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### Introduction

VCW LAW are the 'controllers' of the information that we collect about you ('personal data'). Being controllers of your personal data, we are responsible for how your data is processed. The word 'process' covers most things that can be done with personal data, including collecting, storing, using and destroying that data.

This notice explains why and how we process your data, and explains the rights you have around your data, including the right to access it and to object to the way it is processed. Please see the section on 'Your rights as a data subject' for more information.

### About VCW LAW

VCW LAW Limited, trading as VCW LAW, is a company registered in England & Wales under company number 11815314. We are a legal practice authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) under reference no 656952. Our registered address is 32-33 Silver Street, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1SX. A list of Directors is available for inspection at our registered office. The SRA Code of Conduct sets out the regulatory framework imposed on service providers such as ours. The current edition of the Code of Conduct is available on the SRA Website at [www.sra.org.uk](http://www.sra.org.uk).

### Personal data

'Personal data' is any information that relates to a living, identifiable person. This data can include your name, contact details, and other information we gather as part of our relationship with you. It can also include 'special categories' of data, which is information about a person's race or ethnic origin, religious, political or other beliefs, physical or mental health, trade union membership, genetic or biometric data, sex life or sexual orientation. The collection and use of these types of data is subject to strict controls. Similarly, information about criminal convictions and offences is also limited in the way it can be processed.

We are committed to protecting your personal data, whether it is 'special categories' or not, and we only process data if we need to for a specific purpose, as explained below. We collect your personal data mostly through our contact with you, and the data is usually provided by you, but in some instances, we may receive data about you from other people/organisations. We will explain when this might happen in this Notice.

Later sections of this Policy contain more information about:

- Contacting you
- Our grounds for processing your data when we work with you
- Who we share your data with
- How we store your data and how long we keep it for
- Your rights as a data subject

### Contacting you about events or areas of interest

As an individual, we will only send general invitations or updates to you if you have provided your consent for us to do so. If you represent an organisation, we may write to you from time to time unless you have told us that you do not wish to receive further mailings. Any marketing and briefing emails will provide you with the option to opt out of future mailings. You can also use this option to manage the type of mailings that you receive from us.

## **If you do not provide personal data**

Where we need to collect personal data by law, or under the terms of a contract we have with you and you do not provide that data when requested, we may not be able to perform the contract we have or are trying to enter into with you. In this case, we may stop providing that service, but we will notify you if this is the case at the time.

## **Personal data received from third parties**

Our clients, the courts and other legal professionals may include personal data about individuals that is relevant to a legal matter that we are working on. We are committed to protecting all personal data that we hold and will treat this data with the same care that we treat data held about our clients.

## **Processing your data to provide you with our services**

In general terms, we process your data to fulfil our responsibilities in the relationship that we have with you. The table below lists more specific purposes for processing your data, and the legal basis for each type of processing.

## **Data we may process to provide our services to you**

- Your contact details so that we can share information with you.
- Information that you provide to us to confirm your identity when you first instruct us so that we can meet anti-money laundering requirements.
- Information contained in emails or other correspondence from you and records of telephone calls or meetings with you so that we can:
  - Understand your objectives
  - Provide you with advice
  - Carry out your instructions.
- Survey data which you may choose to provide that we use for research purposes.
- Details of transactions you carry out through us and of the fulfilment of our services to you so that we can:
  - Monitor progress
  - Deliver our services
  - Complete financial transactions
  - Issue bills and arrange payment with you.
- Details of your preferences where you have requested to be contacted about events, products or services, legal updates and/or news which we feel may interest you,
- Information about you that we retain on your behalf.
- Legal bases for processing

There are three grounds under which we may process your data to provide you with legal services.

1. Processing is necessary to agree your requirements and to deliver the services that we have contracted to provide for you: or
2. You have given consent for us to process your personal data; or

3. It is a requirement of the court to provide information that we hold about you.

The nature of some of our work dictates that we will hold special category data that relates to you.

Additional grounds under which may process your data are:

- When establishing, exercise or defending a legal claim;
- When protecting your interests if you are physically or legally incapable of giving consent;
- Where you have provided us with explicit consent to the process your data; or
- Where the data we are processing has already been made public by you.

