

VERMEYLEN LAW

Terms of Business

V.0006

1 Our contract with you

- 1.1 These **Terms of Business** (as updated from time to time) apply to all work we do on your behalf. It is an important document—please read and keep it in a safe place for future reference.
- 1.2 Each time you instruct us on a new matter we will send you a letter confirming your instructions and setting out the scope of the work we will carry out for you, our fees and individual contact details. This is called the **engagement letter**. These Terms of Business should be read together with the engagement letter—together they form the contract between us.
- 1.3 If there is any inconsistency between our Terms of Business and the engagement letter, the engagement letter will take priority.
- 1.4 Although your continuing instructions in this matter will amount to your acceptance of these Terms of Business, we ask that you sign, date and return one copy for our file.
- 1.5 Unless otherwise agreed, these Terms of Business will apply to all future instructions you give us on this or any other matter.
- 1.6 These Terms of Business are subject to change from time to time and are updated on our website at <https://www.vermeylen-law.com/legal-and-regulatory-information>.
- 1.7 This contract and any dispute or claim arising out of, or in connection with, it, its subject matter or formation (including non-contractual disputes or claims) shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of England and Wales and considered exclusively by the English and Welsh courts.

2 About us

- 2.1 Vermeylen Law is the trading name of Vermeylen Law Limited. Vermeylen Law Limited is a limited company registered in England and Wales (registration number 11884470). Its registered office is 40 Berkeley Square, Bristol BS8 1HP.
- 2.2 Vermeylen Law Limited is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA Number: 658016). Vermeylen Law Limited is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (ICO No. ZA526756).
- 2.3 Vermeylen Law Limited is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). The SRA is the independent regulatory arm of the Law Society of England and Wales, our professional body. Vermeylen Law Limited and our solicitors are governed by Codes of Conduct and other professional rules, which you can access on the SRA's website at www.sra.org.uk or by calling 0370 606 2555. Our SRA authorisation number is 658016. All services provided by Vermeylen Law Limited are regulated by the SRA.
- 2.4 We are registered for VAT purposes. Our VAT registration number is 329666562.
- 2.5 Where we say 'we', 'us', 'our' or 'the firm' in these Terms of Business, we mean Vermeylen Law Limited.

3 About you

Where we say 'you' or 'your' in these Terms of Business, we mean the client identified in the engagement letter and anyone authorised to give instructions on that client's behalf.

4 Our responsibilities and your responsibilities

What you can expect of us

- Treat you fairly and with respect
- Communicate with you in plain language
- Review your matter regularly

What we expect of you

- Provide us with clear, accurate and timely instructions
- Provide documents when we ask for them and respond promptly when we ask for instructions or information
- Notify us immediately if your contact details change
- Tell us immediately if your expectations change or if you are not sure you understand what we have discussed
- Inform us of any time limits or objectives that might not be obvious to us
- Inform us in writing if your instruction or any information you provide is urgent, and make sure that we have received it. You must specify any deadline
- Notify us immediately if you receive any email or other communication purporting to be from us stating that we have changed our bank details or payment arrangements
- Let us know about any other changes that may affect the way we deal with your matter, including any changes that may affect your tax status in any jurisdiction

5 Scope of our legal services

5.1 The scope of the services we will provide is set out in the engagement letter.

5.2 We will provide legal advice and services to you with reasonable care and skill. However, the nature of many types of legal work means that it is not possible to guarantee a particular outcome.

5.3 We will advise only on English law.

5.4 We will not advise on surveying, valuation, commercial viability, trading or marketability issues.

5.5 We will not provide any tax advice unless we have expressly agreed in writing to do so.

5.6 We do not provide financial services or financial advice.

- 5.7 Unless otherwise agreed in writing, our advice and any documents we prepare:
- 5.7.1 are for use only in connection with the specific matter on which we are instructed, can only be relied on by you; and
 - 5.7.2 reflect the law in force at the relevant time.

