



# BDM Law LLP

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## **TERMS OF BUSINESS**

### **Introduction**

These are the general terms of business which will apply to the services to be provided to you by BDM Law LLP.

BDM Law LLP is a limited liability partnership based in London.

### **Our contract**

When you retain us to act on your or your principal's behalf, we will send you an email marked "Terms of Engagement" ("Engagement Email") which will apply to each matter and which, amongst other things, will set out the anticipated scope of work and a guide to its cost, the partner responsible for handling the matter and the proposed team together with the proposed charging rates. The following general terms and conditions will apply to the services BDM Law LLP will provide to you, unless they are varied in the Engagement Email. These terms and conditions may be revised from time to time, in which case you will be notified of the changes, and the new provisions will apply from that date.

You agree that we may, where appropriate, as agent on your behalf, engage other law firms within our network of correspondents ("the Network") to work alongside us on any matter on their standard terms of engagement, a copy of which will be available on request.

You agree that you will not be a client of any law firm in the Network unless we have engaged such law firm on your behalf as described above, or you have an agreed engagement directly with that law firm.

No variation of these terms shall be effective unless it is in writing and is signed by one of our partners. You will be entitled to terminate the services if the variation is unacceptable to you. If you have any questions you want to raise about these terms and conditions, please speak to the partner nominated in the Engagement Email.

### **Retainer**

We shall be entitled to assume that those who hold themselves out as having authority to retain us have that authority.

Nevertheless, we may require a certified copy of a board resolution approving or confirming our appointment. Before we start acting for you, under regulations relating to money laundering and other matters which regulate us and other professional services firms, we may have to obtain other information in order to verify your identity. If satisfactory evidence of your identity cannot be obtained within a reasonable time we will have to decline your instructions. To perform the services required of us efficiently and cost-effectively, it is important that we receive as quickly as possible accurate, up to date

and complete information and instructions, and we are then kept informed of any changes or developments. We shall provide legal advice on the basis of the information supplied by you. We shall not seek verification of that information and cannot be held responsible for advice given on the basis of incorrect and inaccurate information. We will only provide advice on matters referred to us. We will also not be responsible if your instructions are not given in sufficient time to allow us adequately to protect your interests.

### **Conflicts**

BDM Law LLP provides a range of legal services to many clients. Some of these clients will operate in the same industry or sector as you, and some may have or may develop commercial interests that you may consider are adverse to yours. In retaining us, you accept that unless specifically agreed otherwise, this will not in principle prevent us from acting for current and future clients who are or may come to be in this position. We maintain conflict-checking procedures to identify conflicting interests or duties to enable us to consider and honour our legal and professional obligations, but we cannot be certain we will identify all conflicts that exist or may develop. We cannot always anticipate what you might perceive to be a conflict. You are therefore asked to tell us of any such conflicts, and if we believe adopting appropriate procedures can safeguard your interests we will discuss and try to agree with you arrangements that will be put in place to preserve confidentiality and impartiality.

### **Communication**

**Reporting:** Clients have differing requirements for the frequency and detail of reports. Please let the partner responsible for your matter know what you would like and with whom we should deal on routine and more important aspects.

**Electronic communication:** Generally, we shall communicate with and convey documents to you and third parties by unencrypted email via the Internet. If you prefer us not to use the Internet, please let us know. Otherwise, in accepting this method you acknowledge that email is not always an instantaneous nor secure method of communication and may become delayed, lost, incomplete, corrupted or otherwise altered or intercepted. We shall endeavour to ensure that electronic communications that we send are virus-free and you undertake to do likewise for any communication you send us, but neither you nor we shall have any liability whatsoever for any delay, failure to receive, corruption or alteration, interception of any e-mails sent between us or to third parties, nor for any virus that may enter our respective systems.

### **The team**

We will advise you of the lawyers and other staff that will be acting on your behalf (fee-earners) and let you know their status. They will have the appropriate level of supervision and experience to handle the matter as efficiently and economically as possible. There may be times when it is necessary or appropriate for those handling your matter to be changed or additional persons deployed to assist. When this happens we shall discuss it with you. It may be necessary for your matter-handlers to be away from the office. To deal with these absences, we have in place arrangements whereby someone of similar status and experience will stand in and provide cover on a temporary basis. If you then need to talk to someone you should ask to be put in touch with the person "pairing" for the matter-handler. You will be warned in advance of any long absence of a team member, and you will be given details of the covering arrangements.

