deposit cash directly into our Firms bank as they may be a breach of Money Laundering Regulations. If you try to avoid this policy by depositing cash directly with our bank, we may decide to charge you for any additional checks we decide are necessary to prove the source of the funds. Where we have to pay money to you, it will be paid by cheque or bank transfer. It will not be paid in cash or to a third party.

## 6. **HOURS OF BUSINESS**

The normal hours of opening at our offices are between 9.00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Messages can be left on the answerphone outside those hours and appointments can be arranged at other times when this is essential.

## 7. **FEES AND EXPENSES**

### 7.1 **General**

- 7.1.1 Unless otherwise agreed in the Client Care Letter, our fees will be calculated principally in accordance with our fees structure.
- 7.1.2 We may, in accordance with professional guidelines, also charge an additional fee (where reasonable to do so) to take account of the complexity, value and urgency of the Services and other criteria specified in the Tariff of Charges enclosed with the attached Client Care letter.
- 7.1.3 You will be responsible for paying the expenses we incur in the course of providing the Services (including travel and subsistence expenses, search and filing fees, court fees and barristers', foreign lawyers' and other third parties' fees and expenses). We have no obligation to pay for such expenses unless you have provided us with the funds for that purpose.
- 7.1.4 VAT will be charged at the appropriate rate on all fees and expenses.

### 7.2 **Limited Companies**

When accepting to act on behalf of a limited company, we may require a Director and/or Controlling Shareholder to sign a form of personal guarantee in respect of our fees and expenses. If such request is refused, we will be entitled to stop acting and require immediate payment of our fees on a time spent basis and expenses as set out above.

### 7.3 **Payments on Account**

- 7.3.1 We may require you to make a payment to us on account of our fees and expenses at any time and on more than one occasion. Money paid on account which is not subsequently required for fees and expenses will be returned promptly.
- 7.3.2 We are not obliged to credit payments on account against interim invoices but may do so if you fail to make prompt payment.

### 7.4 **Quotations and Estimates**

- 7.4.1 The provision of figures (orally or in writing) from time to time for the likely cost of a piece of work is an estimate only and does not constitute a contract to carry out the work at that cost.
- 7.4.2 The provision of a written quotation for work constitutes an offer to carry out the work at that cost and does not become a contract until you accept the quotation or a defined part of it.
- 7.4.3 Unless stated in writing to the contrary, any quotation or estimate does not include any expenses or VAT.
- 7.4.4 Where we carry out work which falls outside the scope of an accepted quotation (or of an estimate which is subsequently incorporated into a contract between us) we may charge fees at our fixed hourly rates, in addition to the quoted or estimated fee. We may also charge additional fees on the same basis for work within the scope of such a quotation or estimate which is made more time consuming, onerous or urgent as a result of:-
  - 7.4.4.1 circumstances or information which we did not know or could not reasonably have anticipated at the time of the quotation or estimate (whether or not you were aware of them/it); or

7.4.4.2 your, or your agents', act or omission.

#### 7.5 Commissions

If we receive a commission from a third party arising from work we are doing for you, we will credit you with the commission unless you have agreed otherwise or the amount is less than twenty pounds (£20) (excluding VAT).

### 8. OUR INVOICES

#### 8.1 Frequency of Invoices

8.1.1 Unless otherwise agreed in the Client Care Letter, we will be entitled to invoice you in respect of our fees and expenses monthly and on completion of each Matter. At the end of our financial year we shall be entitled to bring up to date our invoicing in respect of all your then unbilled work.

8.1.2 Unless otherwise stated, monthly or other interim invoices are a final account of our fees for all work done during the period to which they relate. You agree that we may bring proceedings on interim invoices which are not final bills where we have provided Services and the amount of the invoice does not exceed the cost of the Services provided at the applicable fixed hourly rates.

8.1.3 There may be a delay in invoicing expenses incurred on your behalf pending our receipt of the relevant invoices from suppliers. Unless otherwise stated, such invoices are not a final invoice in relation to such expenses.

#### 8.2 Payment Terms

Interest will accrue on all debts over 30 days until the time they are paid at the rate of 4% above the Bank of England's Base Rate. Any debts that have to be chased will incur a handling charge of £50 plus VAT.

