

# Ward Williams Limited

## Chartered Accountants

### Standard Terms Of Business

November 2018

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The purpose of this schedule is to set out the standard terms of business that apply to all engagements accepted. All work carried out is subject to these terms except where changes are expressly agreed in writing.

These standard terms of business are applicable to all types of entities (e.g. companies, LLPs, charities, friendly societies, academies, pension schemes, etc.). Any reference therefore to director or company should be interpreted as appropriate for the entity type (e.g. partner, trustee, governor, charity, LLP, etc.)

#### 1. Professional Obligations

1.1 As required by the *Provision of Services Regulations 2009* (SI 2009/2999), details of the firm's professional registrations, including audit registration where applicable, can be found on our website address.

1.2 We will observe and act in accordance with the bye-laws and regulations of our professional body together with their code of ethics. We accept instructions to act for you on this basis. In particular you give us authority to correct errors made by HM Revenue & Customs where we become aware of them. We will not be liable for any loss, damage or cost arising from our compliance with statutory or regulatory obligations.

#### Professional indemnity insurance

1.3 Our professional indemnity insurer is Barbican PI Protect, Barlow House, Minshull Street, 33 Gracechurch St, London, EC3V 0BT. The territorial coverage is worldwide excluding professional business carried out from any office in the United States of America or Canada and excludes any action for a claim brought in any court in the United States or Canada.

#### 2 Investment services

2.1 Since we are not authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority then we may have to refer you to someone who is authorised if you need advice on investments. However, as we are licensed by our professional body, we may be able to provide certain investment services that are complementary to, or arise out of, the professional services we are providing to you.

2.2 Such advice may include:

- advise you on investments generally, but not recommend a particular investment or type of investment;
- refer you to a Permitted Third Party (PTP) (an independent firm authorised by the FCA), assist you and the PTP during the course of any advice given by that party and comment on, or explain, the advice received (but not make alternative recommendations). The PTP will issue you with his own terms and conditions letter, will be remunerated separately for his services and will take full responsibility for compliance with the requirements of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000;

- advise you in connection with the disposal of an investment, other than your rights in a pension policy or scheme;
- advise and assist you in transactions concerning shares or other securities not quoted on a recognised exchange;
- assist you in making arrangements for transactions in investments in certain circumstances; and
- manage investments or act as trustee (or donee of a power of attorney) where decisions to invest are taken on the advice of an authorised person.
- 2.3 For corporate clients we may also, on the understanding that the shares or other securities of the company are not publicly traded:
  - advise the company, existing or prospective shareholders in relation to exercising rights, taking benefits or share options, valuations and methods of such valuations;
  - arrange any agreements in connection with the issue, sale or transfer of the company's shares or other securities;
  - arrange for the issue of new shares; and
  - act as the addressee to receive confirmation of acceptance of offer documents etc.

2.4 In the unlikely event that we cannot meet our liabilities to you, you may be able to claim compensation under the Chartered Accountants' Compensation Scheme in respect of exempt regulated activities undertaken.

2.5 Where the firm is providing insurance mediation services (including fee protection), we are not authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority. However, we are included on the Register maintained by the Financial Conduct Authority so that we can carry on insurance mediation activity, which is broadly the advising on, selling, and administration of insurance contracts. This part of our business, including arrangements for complaints or redress if something goes wrong, is regulated by our professional body. The register can be accessed via the Financial Conduct Authority website at [www.fca.org.uk/register](http://www.fca.org.uk/register).

### **Financial Promotions**

2.6 To enable us to provide you with a proper service, there may be occasions when we will need to contact you without your express permission concerning investment business matters. For example, it may be in your interests to sell a particular investment and we would wish to inform you of this. We may therefore contact you in such circumstances, but would only do so in our normal office hours. We shall of course comply with any restrictions you may wish to impose which you notify to us in writing.

### **Client money**

2.7 Please note that we are not authorised to hold client money in connection with our designated investment business.

2.8 If you have any questions regarding investment business or require any further information please contact us.

### **Not licensed or Authorised**

2.9 We are not authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority to conduct Investment Business. If you require investment business services we will refer you to a firm authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority.

## **3 Commissions or other benefits**

3.1 In some circumstances, commissions or other benefits may become payable to us or to one of our associates in respect of transactions we or such associates arrange for you, in which case you will be

notified in writing of the amount and terms of payment. If we reduce the fees that we would otherwise charge by the amount of commission retained, we will apply the HMRC concession which allows VAT to be calculated on the net fee after deduction of the commission. You consent to such commission or other benefits being retained by us or, as the case may be, by our associates, without our, or their, being liable to account to you for any such amounts.

