



## ***Standard terms of business***

(Last Revised June 2018)

All engagements that we accept are subject to the following standard terms of business unless changes are expressly agreed in writing.

### **1 Professional obligations**

- 1.1. We are a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and in our conduct are subject to its Code of Ethics which can be found at [www.icaew.com/regulations](http://www.icaew.com/regulations). We will observe and act in accordance with the bye-laws and regulations of ICAEW. We accept instructions to act for you on this basis.
- 1.2. Where we become aware of errors made by HM Revenue & Customs you give us authority to correct them. We will not be liable for any loss, damage or cost arising from our compliance with statutory or regulatory obligations.
- 1.3. As required by the Provision of Services Regulations 2009 (SI 2009/2999) we confirm that we are licensed to carry on general accountancy and tax practice by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our registration as practicing members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales can be viewed at <http://find.icaew.com/> using our firm name and location.

### **Professional indemnity insurance**

- 1.4. In accordance with the disclosure requirements of the Provision of Services Regulations 2009, our professional indemnity insurer is Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance PLC, RSA BP 16293138. The territorial coverage is worldwide excluding professional business carried out from an office in the United States of America or Canada and excludes any action for a claim brought in any court in the United States of America or Canada.
- 1.5. If for any reason circumstances arise that may result in a claim to our professional indemnity insurers, you give us your permission to notify them.

### **2 Fees**

- 2.1. Our fees are calculated on the basis of time spent on your affairs, the levels of skill and responsibility involved, the importance and value of the advice provided to you, and the level of risk. In addition we may charge disbursements of travel, accommodation and other expenses incurred in dealing with your affairs.
- 2.2. If it is necessary for us to carry out work that is outside the scope of the engagement currently in place with you, we will advise you of this in advance. Any additional work will result in additional fees being charged.

We would therefore like to point out that it is in your interests to ensure that the information you provide us with is completed to the agreed stage.

- 2.3. If we give you an estimate of our fees for carrying out any specific work, then that estimate will not be contractually binding unless we have explicitly stated that will be the case.
- 2.4. If we agree a fixed fee with you for providing a specific range of services this will be the subject of a separate agreement. This agreement will set out the period which the fixed fee relates to and the services covered by it.
- 2.5. Where we have agreed that you will pay on an invoice rendered basis, invoices are payable in full (including disbursements) in accordance with the terms set out on the invoice. Any queries you have on our invoices must be notified to us within 21 days of receipt or we shall deem you to have accepted that payment is due.
- 2.6. Where we have agreed that you will pay us on a standing order basis, we will discuss with you separately the amount and frequency of payments. These standing orders will be applied to fees arising from work agreed in our letter of engagement for the current and ensuing years. Where a scheduled monthly payment is not made any fees invoiced to you that are outstanding at that time will immediately become due for payment in entirety.
- 2.7. You may have an insurance policy or membership of a trade or professional body that entitles you to assistance with payment of our fees in some situations. A particular example would be assistance with an investigation by HM Revenue & Customs. Unless you arranged the insurance through us then you will need to advise us of any such cover you have. Please note that you remain liable for our fees regardless of whether all or part are liable to be paid by your insurers.
- 2.8. 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. [We accept settlement of fees by certain credit cards.]
- 2.9. In the event that we cease to act for you then you agree to meet all reasonable costs of providing information to your new advisers. In particular you agree to meet these costs where we are required by law to provide information to a successor firm.
- 2.10. As directors\* you guarantee to pay personally any fees (including disbursements) for services provided to the company that the company is unable to pay. This clause shall become effective in the event of a receiver or liquidator being appointed to the company or the company otherwise being wound-up.

\*This clause is not applicable for a sole trader or partnership.

### **3 Help us to give you the right service**

- 3.1. 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 Matthew Jackson email: [matthew.jackson@northoverco.co.uk](mailto:matthew.jackson@northoverco.co.uk)
- 3.2. 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 the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

3.3. 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 letters. 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.

#### **4 Commissions or other benefits**

4.1. Commissions or Other Benefits. In some circumstances we may receive commissions or other benefits for introductions to other professionals or transactions we arrange for you. In this case we will notify you in writing of the amount, the terms of payment and receipt of any such commissions or benefits. Our time in dealing with other professionals or arranging transactions on your behalf will be offset against any commissions or fees received. You agree that we can retain any commissions or fees received above our professional time spent, if any.