If you do not pay any invoice by the end of the Credit Period, or the sum we have requested on account within seven (7) days (or such longer period as we may specify) of our demand, we may suspend or terminate the provision of all or any Services (and instruct any third parties engaged by us to suspend the provision of their services) and may invoice you for all accrued fees and expenses.

#### 8.3 Third Party Payments

In some circumstances, you may have a right of recovery or indemnity against a third party in respect of all or part of our invoices, but we are not permitted to issue a VAT invoice to any person other than you in any circumstances, and you remain liable to us to pay our invoices notwithstanding such a right.

#### 8.4 Right to Retain Money, Documents and Property

As a contractual right, in addition to any right to retain money, Documents and property available to us under the general law (lien), we have the right to retain your money, Documents and property (whether held in relation to the Services for which payment has not been made or any other Services) until you have paid us in full.

### 9. INTEREST POLICY

Interest will only be credited where the aggregate amount exceeds £20.00. Whilst monies are held on your behalf you accept that we may deal with the same at our discretion, subject, of course, to the regulatory Accounts Rules.

### 11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

(a) "Conflict of Interest" means any situation where we owe (or, if we accepted your instructions, would owe) separate duties to act in the best interests of two or more clients, including your Lender, in relation to the same or a related matter and those duties conflict, or there is a significant risk that those duties may conflict; or

our duty to act in your best interests in relation to a matter conflicts, or there is a significant risk that it may conflict, with our own interests in relation to that or a related matter; or we have confidential information in relation to a client or former client, and you wish to instruct us on a matter where:-

that information might reasonably be expected to be material; and you have an interest adverse to our other client, Lender or former client.

(b) We may decline to act for you where accepting your instructions would create a Conflict of Interest or cause us to break an existing agreement with a third party.

(c) Our firm does not operate a policy of acting on both sides of a transaction in respect of a sale or purchase.

(d) If, whether through a change in circumstances or otherwise, we find that we have agreed to provide services to you in circumstances which give, or could give, rise to a conflict of interest we will discuss with you how to deal with the conflict and may, be obliged to stop providing Services to you and/or to all other clients affected by the Conflict of Interest.

### 12. INFORMATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

#### 12.1 Information About You

12.1.1 We may use the information which you provide, or which we obtain through our dealings with you, for the provision of Services and may give it on a confidential basis to our Directors, employees and agents. We may use it to administer your account with us, including tracing and collecting any debts.

12.1.2 We may also use it to ensure the safety and security of our premises (where we may also use CCTV); for fraud prevention purposes (including verification checks for our money laundering obligations); to assess client satisfaction (such as by asking you to participate in surveys); and to help improve our services generally.

12.1.3 We may also use it to contact you by letter, telephone, e-mail or otherwise about our services or events which we may organise. By signing and returning a copy of any Client Care Letter you are agreeing that we may use your contact details and information in this way. If you do not wish to be contacted, please tick the box provided before returning the copy of the Client Care Letter.

#### 12.2 Our Duty of Confidentiality

- 12.2.1 We will treat any information which is confidential to you and which we obtain as a result of acting for you as strictly confidential, save:-
- 12.2.1.1 for the purpose of acting for you; or
- 12.2.1.2 for disclosures to our auditors or other advisers or for the purposes of our professional indemnity insurance; or
- 12.2.1.3 as otherwise required by law or other regulatory authority to which we are subject.
- 12.2.2 We may refer publicly to your name as a client of ours, provided we do not disclose any information which is confidential to you.
- 12.2.3 We shall be under no duty to disclose to you (or take into account in the course of providing the Services) any information acquired by us in acting for any other client or any information in respect of which we owe a duty of confidentiality to a third party.

12.3 **Your Duty of Confidentiality**

- 12.3.1 Our advice and other communications with you are confidential and may not, without our consent, be disclosed by you to any third party (other than to your employees and agents who require access and who do not disclose it further) or otherwise made public except as required by law or other regulatory authority to which you are subject.
- 12.3.2 If, as a result of our acting for you, you acquire any information in respect of which we notify you that we owe a duty of confidentiality to a third party you will keep it confidential and not use it without our consent.

