



## **CLIENT CARE POLICY**

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

We strive to provide outstanding legal services accompanied by the highest professional standards of client care. We will always try to provide you with a service that is professional, courteous and accessible.

In order to achieve the highest standards of client care we will:

- Provide you with a high quality professional and consistent service delivered in a timely manner and taking into account your individual needs and circumstances.
- Ensure that your needs, concerns and interests are constantly in view, and, where necessary, addressed.
- Always act in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Always treat you fairly.
- Be open and honest.
- Give clear and concise legal advice.
- Use plain English wherever possible and explain any legal terms or references.
- Act with integrity.
- Ensure we communicate effectively and promptly wherever possible and in a manner which suits your requirements.
- Respect the joint nature of our instruction and ensure all communications with you both are open, transparent and shared following the Introductory Sessions (unless a disclosure is made that a child or adult is at risk of significant harm).

- Inform you as soon as possible if your case is unsuitable for The Divorce Surgery process.
- Provide you with clear information about ways to resolve your dispute following the receipt of our advice, for example by accessing mediation, other forms of alternative dispute resolution or each instructing your own solicitor or direct access barrister.
- Act in accordance with the Bar Standards Board Code of Conduct and other relevant regulatory requirements.
- Provide you with a costs estimate at the inception of your case. In the event that the costs estimate increases due to the complexity of your case you will be advised prior to the Advice Session so that you can decide whether to continue with the service.
- Provide you with information concerning our complaints procedure and details about the Legal Ombudsman.
- Continually monitor our performance and conduct regular reviews of our systems and procedures to refine and improve our standards of client care.

## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The overall purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance as to how we work and the standard of service we strive to offer. Every member of staff and all contracting barristers providing services on behalf of The Divorce Surgery are required to act in accordance with this client care policy.

## **CLIENT CARE LETTER**

After you have jointly instructed us to advise you we will provide each of you with a Client Care Letter, which will contain details of the service we will be offering and the identity of the barrister who we have agreed will be advising you.

## **OUR POLICY**

The Divorce Surgery is committed to providing a service to clients which is:

- **Specialist:** We only offer and provide advice in the field of family law.
- **Expert:** We will only provide legal advice through barristers who have substantial experience in advising in family law. As the details of your case emerge we will keep under review the seniority of barrister needed to advise you.

- **Professional:** We will provide a professional service to our clients and act with integrity at all times and treat our clients and prospective clients with courtesy. We will at all times comply with the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and our own Equality and Diversity Policy.
- **Efficient:** We strive to make our service streamlined. In the client care letter we will advise our clients of the dates of their Introductory Sessions and Advice Session. As long as our clients provide all information requested on time it is our aim that all meetings should take place on the dates advised. However, we will keep our clients fully informed of any factors which are likely to cause delay and the reasons for them. We will advise our clients promptly if a meeting needs to be rescheduled and, where possible, offer them the services of an alternative suitably qualified barrister who has better availability.
- **Cost Effective:** We will be open about costs in all our dealings with our clients. We will provide all our prospective clients with a costs estimate in the Client Care Letter which is sent out before the Introductory Session. In the event that the costs estimate increases due to the complexity of the case our clients will be advised as soon as possible and in any event prior to the Advice Session so that they can decide whether to continue with the service. All communications on costs with our clients will be in writing. We will be open and honest with our clients as to the value and proportionality of using our service if they have very limited financial resources.
- **Accessible:** We strive to make our service accessible to anyone who may need it and we will at all times operate in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy. We will do our best to make use of technology to ensure that our services are as accessible as possible to those who need them. We also strive to make our service accessible in terms of its delivery. We will offer Introductory and Advice Sessions as quickly as possible, fitting in to our client's timescales as much as we can, and will respond promptly to all communications.
- **Tailored Service:** It is our ultimate goal that our clients receive impartial joint advice which is tailored to their individual circumstances and provided by a specialist and expert barrister in whom both clients have confidence.
- **Confidentiality:** In dealing with our clients we will at all times maintain confidentiality. This means that we will not, without both our clients' specific consent, disclose to third parties the fact that either of them has approached us or sought our advice. We will at all times operate in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

- **Conflicts of Interest:** We will at all times comply with the Bar Standards Board Code of Conduct and our own Conflicts of Interest Policy.
- **Complaints:** We will make our complaints procedure known to our clients from the outset in our Client Care Letter. Where a client is in any way dissatisfied with our service we will encourage them to utilise the complaints procedure and will investigate complaints promptly and in line with our procedure.

## **FEEDBACK AND TESTIMONIALS**

In order that we can continue and improve our service we actively encourage and value feedback from our clients, whether negative or positive. If you wish to provide any feedback, please provide it by post or email to Samantha Woodham (samanthawoodham@thedivorcesurgery.co.uk) or Harry Gates (harrygates@thedivorcesurgery.co.uk).

We monitor and evaluate any client complaints to identify and address any shortcomings and failings in our business so that we can strive continually to improve our standard of service.

## **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Last reviewed: March 2020