#### 4 Client monies

4.1 We may, from time to time, hold money on your behalf. Such money will be held in trust in a client bank account, which is segregated from the firm's funds. The account will be operated, and all funds dealt with, in accordance with the Clients' Money Regulations of our professional body.

4.2 In order to avoid an excessive amount of administration, interest will only be paid to you where the amount of interest that would be earned on the balances held on your behalf in any calendar year exceeds £25. Any such interest would be calculated using the prevailing rate applied by the Natwest bank for small deposits subject to the minimum period of notice for withdrawals. Subject to any tax legislation, interest will be paid gross.

4.3 If the total sum of money held on your behalf is enough to give rise to a significant amount of interest or is likely to do so, then the money will be placed in a separate interest-bearing client bank account designated to you. All interest earned on such money will be paid to you. Subject to any tax legislation, interest will be paid gross.

4.4 We will return monies held on your behalf promptly as soon as there is no longer any reason to retain those funds. In the unlikely event of us holding any unclaimed monies we reserve the right to pay such monies to a registered charity in line with the guidelines set out in the Clients' Money Regulations referred to above. We will not do this unless we have been unable to contact you for at least five years and we have taken reasonable steps to trace you and return the monies.

#### 5 Fees

5.1 Our fees are computed on the basis of time spent on your affairs by the principals and our staff, including sub-contractors or consultants where necessary, and on the levels of skill and responsibility involved. Disbursements represent travel, accommodation and other expenses incurred in dealing with your affairs.

5.2 If it is necessary to carry out work outside the responsibilities agreed with you for each service, we will advise you in advance. Any additional work will involve additional fees. Accordingly we would like to point out that it is in your interests to ensure that your records etc. are completed to the agreed stage.

5.3 Invoices are payable in full (including disbursements) in accordance with the terms set out on the invoice. If you do not accept that an invoiced fee is fair and reasonable you must notify us within 21 days of receipt, failing which you will be deemed to have accepted that payment is due.

5.5 We reserve the right to charge interest on overdue accounts at the current rate under the *Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998*. We also reserve the right to terminate our engagement and cease acting if payment of any fees billed is unduly delayed.

5.6 If a client company, trust or other entity is unable or unwilling to settle our fees, we reserve the right to seek payment from the individual (or parent company) giving us instructions on behalf of the client, and we shall be entitled to enforce any sums due against the group company or individual nominated to act for you.

5.7 Insofar as we are permitted to so by law or by professional guidelines, we reserve the right to exercise a lien over all funds, documents and records in our possession relating to all engagements for you until all outstanding fees and disbursements are paid in full.

5.8 In the event that we cease to act in relation to your company's affairs you agree to meet all reasonable costs of providing information to the company's new advisers. In particular you agree to meet these costs where we are required by law to provide information to a successor firm.

## 6 Retention of papers

6.1 You have a legal responsibility to retain documents and records relevant to your financial affairs. During the course of our work we may collect information from you and others relevant to your tax and financial affairs. We will return any original documents to you if requested. Documents and records relevant to your tax affairs are required by law to be retained as follows:

Individuals, trustees and partnerships:

- with trading or rental income: five years and 10 months after the end of the tax year;
- otherwise: 22 months after the end of the tax year.

Companies, Limited Liability Partnerships, and other corporate entities:

- six years from the end of the accounting period.

6.2 Although certain documents may legally belong to you, we may destroy correspondence and other papers that we store electronically or otherwise that are more than seven years old, except documents we think may be of continuing significance. You must notify us in writing if you wish us to keep any document for a longer period.

## 7 Conflicts of interest and independence

7.1 We reserve the right during our engagement with you to deliver services to other clients whose interests might compete with yours or are or may be adverse to yours, subject to clause 8 below. We confirm that we will notify you immediately should we become aware of any conflict of interest involving us and affecting you unless we are unable to do so because of our confidentiality obligations. We have safeguards that can be implemented to protect the interests of different clients if a conflict arises. Where conflicts are identified which cannot be managed in a way that protects your interests then we regret that we will be unable to provide further services.

7.2 During and after our engagement, you agree that we reserve the right to act for other clients whose interests are or may compete with or be adverse to yours, subject, of course, to our obligations of confidentiality and the safeguards set out in the paragraph on confidentiality below.