13. **CUSTODY, RETENTION AND TRANSFER OF DOCUMENTS**

- 13.1 We will, at your request, either during the provision or after completion of any Services, release to you or to your order Your Documents and Documents Held For You, provided that we are not at the time exercising our right to retain documents pending payment of outstanding fees and expenses or are prevented by any court order, undertaking or other legal constraint from doing so. We may copy all of Your Documents and Documents Held for You before releasing them.
- 13.2 We may at any time scan, microfilm, or otherwise make electronic copies or images of any Documents (other than Documents held in safe custody), destroy the originals and thereafter hold the Documents only in such copy or image form. Unless expressly agreed otherwise in writing we will keep all Documents whether in original, copy or imaged Form for a minimum of six (6) years, after which we may destroy them and any copies or images of them.
- 13.3 We may agree to store title deeds, wills and other especially valuable documents in safe custody for you if you require and, if we do, we will not, without your consent, destroy any such documents.
- 13.4 We do not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of any item which we hold on your behalf unless we expressly agree in writing to the contrary.
- 13.5 After completing the work, we are obliged to keep all your papers and documents. We will keep your sale file for six (6) years before we destroy it. All other

matters we will destroy after twelve (12) years, except those that you ask to be returned to you. However we may charge you both for time spent producing stored papers that are requested as well as reading correspondence or other work necessary to comply with your instructions in relation to the retrieved papers.

14. **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**

14.1 **Copyright**

We retain copyright and all other intellectual property rights in all documents and other works we develop or generate for you in providing the Services (including know-how and working materials as well as final documents). We now grant you a non-exclusive, non-transferable, non-sublicensable licence to use such documents or other works solely for the Matter to which the Services of developing or generating them relate and not otherwise. If you do not pay us in full for our Services in relation to that Matter we may, on giving you notice, revoke that licence and only re-grant it to you once full payment has been made.

15. **JOINT INSTRUCTIONS**

- 15.1.1 Where we agree to work on a Matter for more than one client jointly, the rights and obligations of the joint clients to us in relation to the Services will be several (save for obligations to pay money to us, which will be joint and several).
- 15.1.2 Each joint client irrevocably permits us to disclose to any other of the joint clients at any time any information which we would otherwise be prohibited from so disclosing by virtue of our duty of confidentiality. If any joint client ends this permission during the provision of the relevant Services, or if a conflict of interest otherwise arises between joint clients, we may suspend or terminate the provision of Services related to that Matter to one or more of the joint clients.
- 15.1.3 If any joint client asks us to transfer documents we will deliver Your Documents to, or to the order of, the joint client who delivered them to us. We will retain any Documents Held For You and will supply copies to each joint client, making the originals available at one of our offices for inspection by any joint client on reasonable prior written notice.

16. **LIABILITY**

16.1 **Duty of Care**

- 16.1.1 We will use reasonable skill and care in the provision of the Services. Where we make an assessment for you, either expressly or by implication, of the likely level of risk associated with different potential courses of action, you accept that such assessment is made relying only upon the information and documents then available to us and cannot, therefore, be definitive.
- 16.1.2 Accordingly, such an assessment should only be used as one element in the making of any practical or commercial decision. You accept that the magnitude or acceptability of a risk is a matter for you.
- 16.1.3 The aggregate liability of the Firm (or of any service company owned or controlled by or on behalf of any of the Directors) and of all Directors, consultants to and employees and agents of the Firm and any service company owned or controlled by or on behalf of any

of the Firm or the Directors in any circumstances whatsoever, whether in contract, tort, under statute or otherwise, and howsoever caused (including but not limited to our negligence or non-performance), for loss or damage arising from or in connection with the Services provided shall, in relation to each Matter, be limited to the sum, unless otherwise agreed, of two million pounds (£2,000 000.00)

## 16.2 **Third Parties**

16.2.1 The Services are provided to and for the benefit of you as our client and you alone. No other person may use or rely upon the Services nor derive any rights or benefits from them. The provisions of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 are to that extent excluded.

