

Lexcel Certification 2011



We are delighted to inform you that on 14th Sept 2011 our firm of Solicitors has again been recommended by the Law Society's independent Assessor for the renewal of its Lexcel Quality Mark. The accreditation by the Law Society is equivalent to the ISO9001 industry standard.

Only approximately 10% of Solicitors Practices in the UK achieve this Award and it is rare indeed for the standard to be maintained as we have done for the last 8 years. On this recent assessment we have secured the rare distinction of having no "non-compliances" even of a minor nature. The standards of management, risk control and file procedure appear to become more demanding each year and we are thus extremely pleased to be re-accredited after a detailed audit process involving interviews with randomly selected staff and probing file reviews by the Independent Assessor.

In the Assessor's Report he has made the following comments which we hope you will find to be of interest:

- The Practice are to be highly commended for the development and implementation of a practical, yet very comprehensive, approach to both Quality "in the round" and an extremely effective Risk Management Framework. Significant ongoing development of this has taken place since the initial assessment, and the approach remains firmly embedded not just into the operations of the Practice; but into the culture of the Practice as well. The robustness of the processes have been well demonstrated by the high levels of compliance..
- A comprehensive set of management information which is accessible to all staff. The Firm should continue to be highly commended for their extremely open and transparent approach in providing information to staff – this is very positively commented upon by the majority of interviewees. Sound effective processes, well managed and effectively implemented.
- A practical, effective ICT strategy with a clear direction for both the short and medium term – outsourcing the IT function has clearly not had a negative impact.
- The Practice should continue to be highly commended for the ongoing provision of what all fee earners continue to describe as "excellent" library and information resources.
- A comprehensive Office Manual and Staff Handbook, which go well beyond the basic requirements of Lexcel Version 4. They are comprehensively yet simply written, thus making them easily assessable as to compliance. Processes and systems are extremely well embedded, and are now very well understood by fee earners and support staff alike.

If you want to know more about this standard and what it means for you, call us on +44 (0)20 8420 7950 and speak to one of our advisors or Email info@slp.uk.com

- The Practice has been recognised as an Investor in People for many years. As such, it very clearly continues to demonstrate high standards in terms of training and developing its people and the ongoing coaching, mentoring and support offered to them. It has well developed processes and systems which are consistently implemented and were very well evidenced during interview. It also has a sound track record of internal promotion and development for both fee earners and support staff – this again was well evidenced during interview.
- The Practice should continue to be commended for the practical, effective and comprehensive approach it has taken to operational risk management “in the round”. This is proactively managed both at Practice and individual fee earner levels, and there is a very clear understanding from all fee earners on all aspects of risk. The processes are clearly effective, well implemented and, taken together, constitute a very robust approach. There continues to be clear ongoing file review evidence to demonstrate the high levels of compliance which have been achieved, and generally sustained, since the initial assessment.
- The Practice should continue to be commended for the ongoing development of its communications processes. Already the subject of positive comments at previous visits, interview evidence clearly continues to show that internal communications are seen as a positive strength within the Firm.
- It remains very clear from both interview and documentary evidence that the Practice continues to place significant emphasis on the levels of ongoing client care which it provides. In the great majority of instances it clearly does so – and this again was evident from client comments noted in some of the files reviewed.
- The Practice should continue to be commended for the high standards of file management/maintenance which was evidenced across the all of the Fee Earners interviewed. This standard has clearly been maintained at a very high level for a number of visits now, and is very clearly evidenced by both interview and file review evidence.
- **In Lexcel terms, therefore, SLP/BES Solicitors LLP continues to be an exceptionally well run and well managed Practice!!**

Recommendation

Having carried out the assessment process rigorously and in accordance with the guidelines laid down by The Law Society, and The Assessment Network Ltd., I am satisfied beyond any doubt that, as no non-compliances were observed, SLP Solicitors/BES Solicitors LLP, continue to meet the requirements of Version 4 of the Lexcel Standard. The Lexcel Assessment Panel is asked to endorse this recommendation and formally continue Lexcel Certification for SLP/BES Solicitors LLP.

Assessor: John Wooddissee

Date: 14/09/2011

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