## **Matters involving the prospect of litigation**

**Documents and evidence:** If the matter may involve litigation, it is vital that you ensure that all relevant documents and evidence are preserved. These include electronic documents such as e mails and other electronic communications, word-processed documents, databases as well as material stored in computer systems and other electronic devices such as PDAs, laptops and mobile telephones. This is regardless of whether the documents and evidence are favourable or unfavourable to your or another party's case. This is necessary for us to advise and assist you properly in handling any prospective or actual litigation as well as to comply with your legal obligations. For example, in proceedings before English courts and arbitral and other tribunals a party is under an obligation to disclose to its opponent all relevant documents, and a failure to preserve documentation or evidence may result in inferences being drawn that are adverse to your case.

**Statements of truth:** In connection with English High Court litigation it may be necessary for you to verify the truth of documents prepared for you such as pleadings and statements. A verification that proves to be false can carry exposure to civil and criminal penalties and costs and you must therefore read these documents with care and be sure that you understand them.

**Costs:** England is often regarded as a favourable jurisdiction for litigation because of the successful party's ability to recover legal costs from the losing party or parties. When you win a case, however, you will not be awarded all of the expenses incurred by you in the litigation. It is also possible that you may not obtain an order that your opponents pay any of your costs or that your opponents will not be able to pay any costs order made against them. In all circumstances you will still be primarily responsible for all our fees and disbursements incurred in the case irrespective of any subsequent recovery of costs for which we shall then account to you. If the outcome of the litigation (or aspects of it) is unfavourable to you, you may be held responsible for your opponents' costs as well as your own. English High Court and arbitral procedures also have rules that allow orders to be made for immediate payment of costs at interim hearings, and there can be orders to put up security. You must therefore be prepared to make provisions of this kind at short notice. We shall explain this further and comment on the sort of orders that may be encountered when a prospect of litigation arises.

## **Assignment and transfer of business**

In respect of any retainer of our services, neither party may assign any of its rights or obligations to any third party without the prior written consent of the other party.

## **Rights of third parties**

The rights of third parties arising under the provisions of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 or otherwise are specifically excluded from the terms upon which we perform any services for you. Unless otherwise expressly agreed by us in writing, any advice or documentation prepared by us resulting from your retainer shall be solely for your use and benefit and you agree it will not be passed to any other person other than to your other professional service providers and bankers or as may be required by law or mandatory regulation. We will not accept any liability or obligation to any person other than you.

You agree that you will not bring any claim whether in contract, tort, equity, under statute or otherwise against any Partner, or any consultant to, or employee or agent of BDM Law LLP or of the Network or any service company owned or controlled by BDM Law LLP and

all Partners, consultants, employees and agents shall be entitled to rely on the terms of this agreement insofar as they limit their liability.

### **Confidentiality**

We will keep confidential all information we receive regarding your business and affairs unless you instruct us to disclose that information, it is already in the public domain or we are required by law or mandatory regulation to disclose it.

### **Fees and expenses**

We will be pleased to discuss alternative ways of charging for our services, but as a rule our charges are based on the following approach:

**Hourly rates:** We will tell you the hourly rates of the nominated matter-handlers. These are intended to be fair and reasonable having regard to all the circumstances and are based on the seniority and status of the matter-handlers; our knowledge of the matter as well as its complexity and importance; the urgency of action required; the degree of specialist knowledge or expertise involved; the value and importance of the subject-matter involved. If these factors change so that, for example, the matter is or becomes more complex than anticipated, we will discuss revising the rates with you. As our matter-handlers become more senior their hourly rates will be revised upwards. Our rates are also reviewed annually and may change. In both cases, we shall advise you.

**Tasks charged:** Time charged will include time spent in meetings with you, your representatives and others; travelling; considering any aspect of the matter; drafting, preparing and working on papers; correspondence; research; investigation; making and receiving telephone calls and attending mediations and hearings (including time spent waiting) before any court, arbitral or other tribunal.

**Expenses (disbursements):** The hourly rates do not include disbursements. These are internal expenses such as communication expenses (fax, postage, international telephone calls and after hours secretarial and other support services); travelling expenses incurred in attending meetings or hearings outside our office and printing, binding and copying charges. External expenses include courier charges; filing, registration and search fees; information database searches and other expenses of a similar nature. Where large disbursements are necessary, for example court and arbitration fees; engaging other service providers such as counsel, overseas lawyers and other experts; foreign travel; external printing and copying; setting up and management of litigation support databases, we shall obtain your approval before committing to that expenditure. We may need to ask for payment in advance prior to engaging other service providers and they will be retained by us acting as your agent and you will be responsible for their fees as well as our own.

**VAT:** When applicable, Value Added Tax and equivalent taxes will be added to all fees and disbursements at the appropriate rate.

