



CHIC SOLICITORS PANEL USER GUIDE 2016 - 2020

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1. Introduction and Background

The CHIC Solicitors panel comprises of 17 firms as suppliers of legal services to the members of CHIC and Re:allies. The purpose of this User Guide is to provide information about the panel including the areas of work covered, the firms appointed, details on pricing and the instruction process and information about the role of Kennedy Cater.

The Solicitors Panel was established following a fully compliant EU tender process. The term of this Panel is for a period of 4 years from 1 July 2016.

2. Key documentation

This User Guide should be read in conjunction with the following Directory documents:

- **‘Quickview Panel Firms & Areas’** – An overview of the Panel including which firms are appointed under each Lot.
- **‘CHIC Panel - Lot descriptions’** – Description of the types of work covered under each Lot.
- **‘CHIC Panel - Lot 1E pricing schedule’** – List of fixed and hourly rates provided by each firm in Lot 1E.
- **‘CHIC Panel - Lot 1W pricing schedule’** – List of fixed and hourly rates provided by each firm in Lot 1W.
- **‘CHIC Panel - Lot 2E pricing schedule’** – List of fixed and hourly rates provided by each firm in Lot 2E.
- **‘CHIC Panel - Lot 2W pricing schedule’** – List of fixed and hourly rates provided by each firm in Lot 2W.
- **‘CHIC Panel - Lot 3E pricing schedule’** – List of fixed and hourly rates provided by each firm in Lot 3E.
- **‘CHIC Panel - Lot 3W pricing schedule’** – List of fixed and hourly rates provided by each firm in Lot 3W.
- **‘CHIC Panel - Firm contact details and Helpline Service’** – Key contact for instructions and Helpline service contact for each firm and Client Relationship Partner for the CHIC contract for each firm.
- **‘CHIC Benefits – Lot 1E, Lot 1W, Lot 2E, Lot 2W, Lot 3E and Lot 3W’** – Extensive list and description of the Value Added and Social Value Benefits offered by each firm under each Lot.
- **‘CHIC Framework Agreement’**
- **‘CHIC Instruction Form’** – Template to be used at the beginning of any instruction.

Much of the information contained within these documents is **confidential to CHIC and Re:allies**. Please ensure that these documents are not disclosed to third parties outside your Organisation and are stored appropriately. Furthermore, you must NOT disclose the information in respect of any firm (particularly the fixed and hourly rates) to any other Organisation.

3. Lots & Firms

Legal work has been divided into 6 separate Lots (below), 3 for England (E) and 3 for Wales (W).

- **Lots 1E & 1W: Corporate, Governance and Finance**

- Lots 2E & 2W: Housing & Asset Management
- Lots 3E & 3W: Property & Development

Firm	England			Wales		
	Lot 1E	Lot 2E	Lot 3E	Lot 1W	Lot 2W	Lot 3W
Addleshaw Goddard	X		X	X		X
Anthony Collins	X	X	X			
Capsticks	X	X	X		X	
Clarke Willmott	X	X	X	X		
Devonshires	X	X	X	X	X	X
Forbes	X	X	X			
Housing Law Services		X				
Hugh James			X	X	X	X
Pricewaterhouse Coopers	X					
Shakespeare Martineau		X	X			
Sharpe Pritchard	X		X			
Shoosmiths		X	X			
Tozers		X				
Trowers & Hamlins	X	X	X	X		
Ward Hadaway		X				
Whiteheads		X			X	
Wright Hassall	X	X	X			

An extensive list of the types of work included under each of the above Lots is set out in 'CHIC Panel - Lot description' document.

4. Pricing Guidance

Pricing Schedule

- **Fixed Fees from the CHIC fixed fee list** - All panel firms have agreed with CHIC a fee structure which will be used to calculate the fee on each matter on which you instruct them. The agreed fee schedule is set out in the 6 'CHIC Panel - pricing schedule' documents (1 document per Lot).
- **Other fixed or capped fees** – For work not covered by a fixed fee from the pricing schedules, the law firm shall, at the very least, be expected to provide to the instructing officer a one off fixed or capped fee. Such fixed or capped fee shall be derived taking into account the hourly rates set out in the pricing schedule.
- **Hourly rates** – If a fixed or capped fee is not considered possible by the law firm it shall provide the member with an explanation as to why it considers that to be the case. Only in exceptional circumstances will the law firm be allowed to complete the work on hourly rates and shall always provide a reasonable estimate for the work. The hourly rates charged by each firm are set out in the second tab of the 'CHIC Panel - pricing schedule' documents.