#### **5 Client monies**

5.1. We may at times hold money on your behalf. Any such money will be held on trust in a client bank account, which is held separately to funds that belong to us. The account will be operated, and all funds dealt with, in accordance with the Clients' Money Regulations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

5.2. To avoid excessive amounts of administration, interest will only be paid to you if 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 our banker for small deposits subject to the minimum period of notice for withdrawals. Subject to any tax legislation, interest will be paid gross.

5.3. 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.

5.4. Money held on your behalf in relation to probate services will be held in a separate client bank account ring-fenced for legal services. This will normally be a separate interest bearing client account for the estate in question.

5.5. 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 5 years and we have taken reasonable steps to trace you and return the monies.

## **6 Retention of and access to records**

- 6.1. During the course of our work we will collect information from you and others acting on your behalf and will return any original documents to you following the preparation of your accounts and returns. You have a legal responsibility to retain these records. The law requires individuals, trustees and partnerships to keep records in relation to trading or rental income 6 years from the 31 January following the end of the tax year to which they relate. Other records should be kept for 22 months after the end of the tax year they relate to. Companies, Limited Liability Partnerships and other corporate entities are required to keep records for 6 years from the end of the accounting period.
- 6.2. While certain documents may legally belong to you, unless you tell us not to, we intend to destroy correspondence and other papers that we store which are more than seven years old, other than documents which we consider to be of continuing significance. If you require retention of any document you must notify us of that fact in writing.

## **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. We confirm that we will notify you immediately should we become aware of any conflict of interest involving us and affecting you. 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. If a conflict of interest should arise, either between two or more of our clients, or in the provision of multiple services to a single client, we will take such steps as are necessary to deal with the conflict. In resolving the conflict, we would be guided by the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales which can be viewed at [www.icaew.com/regulations](http://www.icaew.com/regulations).

## **8 Confidentiality**

- 8.1. Communication between us is confidential and we shall take all reasonable steps to keep your information confidential except where we are required to disclose it by law, by regulatory bodies, by our insurers or as part of an external peer review. We may, on occasions, subcontract work on your affairs to other tax or accounting professionals. Any subcontractors we use will be bound by the same confidentiality requirements.

## **9 Quality control**

- 9.1. As part of our ongoing commitment to providing a 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.

## **10 Applicable law**

- 10.1. This engagement letter is governed by, and construed in accordance with, English law. The Courts of England 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.

- 10.2. If any provision in these terms of business or any associated engagement letter, 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.

## **11 Changes in the Law**

- 11.1. 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 the light of any change in the law or your circumstances.
- 11.2. We will accept no liability for losses arising from changes in the law or the interpretation thereof that occur after the date on which the advice is given.

## **12 Internet communication**

- 12.1. Unless you tell us otherwise we will at times use email or other electronic means to communicate with you.
- 12.2. 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.
- 12.3. It is the responsibility of the recipient to carry out a virus check on any attachments received.

## **13 Data Protection**

- 13.1. To enable us to discharge the services agreed in this engagement letter, comply with related legal and regulatory obligations and for other related purposes including updating and enhancing client records and analysis for management purposes, as a data controller, we may obtain, use, process and disclose personal data about you / your business / company / partnership / its shareholders / members / officers and employees as described in our privacy notice. We confirm when processing data on your behalf that we will comply with the provisions of all relevant data protection legislation and regulation.
- 13.2. You are also an independent controller responsible for complying with data protection legislation and regulation in respect of the personal data you process and, accordingly where you disclose personal data to us you confirm that such disclosure is fair and lawful and otherwise does not contravene relevant requirements. Nothing within this engagement letter relieves you as a data controller of your own direct responsibilities and liabilities under data protection legislation and regulation.
- 13.3. Data protection legislation and regulation places obligations on you as a data controller where we act as a data processor to undertake the processing of personal data on your behalf. We therefore confirm that we will at all times take appropriate measures to comply with relevant requirements when processing data on your behalf. In particular we confirm that we have adequate security measures in place and that we will comply with any obligations equivalent to those placed on you as a data controller.
- 13.4. Our privacy policy, which can be found on our website at [www.northoverco.co.uk/privacy-policy](http://www.northoverco.co.uk/privacy-policy) explains how we process personal data in respect of the various services that we provide.