## 8 Confidentiality

8.1 We confirm that where you give us confidential information we shall at all times keep it confidential, except as required by law or as provided for in regulatory, ethical or other professional statements relevant to our engagement.

8.2 You agree that, if we act for other clients who are or who become your competitors, to comply with our duty of confidentiality, it will be sufficient for us to take such steps as we think appropriate to preserve the confidentiality of information given to us by you, both during and after this engagement. These may include taking the same or similar steps as we take in respect of the confidentiality of our own information.

8.3 In addition, if we act for other clients whose interests are or may be adverse to yours, we will manage the conflict by implementing additional safeguards to preserve confidentiality. Safeguards may include measures such as separate teams, physical separation of teams, and separate arrangements for storage of, and access to, information.

8.4 You agree that the effective implementation of such steps or safeguards as described above will provide adequate measures to avoid any real risk of confidentiality being impaired.

8.5 We may, on occasions, subcontract work on your affairs to other tax or accounting professionals. The subcontractors will be bound by our client confidentiality terms.

8.6 If we use external or cloud based systems, we will ensure confidentiality of your information is maintained.

8.7 We reserve the right, for the purpose of promotional activity, training or other business purposes, to mention that you are a client. As stated above, we will not disclose any confidential information.

8.8 This clause applies in addition to our obligations as to data protection below.

## 9 Quality control

9.1 As part of our ongoing commitment to providing a high quality service, our files are periodically subject to an independent regulatory or quality review. Our reviewers are highly experienced and professional people and are, of course, bound by the same requirements of confidentiality as our principals and staff.

### Dealing with HM Revenue & Customs

9.2 When dealing with HMRC on your behalf we are required to be honest and to take reasonable care to ensure that your returns are correct. To enable us to do this, you are required to be honest with us and to provide us with all necessary information in a timely manner. For more information about 'Your Charter' for your dealings with HMRC, see [www.hmrc.gov.uk/charter/index.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/charter/index.htm). To the best of our abilities, we will ensure that HMRC meet their side of the Charter in their dealings with you.

9.3 We will take account of the steps and checks suggested by HMRC in their 'Agent Toolkits'. While use of the Toolkits is voluntary, we will ensure that our quality control procedures match or enhance the suggestions in the Toolkits so that, in the unlikely event that HMRC consider any of your tax returns with which we assist to be inaccurate, we will be able to help you demonstrate to HMRC that reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of the return, thereby significantly reducing the possibility of an inaccuracy penalty being imposed. To further reduce the possibility of an inaccuracy penalty, you will remain responsible for maintaining good quality supporting records for each return, for providing us with all relevant information and explanations and for acting on any advice that we give you.

## 10 Help us to give you the right service

10.1 We are committed to providing you with a high quality service that is both efficient and effective. If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, please let us know, by contacting the principal contact.

10.2 We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and do all we can to explain the position to you. If we do not answer your complaint to your satisfaction you may of course take up the matter with our professional body.

10.3 In order for us to provide you with a high quality service on an ongoing basis it is essential that you provide us with relevant records and information when requested, reply to correspondence in a timely manner and otherwise follow the terms of the agreement between us set out in this Standard Terms of Business and associated Engagement schedules. We therefore reserve the right to cancel the engagement between us with immediate effect in the event of:

- your insolvency, bankruptcy or other arrangement being reached with creditors;
- failure to pay our fees by the due dates;
- either party being in breach of their obligations where this is not corrected within 30 days of being asked to do so.

## 11 Applicable law

11.1 This engagement letter is governed by, and construed in accordance with English law. The Courts will have exclusive jurisdiction in relation to any claim, dispute or difference concerning this engagement letter and any matter arising from it. Each party irrevocably waives any right it may have to object to any action being brought in those courts, to claim that the action has been brought in an inappropriate forum, or to claim that those courts do not have jurisdiction.

11.2 If any provision in this Standard Terms of Business or any associated engagement schedules, or its application, are found to be invalid, illegal or otherwise unenforceable in any respect, the validity, legality or enforceability of any other provisions shall not in any way be affected or impaired.

## 12 Changes in the law, in practice or in public policy

12.1 We will not accept responsibility if you act on advice previously given by us without first confirming with us that the advice is still valid in light of any change in the law, public policy or your circumstances.

12.2 We will accept no liability for losses arising from changes in the law or the interpretation thereof, practice, or public policy that are first published after the date on which the advice is given to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.