16.2.2 The Firm alone will provide the Services and you agree that you will not bring any claim whether in contract, tort, under statute or otherwise against any Director, or any consultant to, or employee or agent of the Firm or any service company owned or controlled by or on behalf of any of the Directors and those Directors, consultants, employees and agents shall be entitled to rely on the terms of this agreement insofar as they limit their liability.

## 16.3 **Drafts**

Where we provide draft or provisional advice or other materials, that advice or those materials are not to be relied upon as constituting our final view.

## 16.4 **Current Law**

The Services are provided in accordance with professional practice requirements and the proper interpretation of the law, as each exists on the date on which the relevant Service is provided. If there is any change in such requirements or the law, or their interpretation, after the relevant Matter has been concluded (or before that time but which could not reasonably be known by us at that time), we have no responsibility to notify you of, or of the consequences of, the change.

## 16.5 **Communication**

16.5.1 We shall communicate with you at the postal and email addresses and the telephone and fax numbers which you publish unless you ask us to use other addresses and numbers. You will notify us if you regard any communications from us as particularly confidential and the means by which you require us to make such communications and we shall have no liability to you arising out of your failure so to notify us.

16.5.2 Subject to any notification you may make to us under the previous paragraph, we shall not be required to encrypt, password-protect or digitally sign any email, or attachment, sent by us. We shall not be responsible for any loss or damage arising from the unauthorised interception, re-direction, copying or reading of e-mails, including any attachments. We shall not be responsible for the effect on any hardware or software (or any loss or damage arising from any such effect) of any e-mails or attachment which may be transmitted by us (save to the extent caused by our negligence or wilful default).

16.5.3 We will endeavour to respond to correspondence within the same working day or the next working day. However, unforeseen circumstances may arise where

this is not possible but we assure you that we will perform our Services diligently.

## 16.6 **Deadlines**

We will try to meet any deadline we agree with you for the performance of any Services but, unless we agree otherwise in writing in relation to any time, date or period for delivery or performance by us, time shall not be of the essence

## 17. **PROPORTIONATE LIABILITY**

If you accept or have accepted any express exclusion and/or limitation of liability from any of your other professional advisers, our total liability to you arising out of the Services will not exceed the net aggregate of the amount for which we would otherwise have been liable after deducting any amount which we would have been entitled to recover from such adviser as a matter of law whether pursuant to statute or otherwise, but are prevented from doing so as a result of any such exclusion and/or limitation of liability.

## 18. **EXCLUSION**

We shall not be liable for:-

18.1 any loss, damage, cost or expense arising from any breach by you of your agreement with us or any act or omission of any other person; or

18.2 any advice or document subject to the laws of a jurisdiction outside England and Wales; or

18.3 any advice or opinion given to you by any third party (whether or not nominated or recommended by us).

## 19. **LOSS OF PROFIT**

We shall not be liable for any indirect loss or damage or any loss of profit, income, production or accruals arising in any circumstances whatsoever, whether in contract, tort, under statute or otherwise, and howsoever caused (including but not limited to our negligence or non-performance).

## 20. **EXCEPTIONS**

Nothing in this agreement exempts us from liability arising from our fraud or reckless disregard of our professional obligations; or from our negligence resulting in death or personal injury; or where, in the case of a contentious business agreement, law or regulation prohibits the exclusion of such liability.

## 21. **TERMINATION**

### 21.1 **Completion of Services**

An agreement between you and us for the provision of defined Services ends on the completion of the provision of those Services. An open-ended agreement for the provision of Services ends three (3) months after the last date on which we provided Services to you. Unless new or different terms are agreed, our acceptance of instructions to perform Services for you subsequent to the ending of any agreement gives rise, from the time of acceptance of the instructions, to a new agreement on these terms. If we provide you free of charge with any seminar, information, or other document after the ending of an agreement, such provision does not give rise to a new agreement.