## **14 Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999**

- 14.1. 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.
- 14.2. 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. We will accept no responsibility to third parties for any aspect of our professional services or work that is made available to them.

## **15 The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Money Laundering Regulations 2017**

- 15.1. In common with all accountancy and legal practices, the firm is required by the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Money Laundering Regulations 2017 to:
- Maintain identification procedures for clients and beneficial owners of clients;
  - Maintain records of identification evidence and the work undertaken for the client; and
  - Report, in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations.
- 15.2. The offence of money laundering includes concealing, converting, using or possessing the benefits of any activity that constitutes a criminal offence in the UK. It also includes involvement in any arrangement that facilitates the acquisition, retention, use or control of such a benefit.
- 15.3. This definition is very wide and would include such crimes as deliberate tax evasion, deliberate failure to inform the tax authorities of known underpayments or excessive repayments, fraudulent claiming of benefits or grants, or obtaining a contract through bribery. Clearly these examples are by no means exhaustive.
- 15.4. We are obliged by law to report any instances of money laundering to NCA without your knowledge or consent. In consequence, neither the firms' principals nor staff may enter into any correspondence or discussions with you regarding such matters.
- 15.5. We may use electronic checks as part of our identification procedures. We confirm that these electronic checks are not credit checks.

## **16 General limitation of liability**

- 16.1. We will provide services as outlined in this letter with reasonable care and skill. 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.
- 16.2. You will not hold us, the owners of this firm and any staff employed by the firm, 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 in connection with this agreement. You have agreed that you will not bring any claim in connection with services we provide to you against any of the principals or employees personally.

16.3. 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.

## **17 Use of our name in statements or documents issued by you**

17.1. 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.

## **18 Draft/interim work**

18.1. In the course of our providing services to you we may provide advice or reports or other work products in draft or interim form. However final written work products will always prevail over any draft or interim statements. Where you request it, we will provide up with written confirmation of matters stated orally.

## **19 Advice**

19.1. Advice we give you orally should not be relied upon unless we confirm it in writing. We endeavour to record all advice on important matters in writing. However if you particularly wish to rely upon oral advice we give you during a telephone conversation or a meeting, you must ask for the advice to be confirmed in writing.

19.2. Unless specifically instructed and agreed in advance we will not assist with the implementation of our advice.

## **20 Intellectual property rights**

20.1. The copyright in any document prepared by us belongs to us in entirety unless the law specifically provides otherwise.

## **21 Interpretation**

21.1. If there is a conflict between the engagement letter and these terms of business then the engagement letter takes precedence.

21.2. If any provision of this engagement letter or terms of business or its application is held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable in any respect, the validity, legality or enforceability of any other provision and its application shall not in any way be affected or impaired.

## **22 Provision of cloud-based services**

22.1. Where the firm provides accounting software in the Cloud, this will be provided by a third party (the 'Cloud Supplier'). The third party has signed a confidentiality agreement with the firm to ensure compliance with the relevant clauses in the firm's standard terms of business i.e. our fees (2), Confidentiality (8), Internet Communication (12), Data Protection Act (13) and General Limitation of Liability (16).

22.2. The service provided by the Cloud Supplier will be a discrete web based hosted facility, and you agree that access will also be provided to the firm and the third party.

22.3. The firm cannot be held liable for any interruption of service provided by the Cloud Supplier. However, we will liaise with them to help ensure that normal service is resumed as soon as possible.

## **23 Investment services**

- 23.1. If during the provision of professional services to you, you need advice on investments, we may have to refer you to someone who is authorised by the Financial Services Authority. However, as we are licensed by the Institute of Chartered Accountant in England and Wales, 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. 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.

## **24 Probate, Estate Management, Wills, Lasting power of Attorney (LPA) Advice and Reviews**

Northover & Co is authorised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants to offer Probate and Estate Planning Services. In addition, we regularly give Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA) advice and reviews to clients which we feel we are able to provide in a more comprehensive, personalised and cost effective way than conventional providers. We are also happy to work with Client's other Professional Advisors as tax planning is invariably a significant part of Estate and Will Planning. If you would like to discuss our services further please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please note that all individuals should as a matter of urgency ensure that they have Lasting Powers of Attorney for both Financial and Health matters (this is of course in addition to having a valid and regularly updated Will in place).

**Northover & Co Accountants Ltd**