## 13 Internet communication

13.1 Unless you instruct us otherwise we may, where appropriate, communicate with you and with third parties via email or by other electronic means. However, internet communications are capable of data corruption and therefore we do not accept any responsibility for changes made to such communications after their despatch. It may therefore be inappropriate to rely on advice contained in an e-mail without obtaining written confirmation of it. We do not accept responsibility for any errors or problems that may arise through the use of internet communication and all risks connected with sending commercially sensitive information relating to your business are borne by you. If you do not agree to accept this risk, you should notify us in writing that e-mail is not an acceptable means of communication. We will never change our bank details without confirming this to you by posted letter.

13.2 It is the responsibility of the recipient to carry out a virus check on any attachments received.

## 14 Data Protection

14.1 To enable us to discharge the services agreed under our engagement, and for other related purposes including updating and enhancing client records, analysis for management purposes and statutory returns, crime prevention and legal and regulatory compliance, we may obtain, use, process and disclose personal data about you/your business/company/partnership/its officers and employees and shareholders ('personal data').

Data controller

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14.2 We confirm that we are each considered an independent data controller in relation to personal data and that we will each comply with the relevant provisions of applicable data protection legislation.

14.3 You will also ensure that any disclosure of personal data to us complies with such legislation. If you supply us with any personal data or confidential information you shall ensure you have a lawful basis to pass it to us and will fully indemnify and hold us harmless if you do not have such a basis and that causes us loss. If you are supplying us with personal data on the basis of a power of attorney for anyone, you must produce to us an original or certified power of attorney on demand. You must ensure you have provided the necessary information to the relevant data subjects regarding its use. You may refer to our [privacy notice](#).

## 15 Limitation of third party rights

15.1 Persons who are not party to this agreement shall have no rights under the *Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999* to enforce any term of this agreement. This clause does not affect any right or remedy of any person which exists or is available otherwise than pursuant to that Act.

15.2 The advice we give you is for your sole use and is confidential to you and will not constitute advice for any third party to whom you may communicate it, unless we have expressly agreed in writing that a specified third party may rely on our work. We will accept no responsibility to third parties, including any group company to whom the engagement letter is not addressed, your spouse nor any family member of yours or your employer, for any aspect of our professional services or work that is made available to them.

## 16 Client identification

16.1 In common with other professional services firms, we are required by the Proceeds to Crime Act 2002 and the Money Laundering Regulations 2017 to:

- maintain identification procedures for clients, beneficial owners of clients, and persons purporting to act on behalf of clients;
- maintain records of identification evidence and the work undertaken for the client; and
- report, in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations.

We have a statutory obligation under the above legislation to report to the National Crime Agency (NCA) any reasonable knowledge or suspicion of money laundering. Any such report must be made in the strictest confidence. In fulfilment of our legal obligations, neither the firm's principals nor may staff enter into any correspondence or discussions with you regarding such matters.

16.2 If we are not able to obtain satisfactory evidence of your identity and where applicable that of the beneficial owners, we will not be able to proceed with the engagement.

## 17 Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) and Common Reporting Standards

17.1 Unless agreed specifically in a separate engagement letter, we are not responsible for your compliance with the *International Tax Compliance (United States of America) Regulations 2013*, produced as a result of FATCA. In particular, we are not responsible for the categorisation of any UK entity into either a Financial Institution (FI) or an active or passive Non-Financial Foreign Entity (NFFE) nor, if a Financial Institution, for its registration with the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and subsequent submission of the required annual returns to HM Revenue & Customs.

17.2 However, if requested to do so we can provide advice on the completion of the forms supplied by Financial Institutions under these Regulations, or under Common Reporting Standards, and used by them to determine the status of an entity. We can also provide advice on setting up the appropriate

systems to identify and report on your clients or beneficiaries who are foreign citizens affected by FATCA or Common Reporting Standards.

## 18 General Limitation of liability

18.1 We will provide our services with reasonable care and skill. Our liability to you is limited to losses, damages, costs and expenses caused by our negligence or wilful default. However, to the fullest extent permitted by law, we will not be responsible for any losses, penalties, surcharges, interest or additional tax liabilities where you or others supply incorrect or incomplete information, or fail to supply any appropriate information or where you fail to act on our advice or respond promptly to communications from us or the tax authorities. Further, we will not be liable to you for any delay or failure to perform our obligations if the delay or failure is caused by circumstances outside our reasonable control. Subject to clause 18.5 below our liability to you shall be limited as set out in our engagement or other client letter.