## 21.2 **Early Termination**

Either you or we may terminate the provision of all or any of the relevant Services at any time by giving written notice to the other. We will not do this without good and substantial reason, such as:-

- 21.2.1 the threat or risk of violence, injury or other danger to the physical, psychological or moral well-being of any of our personnel; or
- 21.2.2 the discovery or creation of a Conflict of Interest; or
- 21.2.3 your requesting us to break the law or any professional requirement; or
- 21.2.4 the relationship of trust and confidence necessary between Fee earner or any other member of staff and client ceasing to exist between us; or
- 21.2.5 your failure to pay to us any amount due, or money on account requested; or
- 21.2.6 your insolvency; or
- 21.2.7 your failure to give us adequate instructions; or
- 21.2.8 our being forbidden to act by the National Crime Agency; or
- 21.2.9 our reasonable belief that our continuing to represent you may cause damage to the professional or personal reputation of our firm or any of its personnel; or
- 21.2.10 any other breach by you of these terms.

## 21.3 **Rights on Early Termination**

On early termination, by either you or us, you will remain liable to pay all fees and expenses incurred before termination and due under our contract or due on the basis of the time spent at our usual hourly rates, whichever is the less, together with any further fees and expenses for work necessary to transfer our files to another adviser of your choice. All our rights set out in these terms shall continue to apply even if we terminate the agreement.

## 22. **GENERAL**

### 22.1 **Money Laundering Regulations / The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002**

22.1.1 We are required to comply with the Money Laundering regulations and in particular to verify the identity and permanent address of all new Clients. This is to ensure that the policy adopted worldwide by Financial and Government Authorities to prevent the use of laundering systems to disguise the proceeds of crime is achieved.

22.1.2 If you are a new client or an existing client who has not previously supplied information, you are requested to supply both of the following; one item from List A and one item from List B (please note we require certified copies if you are sending these by post or if you are bringing in the original documents to our offices – we will make certified copies here) as set out in our ML1 Form attached to our Client Care letter.

22.1.3 Under the provisions of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 ("POCA"), we may be required to make a report

to the relevant authorities if at any time we become aware of or suspect (whether from you or any other person) the existence of the proceeds of crime in relation to any Services on which we are engaged. Our obligation to make such a report will, in certain circumstances, override our duty of client confidentiality and we may not be permitted to inform you whether or not we have made, or might intend to make, such a report.

We may terminate the provision of any Services to you, or be instructed to do so by the relevant authorities, if you fail to comply with your obligation to provide evidence of identity or we suspect that you or any other party connected with you or with the Matter is involved in activities proscribed by POCA.

## 22.2 **Severability**

Each of these terms shall be severable and distinct from the others and if any term is held to be illegal, invalid or unenforceable, in whole or in part, the remaining terms shall not be affected.

## 22.3 **Equal Treatment / Equality and Diversity**

Consistent with our internal policies and procedures, we will not discriminate in the way we provide our Services on the grounds of race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability or marital status.

## 22.4 **Financial Services**

If during the course of the matter upon which we are advising you, you need advice on investments, we may have to refer you to someone who is authorized by the Financial Conduct Authority, as we are not. However, as we are regulated by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers, we may be able to provide certain limited investment services where these are closely linked to the legal work we are doing for you.

If you have any problem with the services we have provided for you, then please let us know. We will try to resolve any problem between ourselves. If for any reason we are unable to resolve the problem between us, then we are regulated by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers and complaints and redress mechanisms are provided through the Council for Licensed Conveyancers and the Legal Ombudsman.

## 22.5 **Insurance Mediation**

As we have said, we are not authorized by the Financial Conduct Authority. However, we are included on the register maintained by the Financial Conduct Authority so that we can carry on insurance mediation activity, which is broadly the advising on, selling and administration of insurance contracts. This part of our business, including arrangements for complaints or redress if something goes wrong, is regulated by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers. The register can be accessed via the Financial Conduct Authority website at [www.fca.org.uk](http://www.fca.org.uk)

## 23. **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE / DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

### 23.1 **Scope**

All claims, complaints and disputes arising out of or in connection with the Services ("Disputes") will be resolved pursuant to this paragraph.