6 Work done by others

- 6.1 Where we believe it is in your interests, we may introduce you to third parties (based in the UK or abroad) to work for you. We make no recommendation and the decision to engage them is yours alone. If you wish to engage them, you would usually do so directly. Where appropriate, we may act as your agent and, if so, they will appear as a disbursement on your bill.
- 7 In all cases, you are responsible for the fees of all such third parties.
- 8 We are not responsible for any action, omission, error or deficiency of anyone you engage whether directly or through us.
- 9 We will rely on the work and advice prepared by you and your other advisers (including those you may engage through us).

10 Service standards

- 10.1 We will update you by telephone or in writing (including by email) with progress on your matter regularly and explain to you the legal work required as your matter progresses.
- 10.2 We are committed to acting in a way that encourages equality, diversity and inclusion in all our dealings with clients, third parties and employees. Please contact us if you would like a copy of our equality and diversity policy.

11 Joint instructions

- 11.1 We will assume that where we act for more than one person but we receive instructions from only one, that person has the authority of the other to give those instructions.

12 Our liability to you

- 12.1 Your contract is solely with Vermeylen Law Limited which has sole legal liability for the work done for you and for any act or omission in the course of that work. No representative, director, officer, employee, agent or consultant of Vermeylen Law Limited will have any personal legal liability for any loss or claim.
- 12.2 Unless explicitly agreed otherwise, in writing:
- 12.2.1 we do not owe, nor do we accept, any duty to any person other than you; and
 - 12.2.2 we do not accept any liability or responsibility for any consequences arising from reliance upon our advice by any person other than you.
- 12.3 We are not responsible for any failure to advise or comment on matters falling outside the scope of our instructions, as set out in these Terms of Business and the engagement letter.

- 12.4 Our maximum liability to you (or any other party we have agreed may rely on our services) in relation to any single matter or any group of connected matters which may be aggregated by our insurers will be £3,000,000 including interest and costs unless we expressly state a different figure in the engagement letter.
- 12.5 We will not be liable for:
- 12.5.1 losses that were not foreseeable to you and us when this contract was formed;
 - 12.5.2 losses not caused by any breach on the part of the firm; and
 - 12.5.3 business losses, including losses sustained by any individual not acting for purposes of their trade, business, craft or profession.
- 12.6 We will not be liable for any losses sustained by malicious or fraudulent emails purportedly coming from the firm. It is your responsibility to ensure that any emails apparently coming from the firm are genuine before relying on anything contained within them.
- 12.7 Please ensure that you update us immediately if any of your contact details change. We shall not be liable for any losses resulting from our inability to contact you.
- 12.8 We are not liable for any losses resulting from you failing to give us instructions in time to comply with any rules or deadlines.
- 12.9 Nothing in these Terms of Business shall exclude or restrict our liability in respect of:
- 12.9.1 death or personal injury caused by our negligence;
 - 12.9.2 fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation;
 - 12.9.3 any losses caused by wilful misconduct or dishonesty;
 - 12.9.4 any other losses which cannot be excluded or limited by applicable law.
- 12.10 Please ask if you would like us to explain any of the terms above.

13 Our charges and billing

- 13.1 You are liable to pay legal costs as set out in the engagement letter, which also states the arrangements for billing. We will usually discuss this with you at the outset of your matter.
- 13.2 We may deliver our bills to you electronically. Please let us know if you have any particular requirements for the delivery of our bills.
- 13.3 Our bills become due for payment within 14 days and in the currency in which they are submitted.
- 13.4 Please inform us if you would like a third party to be responsible for paying our bills or any part of them. We must approve this in advance and we will need the party's name, contact details and any other information or identification documents we request. It is your responsibility to pay our bills even if someone else has agreed to pay some or all of them and our bills will still be addressed to you. If someone else does pay some of our bills, you are responsible for paying the rest.

