

Terms and Conditions (v5)

The following terms will apply to all matters handled on behalf of clients, unless otherwise agreed in writing and my contract with you shall be on the basis of these conditions only.

1. Why a notary?

It is almost always the case that you have been asked to see a notary because you have a document that needs to be used abroad. Seeing a notary is never a mere rubber-stamping exercise. The international duty of a Notary involves a high standard of care. This is not only towards the client but also to anyone who may rely on the document and to Governments or officials of other countries. These people are entitled to assume that a Notary will ensure full compliance with the relevant requirements both here and abroad; and to rely on the Notary's register and records. Great care is essential at every stage to minimise the risks of errors, omissions, alterations, fraud, forgery, money laundering, the use of false identity, and so on.

I offer appointments during business hours and occasionally outside of business hours in exceptional circumstances. I am also prepared to make home visits or visit corporate clients at their place of business. If the notarial appointments take place outside of my office I will make an additional charge to cover travelling time and expenses. Occasionally I may not be able to see you within the timeframe you require, or I may decide that I am not able to act for you, in which case I will advise you that that is the case and will provide you with the necessary information to locate an alternative notary.

2. Signatures

The Notary should normally witness your signature. Please do not sign the document in advance of your appointment with me.

3. Papers to be sent to me in advance

It will save time, expense and mistakes if, as long before the appointment as possible, you can let me have the originals or photocopies of:

- The documents to be notarised;
- Any letter or other form of instruction which you have received about what has to be done with the documents;
- Your evidence of identification.

4. Identification

I will need you to produce by way of formal identification the original of, in preferred order:

- Your current passport; or, if not available
- A current photocard driving licence or national identity card.

If neither of the above are available, at least two of the following may be required:

- A current government or police issued certificate bearing a photo or other formal means of identification;
- A utility bill, credit card or bank statement showing your current address which should not be more than 3 months old, or a council tax bill. Mobile phone bills will not be acceptable.

You must also bring any other means of ID which may be referred to in the papers sent to you as being required, such as a foreign identity card. I may also ask to see further evidence of identity such as marriage certificates etc and will advise you of this if necessary. We reserve the right to verify and pass your personal details and ID to third parties for verification in compliance with anti-money laundering requirements in force from time to time.

5. Proof of names

In a case where the name on the document is different from the name you are currently using, or there has been a variation in the form of spelling of the name over the years, please provide me as appropriate with Certificates of Birth, Marriage or Divorce Decree or Change of Name Deed showing all the different names that you use. If there has been a change of name, then I will need to see a copy of the Deed Poll or Statutory Declaration which dealt with it.

6. Advice on the document

If you bring a document to me for authorisation as a Notary, I will advise you as to the formalities required for completing it. However, I will not be attempting to advise you about the transaction itself.

7. Written translations

It is essential that you understand what you are signing.

- If the document is in a foreign language which you do not understand sufficiently, I may have to insist that a translation be obtained. If I arrange for a translation, a further fee will be payable and I will provide you with details of this.
- If you arrange for a professional translation, the translator should add his/her name, address, relevant qualification, and a certificate stating: "Document X is a true and complete translation of document Y, to which this translation is attached."

8. Oral interpreter

If you and I cannot understand each other because of a language difficulty, we may have to make arrangements for a competent interpreter to be available at our interview and this may involve a further fee. Please inform us in advance if you need to arrange for an interpreter.

9. Companies, partnerships etc.

If a document is to be signed by you on behalf of a company, a partnership, a charity, club or other incorporated body, there are further requirements on which I may have to insist. Please be prepared for these and telephone with any point of difficulty before attending the appointment.

In each case I may require:

- Evidence of identity of the authorised signatory as listed above;
- A copy of the current letterhead showing the registered office if it is a company;
- A Letter of Authority, Minute, Resolution or Power of Attorney, authorising you to sign the document.

Additionally, for companies, I may require the Certificate of Incorporation and any Change of Name, a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and details of directors and secretaries. In all instances I will be carrying out various company searches, which may have an effect on the level of fees charged.