### 23.2 **Complaints Procedure**

- 23.2.1 We hope you will have no complaint. To underline how seriously we take complaints, we have a set Complaints Procedure which can be summarised as follows: (a copy of our full complaints procedure is available on request)-
- 23.2.1.1 If you have any complaint or observation (good or bad) about our service, please say so.
  - 23.2.1.2 We will acknowledge the complaint within seven days.
  - 23.2.1.3 We will conduct a full investigation and an independent review of the matter.
  - 23.2.1.4 Where a full response cannot be given in seven days we will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in that timescale, give the reason for the delay and commit to responding fully within 28 days of receipt of the initial complaint.
  - 23.2.1.5 Our response to the complainant will include:
    - 23.2.1.5.1 A clear explanation of assessment of the complaint;
    - 23.2.1.5.2 Our decision on it;
    - 23.2.1.5.3 Any offer of remedial action and/or redress where a complaint is upheld;
    - 23.2.1.5.4 Information on our complaint-handling review procedure (if applicable), its timeframes and how it can be accessed;
    - 23.2.1.5.5 Information on the complainant's right to refer the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, its time frames and contact details.
  - 23.2.1.6 If still unresolved at this stage, you may take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. Normally, you will have to bring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of receiving a final response from us about your complaint and 6 years from the date of the act or omission giving rise to the complaint or alternatively 3 years from the date you should reasonably have known there are grounds for complaint (if the act/omission took place before 6 October 2010 or was more than 6 years ago).
- 23.2.2 Contact details:
- 23.2.2.1 The address of the Legal Ombudsman is: PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ; telephone, 0300 555 0333; or view their website at [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk), email enquiries to: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)
- 23.3 **Exclusions**
- We shall not be obliged to comply with paragraph 23 above in relation to any Dispute in which we seek:-
- 23.3.1 an order or award (whether interim or final) restraining you from doing any act or compelling you to do any act; or
  - 23.3.2 a judgment or award for a liquidated sum to which here is no arguable defence (provided that the exception shall cease to apply and the Dispute may be referred to arbitration on the application of either party if the court decides that you should have permission to defend the claim); or

23.3.3 the enforcement of any agreement reached or any binding order, award, determination or decision made pursuant to paragraph 23 above,

nor shall anything in this paragraph inhibit us at any time from serving any form of demand or notice or from commencing or continuing with any bankruptcy, winding up or other insolvency proceedings.

#### 23.4 **Regulator**

Nothing in these Terms of Business shall prevent you at any time from referring any Matter to the body or bodies for the time being charged with the regulation of Licensed Conveyancers.

### 24. **LAW AND JURISDICTION**

The terms on which we provide Services to you are governed by, and shall be construed in accordance with, English law. You and we each agree to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts, provided that we may in our sole and unfettered discretion commence proceedings against you in any other Court.

### 25. **QUALITY STANDARDS**

Due to our own internal quality standards, we are subject to periodic checks by outside assessors. This could mean that your file may be selected for checking, in which case we would need your consent for inspection to occur. All inspections are, of course, conducted in confidence. If you prefer to withhold consent, work on your file will not be affected in any way. Since very few of our clients do object to this we propose to assume that we do have your consent unless you notify us to the contrary. We will also assume, unless you indicate otherwise, that consent on this occasion will extend to all future matters which we conduct on your behalf. Please contact us if we can explain this further or if you would like us to mark your file as not to be inspected. If you would prefer to withhold consent please put a line through this section in the copy letter for return to us.

### 26. **DISCLAIMERS**

#### 26.1 **Tax**

We are not qualified to advise you on the tax implications of transactions you instruct us to carry out, or the likelihood of them arising.

#### 26.2 **Planning in property transactions**

We will not advise you on the planning implications of your proposed purchase, unless specifically requested to do so by you, otherwise than by reporting to you on any relevant information provided by the results of the "local search".

#### 26.3 **Physical Inspection/Environmental**

It is not our responsibility to carry out a physical inspection of the property nor advise on the valuation of the property nor the suitability of your mortgage nor any other financial arrangements. We shall not advise generally on environmental liabilities where we shall assume, unless you tell us to the contrary, that you are making your own arrangements for any appropriate environmental survey or investigations.