- 13.5 We may charge interest on overdue bills at 4% above the base rate of the Bank of England on a daily basis (up to a maximum of the court rate applied to civil judgments from time to time).
- 13.6 We may cease acting for you if an interim bill remains unpaid after 14 days or if our reasonable request of a payment on account of costs is not met.
- 13.7 You have the right to challenge or complain about our bill. Please see section 15 (**Complaints**) for details of how to complain about our bill.
- 13.8 You have the right to challenge our bill by applying to the court to assess the bill under the Solicitors Act 1974. The usual time limit for applying to the court for an assessment is one month from the date of delivery of the bill.
- 13.9 We can keep all your papers and documents while there is still money owed to us for fees and expenses.

14 Confidentiality

- 14.1 We will keep your information confidential, unless:
- 14.1.1 you consent to the disclosure of that information;
 - 14.1.2 disclosure of the information is required or permitted by law or regulatory requirements that apply to us;
 - 14.1.3 we advise you otherwise during the course of your matter; and / or
 - 14.1.4 these Terms of Business state otherwise.
- 14.2 Examples of organisations we may be required to disclose your information to include:
- 14.2.1 the National Crime Agency;
 - 14.2.2 domestic and international tax authorities;
 - 14.2.3 regulatory authorities.
- 14.3 Unless you instruct us otherwise, we may contact you or others by email. We cannot, however, guarantee the security of information or documents sent by email. If you do not wish us to communicate information by email, please let us know.
- 14.4 Sometimes we ask other companies or people to carry out administrative or other work on our files to help us deliver efficient, cost effective legal services. For information on outsourcing in relation to your personal data, see the attached Privacy Policy.
- 14.5 External organisations such as the Information Commissioner's Office or Lexcel auditors and the SRA may conduct audit or quality checks on our practice from time to time. They may wish to audit or quality check your file and related papers for this purpose. We will require that these external organisations maintain confidentiality in relation to any files and papers which are audited or quality checked.
- 14.6 Your files may also be reviewed in a due diligence exercise relating to the sale or transfer of all or part of our business, the acquisition of another business by us or the acquisition of new

business. If you do not wish your file to be used in this way, please let us know as soon as possible.

15 Privacy and data protection

15.1 We use your personal data primarily to provide legal services to you, but also for related purposes such as administration, billing and record keeping and to inform you of our services and events that we think may be of interest to you.

15.2 Our use of your personal data is subject to your instructions, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), other relevant UK and EU legislation and our professional duty of confidentiality.

15.3 We take your privacy very seriously. Please read the attached Privacy Policy carefully as it contains important information on how and why we collect, process and store your personal data. It also explains your rights in relation to your personal data. The Privacy Policy is also available on our website at www.vermeylen-law.com/legal-and-regulatory-information.

15.4 We may record telephone calls and monitor emails for training, regulatory and compliance purposes.

15.5 We use third party service providers (including 'cloud' service providers) to help us deliver efficient, cost effective legal services. This may include document/information hosting, sharing, transfer, analysis, processing or storage. If you instruct us to use an alternative provider for storing, sharing or exchanging documents/information, we are not responsible for the security of the data or the provider's security standards.

15.6 We may use your personal data to send you updates (by email, text, telephone or post) about legal developments that might be of interest to you and/or information about our services, including exclusive offers, promotions or new services. You have the right to opt out of receiving promotional communications at any time, by:

15.6.1 contacting us by email at support@vermeylen-law.com or by telephone on 0117 251 0175; or

15.6.2 using the 'unsubscribe' link in emails or 'STOP' number in texts

16 Banking and related matters

16.1 Our client account

Unless agreed otherwise, we hold client money in various accounts with UK banks which are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

16.2 Changes to our bank details

We will never tell you of changes to important business information, such as bank account details, by email. Please notify us immediately if you receive any email or other communication purporting to be from the firm stating that we have changed our bank details or payment arrangements.