Additionally, for partnerships, clubs etc, I may require a Partnership Agreement, relevant Trust Deed, Charter, Constitution or Rules.

10. Notarial charges and expenses

Details of my charges are set out below. Please note that if I have to make payments on your behalf such as legalisation fees, translator or interpreter fees, or other costs such as travelling expenses, your approval to these will be obtained and you are normally required to make payment in advance of any such amounts.

Charges: We base our hourly fee on £350 with a minimum fee of £220. We charge for all time spent in relation to the matter, including preliminary advice, meeting you, dealing with the document, drafting notarial certificates, preparing our records, and any emails, letters, phone calls, etc. We can often agree with you a fixed fee.

If a matter becomes protracted, complicated, urgent, or requires more work than originally anticipated, I reserve the right to review any fee estimate or fixed fee. Examples of this could include where additional documents are required to be notarised, additional translations or legalisations are needed to meet the requirements of the receiving jurisdiction, third party fees are adjusted to reflect external factors such as fuel price and exchange rate changes and so on. Any additional work may be charged at my hourly rate, plus any applicable disbursements. I will notify you as soon as reasonably possible if this becomes necessary. I will notify you of any changes in the fee estimate as soon as possible.

Unless we agree otherwise, our fees are payable when the document has been prepared, and we may retain the document until full payment is made. We normally accept payments by bank transfer only. In the rare case that we are unable to complete the notarial transaction, you are still liable to pay for the work we have done. If you are a business and wish to pay by bank transfer after submission of an invoice, we are happy to consider this, but it is likely to increase our charge. If the matter is simple, I will endeavour to charge a fixed fee to include disbursements such as legalisation fees, postage, consular agent fees, courier fees, travelling expenses, translating costs and so on.

Disbursements: Some documents require legalisation before they will be accepted for use in the receiving jurisdiction by obtaining an apostille through the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and, for some countries, additional legalisation is required through the relevant embassy or consulate. The cost of legalisation, including agent's fees and postage to and from the legalising authority, varies from matter to matter. The cost of posting varies based on whether it is to an England and Wales recipient or an international recipient, as well as what type of service is used, such as Royal Mail or courier. We will inform you of the costs where possible in advance. Travelling fees will be based on the time spent travelling multiplied by my hourly fee, plus any fee uplift, subject to a minimum fee of £220 plus disbursements.

11. Typical stages of a notarial transaction

Each notarial matter is different and the requirements and timescales will vary greatly according to whether the client is a private individual or a company and, in particular, according to the processing times of third parties such as the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, legalisation agents, translating agencies and couriers. Some of the typical key stages are likely to include:

- Receiving and reviewing the documents to be notarised together with any instructions you may have received;
- Liaising with your legal advisers or other bodies to obtain the necessary documentation to deal with the document, for example information from Companies House or foreign registries, powers of attorney etc;
- Checking the identity, capacity and authority of the person who is to sign the document;
- If a document is to be certified, checking with the issuing authorities that the document or award is genuine. In the case of academic awards, this would entail checking with the appropriate academic institutions;
- Meeting with the signatory to verify their identity and to ascertain that they understand what they are signing and that they are doing so of their own free will and ensuring that the document is executed correctly;
- Drafting and affixing or endorsing a notarial certificate to the document;
- Arranging for the legalisation of the document as appropriate;
- Arranging for the storage of copies of all notarised documents in accordance with the requirements of the Notarial Practice Rules 2019.

12. Notarial records and data protection

When I carry out my work for you, I am required to make an entry in a formal register, which is kept by me as a permanent record. I will retain a copy of the notarised documentation with that record. My practice is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. Personal data received from clients is held securely and not capable of being accessed externally. Data collected as part of notarial records is used solely for the purposes of meeting our professional legal responsibilities as Notaries Public. For full details of my privacy policy and data processing terms please see my website.

13. Insurance

In the interests of my clients, I maintain professional indemnity insurance at a level of at least £1,000,000.00 per claim.