Disbursements policy

Items which are included in the fee for services and **cannot** be charged for separately:

- All routine office expenses such as photocopying, facsimile, telephone calls and standard post.
- Counsel's fees where the matter to which they relate is a pre agreed fixed fee from the Pricing Schedule.
- Travel time or travel costs

Items which are not included in the fee for services and which **can** be separately charged:

- Costs incurred with third parties on behalf of your Organisation such as professional fees and courier costs, but only where your Organisation has given prior approval for such costs.
- Counsel's fees where the matter to which they relate is not a pre agreed fixed fee, but only where your Organisation has given prior approval for Counsel to be used.

5. Instruction Process

Basis of instruction. You should make it clear to the law firm that, as a member of CHIC or Re:allies, you are instructing them on the terms of the CHIC Framework Agreement. This is particularly important if you already have a relationship with the law firm but wish the new instruction to be on the basis of CHIC hourly rates or fixed fees.

Practice cost avoidance:

- **Check with colleagues** – prior to seeking advice check with colleagues that they have not already obtained the same or similar advice.
- **Where available, use the panel firms' free 'ad-hoc' advice service** – Many panel firms offer initial free of charge ad hoc advice. Whenever you are contacting a panel firm on this basis you must confirm with the lawyer that you are making use of this service. Contact details of this service can be found on the '**Firm Contact details and Helpline Service**' document.

Which firm should you choose? - You should instruct the firm you determine will provide the most economically advantageous service to you in the relevant circumstances. You should take into consideration the list of fees set out in the pricing schedule and the firms' expertise in dealing with a particular type of matter.

Call off via a 'Mini Tender' - This is appropriate for larger pieces of work. For example, with fees in excess of £10,000 you may want to run a more formal 'mini tender' process between all the panel firms appointed to the relevant lot. In order to achieve the best results from this exercise, you should scope the work and provide as much detail about the work to the firms as possible. When conducting a mini-tender, each firm must be treated equally and fairly – by providing them with the same information and being transparent with them about how you will evaluate their submissions.

Obligations on the firm The firm should let you know within 2 working days whether they are able to accept the instruction/participate in the tender or if they are unable to carry out the instruction/participate in the tender with reasons why. Following receipt of an instruction or a mini tender, a '**CHIC Instruction Form**' document should be executed between you and the firm. **Please ensure that you obtain confirmation of the fee prior to any work being undertaken by the Solicitor and/or the Instruction Form being sent to the Solicitor.**

Record details of the instruction – you should check any internal procedures your organisation has put in place relating to recording the details of your panel firm instructions – for example, completing (or having the panel firms complete) an instruction form.

Repeat-type work – check if the work is of a type that you will be instructing again in the future, such that it may be possible to secure a volume-based reduction. For example, if you anticipate between 5 and 10 instructions per annum, you might approach the panel firms for quotes based on the different volumes (e.g. 5 x Rent Arrears Possessions at £300 per case; 10 x Rent Arrears Possessions at £200 per case).

Share advice with colleagues – consider if the advice received may be useful to colleagues and if so circulate by e-mail and/or store the advice where it can be located/accessed easily.

Check invoices – check invoices issued by panel firms upon completion of instructions to ensure the correct fixed fee, hourly rates and disbursements have been applied. As a further precaution, Kennedy Cater will also be spot checking invoices to ensure that they have been correctly charged and appear reasonable in the circumstances.

6. Training and other Value Added Benefits

Each firm offers a range of free of charge Training and Value Added Benefits including Social Benefits, a summary of which can be found in the '**CHIC Benefits – Lot 1E, Lot 1W, Lot 2E, Lot 2W, Lot 3E and Lot 3W**' document. If you wish to take advantage of any of these benefits you should liaise directly with the appropriate Client Relationship Partner at each Firm (contact details can be found on the second tab of '**CHIC Panel - Firm Contact details and Helpline Service**' document).

7. Role of the Kennedy Cater

Our role will include:

- maintaining and updating all the Directory documents.
- collecting, compiling and reviewing the Monthly Management Information submitted by firms each month and providing reports to the relevant CHIC and Re:allies members on their spend across the panel.
- spot-checking invoices to ensure the correct rates have been applied.
- resolving any issues arising between panel firms and CHIC or Re:allies members with respect to the services provided/fees charged etc.

8. Queries

Any queries relating to the CHIC Solicitors Framework should be directed to Kennedy Cater (E: CHIC@kennedycater.com; T: 020 7113 4020)