

APPENDIX 6

CODE OF CONDUCT

The CILEx Code of Conduct

This is the Code of Conduct (the **Code**) of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (**CILEx**) and its regulatory body, ILEX Professional Standards Limited (**IPS**). It sets out the principles to which CILEx members, CILEx practitioners and Authorised Bodies must adhere in their conduct, practice and professional performance, and the outcomes they must meet.

Membership and regulated practice carry both privileges and responsibilities. They require that in your conduct, practice and professional performance you:

- develop and use your professional knowledge and skills for the benefit of those who use your services
- maintain good professional relationships with others
- act in a way that promotes confidence and trust in the legal professions and the provision of legal services.

Core Principles

You must adhere to the following core principles in the work you do and the decisions you make. The principles also help the public to know the standards of behaviour that are expected of you.

You must:

1. Uphold the rule of law and the impartial administration of justice.
2. Maintain high standards of professional and personal conduct and justify public trust in you, your profession and the provision of legal services.

3. Behave with honesty and integrity.
4. Comply with your legal and regulatory obligations and deal with your regulators and ombudsmen openly, promptly and co-operatively.
5. Act competently in the best interests of your client and respect client confidentiality.
6. Treat everyone fairly and without prejudice.
7. Ensure your independence is not compromised.
8. Act effectively and in accordance with proper governance and sound financial and risk management principles.
9. Protect client money and assets.

Application

You must comply with the Code whenever it applies to you. Your professional and personal conduct will be judged against it and a breach may lead to action being taken against you. Compliance with the Code will be taken into account in considering information which raises a question about your conduct, practice or professional performance.

The Principles Explained

Each core principle is supported by a series of outcomes. You must adhere to the principles and meet the outcomes.

Where IPS provides guidance to the Code of Conduct, this is not exhaustive but is intended to help you to understand our expectations of you. Compliance with any guidance may not be an absolute requirement but you may be called upon to justify a departure from it if your behaviour is called into question.

Definitions

In the Code: **You** and **your** means a CILEx member, CILEx practitioner or Authorised Body.

1. Uphold the rule of law and the impartial administration of justice.

You must:

- 1.1 Understand and comply with your primary and overriding duty to the court, obey court orders and do nothing which would place you in contempt.
- 1.2 Not knowingly **or recklessly** allow the court to be misled.

2. Maintain high standards of professional and personal conduct and justify public trust in you, your profession and the provision of legal services.

You must:

- 2.1 Advise your client of your professional status and that you are authorised to practise and/or regulated by IPS. Where your practice is regulated by IPS your business communications must confirm that.
- 2.2 Not engage in any conduct that could undermine or affect adversely the confidence and trust placed in you and your profession by your client, your employer, professional colleagues, the public and others.

3 Behave with honesty and integrity.

You must:

- 3.1 Be honest in all your dealings and in all financial matters.
- 3.2 Not intentionally mislead anyone you deal with.
- 3.3 Report to IPS without delay any suspicion that another has breached the Code unless bound by legal professional privilege or client confidentiality.
- 3.4 Report to the relevant authority any misconduct of another which falls to be regulated by that authority unless bound by legal professional privilege or client confidentiality.
- 3.5 Not hold yourself out as having a qualification or professional status that you do not possess.

4 Comply with your legal and regulatory obligations and deal with regulators and ombudsmen openly, promptly and co-operatively.

You must:

- 4.1 Understand and comply with the law and regulation applicable to you.
- 4.2 Take all practicable steps to ensure you can demonstrate that you have adhered to the Core Principles and met the associated Outcomes.
- 4.3 Not place others in breach of any regulatory requirement or rule of professional conduct.
- 4.4 Respond openly, promptly and co-operatively to communications from your regulators and ombudsmen.

5 Act competently in the best interests of your client and respect client confidentiality.

You must:

- 5.1 Maintain a high level of competence in your legal work and ensure that your legal knowledge is current and of sufficient depth for your role.

- 5.2 Identify and address any deficiencies in your knowledge or training, or that of your staff, so as to maintain a level of competence and knowledge appropriate to the work and level of responsibility in which you or your staff are engaged.
- 5.3 Act only on matters that are within your competence.
- 5.4 Not act for a client in an area of law where you have insufficient knowledge or experience.
- 5.5 Act on your client's instructions except when to do so would involve a breach of the law or this Code.
- 5.6 Not act in a matter where you do not have the right or are not authorised to act.
- 5.7 Adequately explain and agree with your client the terms upon which your services are to be provided, including the extent of the services, payment and the likely or anticipated cost, outcome and timescale for the advice and services to be provided.
- 5.8 Provide prompt, clear and accurate information and advice to your client, advise them openly and honestly and keep them up to date with information they need about the work you are performing for them within agreed timescales.
- 5.9 Inform your client fully as to your complaints procedure including their right to refer a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman or IPS where appropriate.
- 5.10 Not charge a client for the cost of handling a complaint.
- 5.11 Where your practice is regulated by IPS, include in the terms of business with your client, a statement that IPS is your regulator and may seek access to their papers and that, in these circumstances, you will grant IPS access unless the client objects.
- 5.12 Maintain confidentiality in respect of your client's affairs except where to do so would conflict with the law or the Code or where your client explicitly authorises you to disclose confidential information.

6 Treat everyone fairly and without prejudice.

You must:

- 6.1 Ensure your business or your role within it, your business model, processes and practices adequately:
- assist consumers and clients to access justice and the full range of legal services; and
 - provide each client with equal opportunity to secure a favourable outcome in their matter, irrespective of their vulnerability or susceptibility to discrimination.

7 Ensure your independence is not compromised.

You must:

- 7.1 Not act or continue to act where there is a conflict of interest or a significant risk that a conflict may arise.
- 7.2 Not act or continue to act for a client if you reasonably consider that they are providing instructions under duress or undue influence, except where to withdraw from acting would be detrimental to the client's interests.
- 7.3 Where instructions are provided by a third party, confirm them with your client to ensure they are your client's own instructions.
- 7.4 Ensure that none of your commercial interests or financial arrangements adversely affect the independence of your advice or your ability to act impartially.

8 Act effectively and in accordance with proper governance and sound financial and risk management principles.

You must:

- 8.1 Maintain proper standards of work and keep accurate records. In matters such as communications with clients, professional colleagues and others,

your records should be contemporaneous and in any event must be made as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 8.2 Ensure that you properly supervise tasks that you have asked others to perform on your behalf, recognising that you remain accountable for any such work.
- 8.3 Ensure that anyone you ask to perform work on your behalf is appropriately qualified and authorised to perform it.
- 8.4 Ensure that clients' matters are supervised and regularly checked by those with sufficient competence and experience to assess the quality of the work and to ensure issues identified are addressed.
- 8.5 Adhere to effective management, oversight and reporting structures.
- 8.6 Comply with effective procedures to ensure compliance with your legal and regulatory obligations.

9 Protect client money and assets.

You must:

- 9.1 Identify, assess, manage and promptly address risks to money and assets entrusted to you by clients and others.
- 9.2 Effectively monitor the financial stability of your business or your role within it, so as to protect client money and assets from risks associated with the financial position of your business or the business of your employer.

Further Help & Guidance

If you are unsure how this Code applies to you, contact IPS on 01234 845770 or info@ilexstandards.org.uk