

# THE LIFETIME LAWYERS - CODE OF PRACTICE

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This Code of Practice has been established for members of The Association of Lifetime Lawyers (“The Association”) to follow when advising their clients.

## Relationship with the Client

1. Members should act with honesty and integrity at all times and should always act only in the best interests of their clients, respecting their dignity and will take into account their need for a holistic approach to problem solving.
2. Members should be mindful of the well-being of their clients at all times.
3. When dealing with older or vulnerable clients, members should allow their clients the assistance of a trusted friend or family member or advocate if that is in the client’s best interests. However, members should be mindful of potential issues of undue influence and should ensure that they have an opportunity to see the client alone.
4. Members should be aware of the risks of potential abuse, financial or otherwise to their clients and take relevant action if they believe that abuse is taking place.
5. Members should be sensitive to the client’s needs. They should be aware of any potential difficulties with vision or hearing that the client may have and ensure that this is taken into account when communicating with their clients. Documents and correspondence may need to be produced in large print or Braille. Where the client has difficulties with hearing or speech, an appropriate speech and language therapist or sign language interpreter may be needed in order that members can communicate with the client and allow the client to give instructions. The pace and duration of any meeting will need to be adapted according to the particular needs of the client.
6. Members should ensure all practicable steps are taken to maximise decision making potential, particularly for those who may be compromised by physical, emotional and mental difficulties.
7. Members will communicate in plain English and should avoid the use of legal jargon where possible. When legal terminology has to be used, members should make sure that they are satisfied that the client has been given a proper explanation of the terms used and that they understand the explanation.
8. Members should offer home, hospital and care home visits as an alternative to a visit to the office. If this will incur additional cost for the client, this must be communicated to the client prior to the visit taking place but members should be mindful of their obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Members should ensure that they have complied with their obligations under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013.

9. Members will endeavour to ensure ease of access to their offices and parking for less mobile clients.
10. Members will ensure that all reception staff and any staff who may come into contact with their clients will be caring and sensitive to all older and vulnerable clients.
11. Members must remain up to date with legal issues affecting older and vulnerable clients and must also ensure that they act only within their level of expertise. If specialist advice is required which is outside of the member's capability, then the client must be referred to a specialist expert.
12. Members must provide details of their charges and ensure that these are communicated to the client clearly and that the client is aware of and has agreed to the charges. Charges must be transparent, and details of charges must be confirmed in writing to the client at the earliest stage possible. This should be accompanied by the client care letter, detailing the service the clients can expect to receive.
13. Members must operate their own complaints policy and ensure that a copy of this is provided to the client at the outset.
14. It is a condition of membership of The Association that all members must agree to conduct themselves and their business in accordance with this code.

## **Relationship with the Public**

Only Accredited Members can use The Association's logo and provide links to The Association's website from their own web pages. Any references made to The Association must relate specifically to the individual member and not to the member's firm.

## **The Association of Lifetime Lawyers Board of Directors**

The board meets four times a year and is responsible for setting policy and strategy for The Association. All board members must be Accredited Members of The Association or, provided their skills and/or experience make it appropriate for them to be board directors despite not being Accredited Members, people invited to be a director by the chairman of the board.

Board members are authorised to make statements on behalf of The Association.

The board has a duty to ensure the smooth, professional running of The Association.

To ensure the efficient operation the board, each board member should attend a minimum of two thirds of the scheduled board meetings each year.

## **The Advisory Board**

The advisory board is comprised of a number of The Association's Regional Directors, who are themselves all members of The Association.

The advisory board is there to help the board of directors with the running of The Association and to input into strategy. The advisory board is also there to represent members of The Association.

Only members of the advisory board authorised by the board of directors may make statements on behalf of The Association.

## **The Expert Panel**

The expert panel is made up of experts in the field of Older Client Law and associated areas, who input into The Association's training curriculum and best practice guidelines. The expert panel also helps with the quality assurance process for The Association's accredited standards and assessments.

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