For some processing purposes, we share your data with third parties. This is a list of the information we may share with external recipients, and for what purpose:

## **Who we share your data with**

Our IT system providers have access to data so that we can ensure that our systems operate effectively and that we are running current versions of software. Financial and quality auditors view data to monitor that we are complying with statutory and regulatory requirements and to confirm that we are complying with the requirements of the Lexcel legal practice quality mark.

We will share your data with other legal professionals, costs drafting and other technical experts when that is appropriate to fulfil the requirements of the service we are providing for you. Specialist confidential waste disposal contractors manage our paper archive records and carry out controlled destruction of the records when they reach the end of their retention period.

## **Website**

Should you visit a website belonging to VCW LAW, we may gather information about you. The information we collect may include your personal information, such as your name, contact information, IP addresses or other things that identify you individually.

Across our website you may come across a form which allow you to make enquiries about the firm. Should you use these forms a member our team will receive the enquiry. This information will then be sent to a lawyer in the department best placed to handle the enquiry.

Cookies are used on websites to help provide a website that is informative and enjoyable to use. Cookies are small files that are found in your computer's internet browser and are beneficial. These small files allow a website to recognise you. You should not be concerned about any use of cookies as any website of the firms will not contain any advertising from other organisations so allowing us to ensure your privacy is respected. You can apply settings to your computer to stop it accepting cookies, but this may affect your ability to use the internet and to get the best from it.

By accessing a website belonging to VCW LAW we may be able to get information about that usage. This allows us to:

- Administer our website and for internal operations, including troubleshooting, data analysis, testing, research, statistical and survey purposes;
- Improve our website to ensure that content is presented in the most effective manner for you and for your computer;
- As part of our efforts to keep our website safe and secure;

## **How we store your data**

Your personal data is held in both hard copy and electronic formats. Electronic data, including emails, is stored on our servers, which are located in the UK. Our cloud-based electronic systems store data in servers located within the European Economic Area (EEA).

We will not normally send such data outside the EEA. We may sometimes send such data to a recipient in a country outside the EEA which has been designated by the EU Commission as providing adequate data protection. If we need to send the data to a country outside the EEA that has not been so designated, we will have appropriate contract clauses agreed with the recipient place to protect the data.

## **How long we keep your data**

If we are providing legal services to you, we will notify you about how long we will keep your data for when we close your matter with us. We maintain a schedule which dictates how long we keep documents for. Our document retention schedule applies dates that meet a statutory requirement, reflect limitation periods for action following completion of a legal transaction or reflect good business practice.

Once the applicable retention period expires, unless we are legally required to keep the data longer, or there are important and justifiable reasons why we should keep it, we will securely delete/destroy the data.

## **Your rights as a data subject**

The General Data Protection Regulation provides you with a number of rights. These include:

- Requesting a copy of the personal information we hold about you. We require you to prove your identity with two pieces of approved identification. Please address requests to the Data Protection Director at the email address below. Please provide as much information as possible about the nature of your contact with us to help us locate your records. This request is free of charge unless the request is manifestly unfounded or excessive.
- Having any inaccuracies in your data corrected. If you would like to update the details we hold about you, please contact our Data Protection Director at the email address below.
- Requesting that we delete your personal data so it is erased from our records.
- Having the data we hold about you transferred to another organisation.
- Objecting to certain types of processing such as direct marketing.
- Objecting to automated processing, including profiling. If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please contact the Data Protection Director at the email address below.

## **Exercising your rights, queries and complaints**

VCW LAW is a data controller under the data protection rules and is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office with Registration Number ZA058358. For more information on your rights, if you wish to exercise any right or for any queries you may have, or if you wish to make a complaint, please contact our Data Protection Director, Brett Wildridge, email [brettw@vcwsolicitors.co.uk](mailto:brettw@vcwsolicitors.co.uk).

## **Complaints to the Information Commissioner**

You have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) about the way in which we process your personal data. You can make a complaint on the ICO's website <https://ico.org.uk>.

## **Changes to this Policy**

We may change this privacy notice from time to time. If we make any significant changes in the way we treat your personal information we will take reasonable steps to draw your attention to this.

**Last updated:** May 2019