It is important that at the outset of the matter we confirm the identity of our client and whether invoices rendered to them are subject to VAT.

### **Payments on account**

In certain cases, particularly when litigation is involved or when we shall be incurring a substantial financial exposure on your behalf, we will ask you for payments on account of the expected fees and disbursements. These requests shall be payable on receipt. Money held on account of these fees and disbursements will be held in our client account and

may be offset against interim or final bills. The amount offset will be shown on the bill and will be transferred from client account to our account within 14 days of the date of the bill as permitted by the Solicitors' Accounts Rules.

## **Bills**

In part to help you to keep abreast of the costs being incurred, we shall deliver interim bills for our fees and disbursements to you at regular intervals - generally monthly. Such a bill will relate to the period to which it applies, and until litigation of any type is commenced shall be regarded as relating to Non-Contentious Business. A final bill will be rendered at the end of the matter for any unbilled fees and disbursements. Your rights may include a right to object to the bill by applying to the court for an assessment of it under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974 or by complaining to the Legal Ombudsman (see the section YOUR CONCERNS below). A record will be kept of the time spent by all fee-earners on the matter, and our bills will generally show the period over which the work charged was being carried out and by whom; a narrative of the work done; a breakdown showing how the fee has been calculated; itemised details of disbursements paid or incurred. Every bill will on its reverse contain details of your rights and our obligations in the event of a dispute as to the amount of our fees and disbursements. Bills, whether interim or final, shall be regarded as statutory bills in accordance with the current Acts of Parliament, statutory instruments and Rules and Regulations of the Law Society, the Solicitors Regulation Authority or any other bodies that regulate English solicitors fees and invoicing requirements.

## **Payment of bills and requests for payment on account**

Payments of both bills and requests for payment on account should be made in the currency in which they are denominated and should be made gross of all bank, agents' or other transmission charges. Bills (whether interim or final) are payable within 14 calendar days of their date. Upon expiry of that period, we reserve the right to charge interest and a collection fee on any billed sums overdue in accordance with the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 as amended and the provisions to be found on-line at [www.payontime.co.uk](http://www.payontime.co.uk), as well as to bring enforcement proceedings. If there is a failure to pay any payment requested on account or any bill, we also reserve the right to suspend work on the matter until payment is made in full and, failing that payment, to cease acting for you altogether in relation both to the matter and to any other matters which we may be handling for you. This will not affect our right to bill you for all work undertaken before suspension of activity or ceasing to act for you.

Should we have to suspend or cease acting for you we shall give you advance notice. We will not be responsible in any way whatsoever for any loss incurred as a result of our suspension or cessation of work. If you expect someone else to settle our bills or requests for payments on account, they must do so promptly and in accordance with these terms. If they do not, then we shall continue to look to you for payment.

Where in relation to a matter we have engaged on your behalf another entity or person in the Network we will include their charges in our bill unless you ask us to arrange for them to bill you directly.

## **Client money**

Any money that we receive or hold on your behalf will be held by us in a separate interest-bearing client account or, at your request, will be remitted to you or applied as you direct. Unless it is below the currently authorised threshold level set by the Solicitors' Accounts Rules, you will be credited with any interest earned on the money while it is held on your

behalf. For further details we refer you to the Solicitors Accounts Rules generally which will be found at <http://www.sra.org.uk/accounts-rules/>.

## **Regulatory matters**

**Money laundering:** Under English money laundering law and regulations we are required to operate certain verification and reporting procedures. In some cases we will need to obtain satisfactory evidence of client identity before work can be carried out.

If there is any suspicion of money laundering, we may have to disclose the circumstances to the appropriate authorities without advising the suspect and suspend work or terminate our instructions. We will not be liable for any loss you may suffer as a result of our disclosure of information, compliance with any instruction given by any appropriate authority or the suspension or termination of our retainer.

**Data protection:** Any personal data you supply to us to carry out work for you is received on the basis that you have complied with all applicable data protection legislation and that its receipt, storage and processing by us will comply with that legislation. We shall keep the data and your own details secure on our computer systems, but we may use that data in any way we consider is necessary to carry out our duties to you or to maintain and preserve our records. This may include releasing the data to third parties or transferring it outside the European Union. We may also use your details to provide you with information and details of our services that we think may be useful or of interest to you. In addition, we may use the information for marketing, statistical analysis and profiling client requirements. If you do not want your details to be used in this way let us know. You have the right to request a copy of any personal information we hold about you and an explanation as to how we use it, as well as to have any inaccuracies corrected. We will ask for confirmation of identity before we disclose that information and may charge a small administration fee to process the request. Please send requests direct to our Data Protection Officer at our London office.