16.3 Payment of interest

16.3.1 We will pay a fair sum of interest to clients or third parties on client money we hold on their behalf.

16.3.2 We will not pay interest:

- (a) on money we are instructed to hold outside a client account in a manner that does not attract interest, eg cash held in our safe;
- (b) where the amount of interest is less than £40;
- (c) where we agree otherwise, in writing, with the client or third party for whom the money is held.

16.3.3 Please ask us if you would like to see our written payment of interest policy.

16.4 Bank failure and the Financial Services Compensation Scheme

16.4.1 We are not liable for any losses you suffer as a result of any bank in which we hold client money being unable to repay depositors in full. You may, however, be protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).

16.4.2 The FSCS is the UK's statutory fund of last resort for customers of banking institutions. The FSCS can pay compensation up to £85,000 if a banking institution is unable, or likely to be unable, to pay claims against it.

16.4.3 The limit is £85,000 per banking institution. If you hold other personal money in the same banking institution as our client accounts, the limit remains £85,000 in total. Some banking institutions have several brands. The compensation limit is £85,000 per institution, not per brand.

16.4.4 The FSCS also provides up to £1m of short-term protection for certain high balances, eg relating to property transactions, inheritance, divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership, unfair dismissal, redundancy, and personal injury compensation (there is no financial limit on protection for personal injury compensation). This is called the temporary high balance scheme and, if it applies, protection lasts for a maximum of six months.

16.4.5 The FSCS (including the temporary high balance scheme) will apply to qualifying balances held in our client account. In the unlikely event of a deposit-taking institution failure, we will presume (unless we hear from you in writing to the contrary) we have your consent to disclose necessary client details to the FSCS.

16.4.6 More information about the FSCS can be found at <https://www.fscs.org.uk>.

16.5 Receiving and paying funds

16.5.1 Our policy is not to accept cash from clients. 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 and this could also cause delays.

16.5.2 If we receive money in relation to your matter from an unexpected source, there may be a delay in your matter and we may decide to charge you for any additional checks we decide are necessary.

16.5.3 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.

16.5.4 Please be aware that we do not notify changes to important business information, such as bank account details, by email.

17 Prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing

17.1 To comply with anti-money laundering and counterterrorist financing requirements, we are likely to ask you for proof of your identity and may conduct searches or enquiries for this purpose. We may also be required to identify and verify the identity of other persons such as directors or beneficial owners. If you or they do not provide us with the required information promptly, your matter may be delayed.

17.2 You agree that we may make checks using online electronic verification systems or other databases as we may decide.

17.3 You must not send us any money until we have told you that these checks have been completed.

17.4 We will not usually charge you for undertaking identification and verification checks, but we reserve the right to do so where the checks are likely to be significantly more time-consuming than we would normally expect.

17.5 We may ask you to confirm the source of any money you have sent us or will send us. If you do not provide us with that information promptly, your matter may be delayed.

17.6 Any personal data we receive from you for the purpose of preventing money laundering or terrorist financing will be used only for that purpose or:

17.6.1 with your consent; or

17.6.2 as permitted by or under another enactment.

17.7 We are professionally and legally obliged to keep your affairs confidential. However, we may be required by law to make a disclosure to the National Crime Agency where we know or suspect that a transaction may involve money laundering or terrorist financing. If we make a disclosure in relation to your matter, we may not be able to tell you that a disclosure has been made. We may have to stop working on your matter for a period of time and may not be able to tell you why.

17.8 Subject to section 8 (*'Our liability to you'*), we shall not be liable for any loss arising from or connected with our compliance with any statutory obligation which we may have, or reasonable belief we may have, to report matters to the relevant authorities under the provisions of the money laundering and/or terrorist financing legislation.

18 Professional indemnity insurance

18.1 We have professional indemnity insurance giving cover for claims against us. Details of this insurance, including contact details of our insurer and the territorial coverage of the policy, can be provided on request.