We may, however, need to obtain on behalf of your lender, at your expense, an environmental search. However, we will not advise you about any issues relating to the possible contamination of any land which may be relevant to your

purchase. We have to tell you that we are not qualified to advise on the results of any search made in that respect and would only be able to report to you the actual results of such a search. This is particularly significant in respect of the potential liabilities that may arise at some future point in time as a result of land contamination or flood risk that are having increasing significance. If you have any doubts, please discuss your concerns with us.

If we are instructed on purchase and we are also acting for your proposed lender, we have a duty to fully reveal to your lender all relevant facts about the purchase and the mortgage. This includes any differences between your mortgage application and information we receive during the transaction and any cash back payments or discount schemes that a seller is giving to you

## 27. DATA PROTECTION

We use the information you provide primarily for the provision of legal services to you and for related purposes including: updating and enhancing client records, analysis to help us manage our practice, statutory returns, legal and regulatory compliance. Our use of that information is subject to your instructions, the Data Protection Act 1998 and our duty of confidentiality. Please note that our work for you may require us to give information to third parties such as expert witnesses and other professional advisers. You have a right of access under data protection legislation to the personal data that we hold about you. We may from time to time send you information which we think might be of interest to you. If you do not wish to receive that information please notify our office in writing.

## 28. REGULATIONS AFFECTING YOUR CANCELLATION RIGHTS

### 28.1 Distance Selling Regulations

If we have not met you in person (instructions and signing of the documentation is taking place by mail), under the terms of the Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000, you have the right to cancel your instructions without any cost to you within 14 working days of receipt of this letter. You can cancel your instructions by contacting us by post or by fax to this office. However, technically under the Regulations, you cannot cancel your instructions once you have agreed that we should start work on your behalf. However, by signing and returning the enclosed questionnaire, you are agreeing that we can start work straight away before the end of the cancellation period and expend your funds paid on account for disbursements. The Regulations normally apply to the provisions of services within 30 days so we also need to draw your attention to the fact that it frequently takes longer to complete a conveyance, particularly where a chain is involved.

### 28.2 Contracts made in a Consumer's Home or Place of Work Regulations

The work required may involve the creation of a contract away from our office and as such the agreement may be subject to The Cancellation of Contracts made in a Consumer's Home or Place of Work Etc Regulations 2008. If this applies to you:

28.2.1 We will include a "Notice of the Right to Cancel" document with our separate Client Care Letter that confirms your instructions to us.

28.2.2 You will have the right to cancel the contract within 14 days (referred to as "the cancellation period") as

set out in the "Notice of the Right to Cancel" documents. To exercise that right, you will need to complete and return the page of the Notice headed "Cancellation", or you can send an email to the address given within the Notice document.

Should you require the work to be done within the 14 day cancellation period (because for example of its urgent nature) you will need to confirm your agreement to that by completing and returning the page at the end of the Notice document headed "Waiver".

## 29. INSURANCE

We have a legal duty to tell you about our professional indemnity insurance. We have an obligation to carry such insurance and our qualifying insurers are:-

ACE European Group Limited whose address is Ace Building, 1 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3A 3BP and WR Berkley Insurance (Europe) Limited whose registered address is 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 40 Lime Street, London, EC3M 7AW. Our insurance policy number is VH000001499. The insurance covers our practice carried on from our offices in England and Wales and will extend to acts or omissions wherever in the world they occur.

## 30. FINANCIAL SERVICES COMPENSATION SCHEME

In the event of a banking failure it is unlikely that the firm would be held liable for any losses of client account money. If a corporate body client is not considered a small company by FSCS, then they will not be eligible for compensation.

We currently hold our client account funds in HSBC. The £85,000 Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) limit will apply to each individual client so if you hold other personal monies yourself in the same bank as our client account, the limit remains £85,000 in total, so it may be advisable to check with your own bank as some banks now trade under different trading names. In the event of a bank failure you agree to us disclosing details to the FSCS.

## 31. COMPENSATION FUNDS

One of the advantages to you of using a Licensed Conveyancer is that you can be confident that your interests will be protected by the profession's strict regulations, insurance and compensation arrangements. The effect of this is that if you should make a valid claim against us for loss arising out of work for which we are legally responsible, and we are unable to meet our liability in full, you may be entitled to claim from the compensation fund administered by The Council for Licensed Conveyancers (from which details can be obtained).