

Guidelines for the Ten Administrative Requirements

- *Opening and closing of a file for civil legal assistance, and monitoring its status.*

Any new file involving provision of Civil Legal Assistance will be opened by a <nominated solicitor>. It will be referenced by the name of the client and the subject matter, and recorded in a central location. If the file is removed from the office (*other than for attendance at court or short term working at home or another similar location*) then a record will be kept as to the whereabouts of the file.

At such time as the Civil Legal Assistance work has been completed the file will be closed by the <nominated solicitor> in charge of the business and a record kept that the file has been closed.

The ongoing status of the Civil Legal Assistance file will be maintained by the <nominated solicitor> responsible for the same.

E.g. A manual or electronic system of monthly or quarterly checks.

- *Recording work carried out for the client, and all material advice tendered to the client as the case proceeds.*

File notes (*dated and showing time engaged*) shall be kept on file of all meetings with and advice tendered to the client and instructions taken from the client. File notes shall record the matters discussed at any meeting, unless that work is self evident from other documents on the file. Copies of all correspondence sent or documents produced on behalf of the client will be kept on file.

- *Ensuring that all solicitors providing civil legal assistance remain acquainted with the regulations.*

All solicitors providing civil legal assistance shall make themselves familiar with the up-to-date regulations; for example, solicitors shall maintain awareness of mail shots, guidance manuals and the Recorder from the Board as well as Regulations including primary and secondary legislation.

- *Ensuring that all documents and other paperwork submitted to the Board are in order.*

<The nominated solicitor> will be responsible for ensuring all documents and other paperwork submitted to the Board are in order.

E.g.

- The application forms
- The financial eligibility forms
- Compulsory Reports
- All other forms enclosed will be checked by said solicitor

- *The control of incoming and outgoing mail.*

All incoming mail shall be viewed by <a partner> (*or other qualified member of staff if appropriate*) and date stamped. It should then be actioned or delegated to an appropriate person for actioning as soon as is practicable.

All outgoing mail should be checked by <the nominated solicitor> and signed by a partner.

- *The periodic review of a sample of cases being conducted under the auspices of the civil legal assistance scheme.*

<The nominated solicitor> will review a sample number of cases (or all depending on number of legal aid cases firm deals with), on a regular basis e.g. monthly, to ensure all requirements are being fulfilled.

- *The review of the conduct of a sample of cases conducted under the civil legal assistance scheme at the conclusion of the case.*

<All>/<a sample of>files (depending on number of legal aid cases the firm deals with) shall be reviewed on closure by a partner. Issues arising from case reviews will be discussed where appropriate.

- *Dealing with complaints from the client, the Law society or the Board arising from any civil legal assistance case.*

Any complaints should be reported to the client relations partner who shall deal with it directly. Complaints should be acknowledged by him/her to the complainer in writing. An investigation of the complaint should be taken and the necessary action to deal with the issues of the complaint, the complaint and actions should be recorded.

- *Submitting accounts to the Board and dealing with subsequent correspondence and queries, and recording the receipt of payment.*

Solicitors providing civil legal assistance shall submit accurate, logically presented and vouched accounts to the Board <timeously> and deal with subsequent correspondence and queries timeously from the Board. A record will be kept showing the date of submission of Accounts to the Board and the date of receipt of payment. Accounts shall be accompanied by such documents and information as the Board requires and in the format specified by the Board.

Any unpaid outlays included on a legal aid account will be paid immediately on receipt of payment from the Board and ledger balances cleared.

- *Ensuring that all members of the firm's administrative and support staff are aware of the firm's procedures and observing them.*

The firm's procedures will be circulated around all members of the firms administrative and support staff. A partner shall be responsible for the updating and the training of said staff where necessary. A partner shall be responsible for monitoring compliance with the procedures.