18.2 It is a condition of our professional indemnity insurance that we notify our insurer and/or broker of any circumstances which may give rise to a claim against us. In doing so, we may

disclose documents and information to our insurer, broker and insurance advisers on a confidential basis. Our insurers and brokers are contractually obliged to keep all information we pass to them strictly confidential.

19 Complaints

19.1 We want to give you the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service we have provided you should inform us immediately so we can do our best to resolve the problem.

19.2 In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues. If you would like to make a formal complaint, you can read our full complaints procedure at www.vermeylen-law.com/legal-and-regulatory-information. Making a complaint will not affect how we handle your case.

19.3 What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint

19.3.1 We have eight weeks to consider your complaint. If we have not resolved it within this time you may be able to complain to the Legal Ombudsman. This applies if you are an individual, a business with fewer than 10 employees and turnover or assets not exceeding a certain threshold, a charity or trust with a net income of less than £1m, or if you fall within certain other categories (you can find out more from the Legal Ombudsman). The Legal Ombudsman will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your matter.

19.3.2 Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- (a) within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint;
- and**
- (b) no more than six years from the date of act/omission; or
- (c) no more than three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

19.3.3 If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, please contact them.

Contact details

Visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 9.00 to 17.00

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

19.4 What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour

19.4.1 The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help if you are concerned about our behaviour. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

19.4.2 Visit their website to see how you can raise your concerns with the [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#).

20 Terminating your instructions

- 20.1 You may terminate our appointment at any time by giving us notice in writing. We can keep all your papers and documents while there is still money owed to us for our charges or disbursements.
- 20.2 We will only decide to stop acting for you with good reason, eg if you do not reply to our correspondence, if we feel that the relationship has broken down, if you provide us with misleading information, if you act in an abusive or offensive manner, if you do not pay an invoice/s, if you do not provide monies on account when requested to do so, or if a conflict of interest arises. This list is not exhaustive. We will give you reasonable notice before we stop acting for you.
- 20.3 If you or we decide that we should stop acting for you, we will charge you for the work we have done and, where appropriate, for transferring the matter to another adviser if you so request. This will be calculated on the basis set out in the engagement letter.
- 20.4 We are not responsible for reminding you about important dates and/or any deadlines after our appointment has been terminated.

21 After the conclusion of your matter

- 21.1 We are not responsible for reminding you about important dates and/or any deadlines after the conclusion of your matter.
- 21.2 The fact that we may inform you from time to time of developments in law or tax should not be understood as a revival of an advisor-client relationship. We have no obligation to inform you of developments in law or tax unless you have formally instructed us to do and we have confirmed acceptance of those instructions in writing.

22 Storage and retrieval of files

- 22.1 We may create and hold client files in hard copy (paper), electronically or a combination of both.
- 22.2 During and / or at the end of your matter we may scan on hard copy documents and then destroy the hard copy documents.
- 22.3 We will not destroy the following original documents during your matter: marriage / birth / death certificate/s, Lasting Powers of Attorney, Will/s, Grant/s of Representation, securities and original property title deed documentation.
- 22.4 If you would like us to keep hard copy versions of any other documents, please let us know at the commencement of your matter.
- 22.5 At the end of your matter, we store the file on the understanding that we may destroy it at the end of the file retention period. Please refer to your engagement letter for confirmation of the file retention period relating to your matter.
- 22.6 We will not charge for this storage.

22.7 If we retrieve your file from storage (including electronic storage) in relation to continuing or new instructions to act for you, we will not normally charge for the retrieval.

22.8 If we retrieve your file from storage for another reason, we may charge you for:

22.8.1 time spent retrieving the file and producing it to you;

22.8.2 reading, correspondence, or other work necessary to comply with your instructions in relation to the retrieved file; and/or

22.8.3 providing additional copies of any documents.

22.9 For information on how long we will hold your personal data, see the attached Privacy Policy.

23 Signature

Please sign, date and return one copy of these Terms of Business.