14. Termination / your right to cancel

You may terminate your instructions to me at any time by giving me reasonable written notice. All fees and disbursements incurred up to the date of termination will be charged.

Consumer Cooling Off Cancellation Period – Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013 (“CCR”): Where the CCR apply, typically where you are an individual consumer and my contract with you was concluded either at or following a meeting with you or by a form of distance communication, you have a cancellation period of 14 days after the date you sign my retainer letter or the date on which you continue to give me instructions, whichever is earlier.

You can cancel your contract within the cancellation period by giving me a clear statement and I will reimburse all payments received from you by the same method that you used, at no cost to you, without undue delay, and not later than 14 days after the day on which you inform me of the cancellation.

If you ask us to begin work during the cancellation period, you can still cancel but you must pay me an amount in proportion to the work which I have performed and this proportion will not be reimbursed to you.

15. Termination by me

I reserve the right to terminate my engagement by you if I have good reason to do so, for example, if you do not pay a bill or comply with my request for a payment on account or you fail to give me the co-operation which I am reasonably entitled to expect.

16. Force majeure

I will not be liable for any loss or damage arising as a direct or indirect result of the supply of services being prevented, hindered, delayed or rendered uneconomic by reason of circumstances beyond our control, including but not limited to any act of God, war, riot, strike, lock out, trade dispute or labour disturbance, accident, breakdown of machinery, fire, flood, storm or difficulty or increased expense in obtaining information or services of any description.

17. Foreign law

We do not advise on foreign law but act solely in an evidential, authentication capacity.

18. Rights of third parties

Save as otherwise specifically agreed in writing in advance, we accept no liability for the rights of third parties resulting from any Notarial act provided.

19. Jurisdiction

English law shall be the applicable law and the English courts shall have sole jurisdiction in the case of any dispute. If any provision of these terms is held by any court or other competent authority to be void or unenforceable in whole or part, these terms shall continue to be valid as to the other provisions thereof and the remainder of the affected provision.

20. Complaints

My notarial practice is regulated through the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury: The Faculty Office, 1, The Sanctuary, Westminster, London SW1P 3JT. Tel: 020 7222 5381. Email: Faculty.office@1thesanctuary.com. Website: www.facultyoffice.org.uk.

If you are dissatisfied about the service you have received please do not hesitate to contact me.

If we are unable to resolve the matter you may then complain to the Notaries Society of which I am a member, who have a Complaints Procedure which is approved by the Faculty Office. This procedure is free to use and is designed to provide a quick resolution to any dispute.

In that case please write, but do not enclose any original documents, with full details of your complaint to: The Secretary of The Notaries Society, P O Box 7655, Milton Keynes MK11 9NR. Email: secretary@thenotariessociety.org.uk.

If you have any difficulty in making a complaint in writing please do not hesitate to call the Notaries Society or the Faculty Office for assistance.

Finally, even if you have your complaint considered under the Notaries Society Approved Complaints Procedure, you may at the end of that procedure, or after a period of 8 weeks from the date you first notified me that you were dissatisfied, make your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, if you are not happy with the result: Legal Ombudsman, PO BOX 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH. Tel: 0300 555 0333. Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk. Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk.

If you decide to make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, you must refer your matter to the Legal Ombudsman within six months from the conclusion of the complaint process.

I hope that these notes are of help to you in understanding what is expected of each of us.

21. Use of technology, devices and artificial intelligence

I may use technology, digital devices and artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist me in providing my notarial services, for example for administration, translation, research, checking, summarising or drafting.

Where I use AI tools, I will always apply my own professional judgment to the output before relying on it. I do not rely on automated decision-making technology, including AI, without appropriate human review and intervention.

Before using any new technology or AI tool in my notarial practice, I carry out an appropriate risk assessment, proportionate to the nature of the technology, the information being processed and the type of work involved.

I will inform you if I have used AI in a way that materially affects the notarial service I provide to you. By instructing me, you agree to my use of AI tools in this way. Your personal data will be processed in accordance with my Privacy Notice.