18.2 You will not hold us, our principal(s)/director(s), shareholders and staff, responsible, to the fullest extent permitted by law, for any loss suffered by you arising from any misrepresentation (intentional or unintentional) supplied to us orally or in writing. This applies equally to fraudulent acts, misrepresentation or wilful default on the part of any party to the transaction and their directors, officers, employees, agents or advisers. However, this exclusion shall not apply where such misrepresentation, withholding or concealment is or should (in carrying out the procedures which we have agreed to perform with reasonable care and skill) have been evident to us without further enquiry.

18.3 You agree that you will not bring any claim in connection with services we provide to you against any of our partners, shareholders, directors or employees personally.

18.4 Our work is not, unless there is a legal or regulatory requirement, to be made available to third parties without our written permission and we will accept no responsibility to third parties for any aspect of our professional services or work that is made available to them. You agree to indemnify us and our agents in respect of any claim (including any claim for negligence) arising out of any unauthorised disclosure by you or by any person for whom you are responsible of our advice and opinions, whether in writing or otherwise. This indemnity will extend to the cost of defending any such claim, including payment at our usual rates for the time that we spend in defending it and our legal fees on an indemnity basis.

18.5 Nothing in this agreement shall exclude or limit our liability for death or personal injury caused by negligence nor for fraudulent misrepresentation or other fraud which may not as a matter of applicable law be excluded or limited.

## 19 Intellectual property rights and use of our name

19.1 We will retain all intellectual property rights in any document prepared by us during the course of carrying out the engagement except where the law specifically states otherwise. You may only use such rights to the extent we agreed when engaged to provide services to you and may not resell or sublicense such rights without our further prior consent.

19.2 You are not permitted to use our name in any statement or document that you may issue unless our prior written consent has been obtained. The only exception to this restriction would be statements or documents that in accordance with applicable law are to be made public.

## 20 Draft/interim work or oral advice

20.1 In the course of our providing services to you we may provide advice or reports or other work products in draft or interim form, or orally. However, final written work products will always prevail

over any draft, interim or oral statements. Where you request it, we will provide you with written confirmation of matters stated orally.

## 21 Interpretation

21.1 If any provision of our engagement letter or terms of business is held to be void for whatever reason, then that provision will be deemed not to form part of this contract, and no other provisions will be affected or impaired in any way. In the event of any conflict between these terms of business and the engagement letter or appendices, the relevant provision in the engagement letter or schedules will take precedence.

## 22 Internal disputes within a client

22.1 If we become aware of a dispute between the parties who own the business, or who are in some way involved in its ownership and management, it should be noted that our client is the business (unless we have agreed otherwise) and we would not provide information or services to one party without the express knowledge and permission of all parties. Unless otherwise agreed by all parties, we will continue to supply information to the registered office/normal place of business for the attention of the directors/proprietors. If conflicting advice, information or instructions are received from different directors/principals in the business, we will refer the matter back to the board of directors/the partnership and take no further action until the board/partnership has agreed the action to be taken. In certain cases we reserve the right to cease acting for the business/client entirely.

## 23 Disengagement

23.1 If we resign or are asked to resign, we will normally issue a disengagement letter to ensure that our respective responsibilities are clear.

## 24 Probate-type services

24.1 As we are licensed/authorised for the reserved legal activity of non-contentious probate, in the unlikely event that we cannot meet our liabilities to you, you may be able to seek a grant from ICAEW's Probate Compensation Scheme. Generally, applications for a grant must be made to ICAEW within 12 months of the time you become aware, or reasonably ought to have been aware of the loss. Further information about the scheme and the circumstances in which grants may be made is available on ICAEW's website: [www.icaew.com/probate](http://www.icaew.com/probate).

24.2 If you would like to talk to us about how we can improve our service to you, or if you are unhappy with the service you are receiving, please let us know by contacting us. We will consider carefully any complaint that you may make about our probate services as soon as we receive it and will do all we can to resolve the issue. We will acknowledge your complaint within five business days of its receipt and endeavour to deal with it within 8 weeks. Any complaint should be submitted to us by letter.

24.3 If we do not deal with it within this timescale or you are unhappy with our response you may of course take the matter up with our professional body the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and the Legal Ombudsman. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman should be made within six years of the act or omission or within three years of you becoming aware of the issue, and in either case within six months of our written response to your complaint to us. The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman are:

Letter: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

Telephone: 0300 555 0333