The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000: BDM Law LLP has not sought authorisation under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. Under Solicitors Regulation Authority regulations we can offer a limited range of investment services as an incidental or necessary part of the legal work we are doing for you. We will, however, only act as your legal adviser and we will not give advice on the commercial merits of a transaction. Any advice from us should not be interpreted as an invitation or inducement (direct or indirect) to engage in investment activity.

## **Termination**

You may withdraw your instructions to us to handle a matter by notice in writing at any time. If there is good reason, we may also decide to cease acting for you, for example, if you do not pay an interim bill or a payment on account or if you do not give us proper instructions. If we are going to stop acting for you we will give you reasonable notice. In any event if we cease to act for you, you will pay our fees and disbursements incurred up to the time of termination.

## **Care and control of documents**

After completing the matter or should we cease acting for you for any reason before the work is completed, we shall be entitled to keep all your documents so long as there is any money due to us for our fees and disbursements. Once our bills are paid, we shall keep the documents (except those that you ask to be returned) for ten years. We have your authority then to destroy the documents. We will not destroy documents that you ask us

in writing to keep in safe custody, but we may charge a separate fee for this storage and any retrieval that may be requested.

### **Duty of care and liability**

We will owe you the duties recognised in English law as owed by a lawyer to his client, including a duty of reasonable care in relation to the legal services provided. Unless expressly otherwise agreed, we assume no responsibility in relation to the commercial as opposed to legal advisability of any course of action. Nor shall we be responsible for providing or reviewing tax, financial or other specialist advice outside the scope of our expertise; matters subject to a law other than English law; checking (or otherwise being responsible for) the services provided by another adviser. Further, we shall not be liable to you for any loss whatsoever arising out of or in connection with our services unless the loss is directly caused by our negligence or other breach of obligation. Where any loss is suffered by you for which we and any other person or persons including yourselves are jointly or in part responsible, the loss recoverable from us shall be limited so as to be in proportion to the respective parties' fault. Where the liability of any other person to you is limited in any way our liability to you shall not exceed the amount that would have been awarded in the absence of that limitation.

### **Limitation of liability**

Please note that unless we agree otherwise, the overall aggregate liability of BDM Law LLP and any service company owned or controlled by or on behalf of BDM Law LLP and of all Partners, Consultants to and employees and agents of BDM Law LLP and any service company owned or controlled by or on behalf of any of BDM Law LLP in any circumstances whatsoever, whether in contract, tort, equity, 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 of £3 million (Three Million Pounds Sterling).

For the purposes of such a limitation, where we, on your behalf, engage another law firm or other entity within the Network we shall not assume any responsibility for the accuracy of their legal or other advice to you. Notwithstanding this, to the extent that there may be any liability on our part (whether or not you have a separate engagement letter in place with that entity), the aggregate liability of all entities within the Network, including BDM Law LLP, all Partners, employees, agents and independent contractors of any entity in the Network and of any service company owned or controlled by or on behalf of any entity in the Network, shall be limited to the sum of £3 million (Three Million Pounds Sterling). The enforceability of this limitation of liability shall be determined in accordance with the law as it stands at the time as the claim is first made against BDM Law LLP or relevant entity within the Network.

### **Your concerns**

If at any time you have any worries about the way in which the matter is being handled by us, or about our bill, you should contact the Partner handling the matter to raise your concerns. If you feel unable to speak to that person then please contact one of the other Partners to discuss the matter. Most matters can be resolved quickly in accordance with our Complaints Procedure, a copy of which will be provided on request. If resolution is not possible, we shall co-operate fully in having the appropriate review body deal with the problem. In this connection, if your concerns are not satisfied within eight weeks of them being raised with the relevant Partner, you have the right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman. Information as to how to do this can be found by contacting him at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ; tel 0300 555 0333; email

enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk; web site: <http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/>. Should it still not, however, prove possible to resolve problems then:

**Governing law and jurisdiction**

Any and all differences and disputes arising out of or in the course of our retainer shall be finally resolved under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts in London, and the laws, both substantive and procedural, of England and Wales, provided that we may in our sole and unfettered discretion commence proceedings against you in any other court.

**BDM Law LLP**

BDM Law LLP is registered in England and Wales (with registered number OC399298) and is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The rules governing the professional conduct of solicitors may be accessed at: [www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/code-of-conduct.page](http://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/code-of-conduct.page). A full list of members is available for inspection at 9 Devonshire Square, London EC2M 4YF, United Kingdom, the firm's registered office address.