

Client Money Handling Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In accordance with the RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) Client Money Protection Scheme, the Company has a duty to ensure that Clients' money can be clearly linked to the Clients to whom it belongs and is used for appropriate purposes only and is protected on behalf of our Clients.
- 1.2. Should Clients' money be misappropriated, the Company will inform our governing body, RICS, where appropriate, the police and our insurers.
- 1.3. The Company complies with all anti-money laundering legislation, rules, and regulations for all receipts of Client money and with the mandatory requirements of the RICS professional statement Countering bribery and corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing.

2. We ensure:

2.1. General

- a) employees have clear understanding of duties and responsibilities and that a director or appropriately qualified individual oversees the Client accounting function.
- b) that we employ competent and knowledgeable staff who are responsible for processing Clients' money.
- c) that our accounting systems and Client data are securely controlled and protected.
- d) that our computer systems are adequately protected for access, firewalls, backups, and disaster recovery.
- e) that there is adequate cover for annual leave and long-term absence.
- f) directors and staff cannot and do not override controls surrounding the accounting systems.

2.2. Holding Client money

- a) all Client money is held in Client money accounts over which the Company has exclusive control at a bank authorised to undertake such a role under UK (United Kingdom) statutory & regulatory standards.
- b) that our Clients' money is held in one or more Client bank accounts separate from all other monies and that Client money is available on demand.
- c) any Client bank accounts are correctly titled to distinguish the accounts from an office or any other account.
- d) that we have obtained written confirmation from the bank of the Client account conditions.
- e) that we advise Clients in writing of the bank account details and agree the terms of the account handling, including arrangements for interest and charges.
- f) that we have obtained written consent from our Clients regarding retention of interest.
- g) that where a Client requests that money is held in an account to which it and the Company has access, this is a bank account set up by the Client, not a Company bank account.
- h) accounting records and systems are appropriate to the nature and volumes of Client account transactions. We use a suitable software package to manage Client money effectively.
- i) our systems provide details of all money received into and paid from all Client accounts and shows a running balance of all Client money held in that account.
- j) our systems identify all receipts and payments to the Client to which they relate on their request; for example, by means of Client ledgers showing cash balances held on behalf of Clients.

- k) accounting records are completed chronologically and promptly.
- l) the current balances at the total and Client levels are available during office hours on request.
- m) all ledgers have clear reference to the Client and an appropriate description, e.g., the property address.
- n) that any penalties incurred are only paid out of a Client account if the Client has provided specific informed consent.
- o) overdrawn balances on Client ledgers are prevented by the systems or controls in place and where they do occur are investigated and rectified immediately.
- p) adequate controls are in place over unidentified Client money to ensure that such funds are kept securely. Defined Clients are located and reimbursed as soon as possible.
- q) a register of Client bank accounts is maintained including dates of opening and closing accounts.
- r) reconciliations are reviewed and signed off by the Finance Team Manager or an appropriate independent senior member of staff.
- s) Client accounting records, including copies of reconciliations, are securely kept for at least six years plus the current year.
- t) no office money is held in a Client money account.

2.3. Controls over the receipt of Client money

- a) only appropriate staff independent of accounting staff open incoming post.
- b) all cheques received by post or by hand are promptly recorded and banked within three working days.
- c) a reconciliation is performed between money received by post and that day's banking.
- d) procedures exist to identify and distinguish between Clients' and office money.
- e) unbanked Client money receipts are kept secure.
- f) where Mears Lawncare staff are asked by a client to accept cash on the doorstep, cash must not be accepted under any circumstances. The staff member must politely refuse, explain that the Company does not permit doorstep cash collections, and direct the client to the approved payment methods or to the office so that an appropriate alternative arrangement can be made. Any such request must be reported to the relevant manager or the finance team as soon as reasonably practicable.

2.4. Payments from Client accounts

- a) checks are made to ensure that sufficient funds are held on behalf of the relevant Client before payments are made.
- b) a copy of the bank mandate is held and is up to date.
- c) adequate authorisation and supervision procedures are in place for payments made by cheque, bank transfer and electronic methods.
- d) insurance and adequate manager supervision is in place where payments are made by non-managers.
- e) all payment requests have supporting evidence, and that documentation has been authorised in advance by a Principal or other appropriate person.
- f) blank cheques are not signed, and unused cheques are kept securely.
- g) effective controls are in place over the setting up of new supplier accounts on the system.
- h) cash payments are not accepted.

2.5. Our Client Money Protection Certificate can be found on our website [here](#).

Signature: *Sarah Chatwin*

Name: Sarah Chatwin

Position: Managing Director

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