BSO LEGAL SERVICES (DLS)

INFORMATION PACK FOR APPLICANTS

GENERAL JUNIOR COUNSEL BANK

Thank you for your interest in the BSO Legal Services (DLS) General Junior Counsel Bank. These notes provide **essential information** for all Applicants: **PLEASE READ THEM CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM.**

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

DLS provides legal services exclusively to public Health and Social Care bodies in Northern Ireland.

Further information regarding DLS and the legal services we provide to our HSC clients can be found on the BSO's website Home - Business Services Organisation (BSO) Website (hscni.net)

2. GENERAL JUNIOR COUNSEL BANK

DLS is launching a new General Junior Counsel Bank which will be effective from 1st January 2025.

This Bank will be open to all junior barristers, particularly those who are yet to develop an extensive specialist practice. DLS may from time to time instruct Counsel on this Bank in respect of a variety of matters such as:-

- Mental Health Tribunals (potentially at short notice)
- Project work
- Support work in relation to Public Inquiries or substantial cases before the courts
- Analysis of documents, review of discoverable documents
- Legal research
- Applications and reviews before various courts or tribunals
- And any other appropriate legal work

Eligibility Criterion

In order to be eligible to apply for the General Junior Counsel Bank candidates must:

- Be a qualified barrister eligible to practise in Northern Ireland at the date of application

Duration of General Junior Counsel Bank

The DLS General Junior Counsel Bank will become effective from 1st January 2025. Those Counsel appointed will remain on the Bank for a period of 5 years from the date of appointment.

Counsel who are removed from the Bank after 5 years will not then be automatically appointed to any of the Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel, but rather would be required to apply for such Panel(s) in the normal course.

The Bank will re-open for applications on an annual basis with Counsel appointed to the Bank for a period of 5 years commencing from 1st January of the following year.

There is no guarantee that any work will be offered to any junior counsel appointed to the Bank.

3. SELECTION

DLS intends to appoint to its General Junior Counsel Bank those Counsel who meet the eligibility criterion set out above.

Applications will be considered on the basis of the information set out in the Application form ONLY.

4. APPLICATION FORM

Applications must be submitted via the eForm accessible via the BSO website by the closing date and time set out below.

Applications will not be acknowledged by e-mail.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM

The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form constitutes an important element of the Application. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a Monitoring Form. You should receive an automatic email with a link after you submit your application form, if you have not, please click on the following link and complete - BSO Legal Services (DLS) Junior Counsel Panels - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING Form - Business Services Organisation (BSO) Website (hscni.net)

6. CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATION

Closing date for ALL applications is 15th November 2024 at 5pm

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Queries should be addressed in the first instance to **generalcounselbank@hscni.net**

8. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

DLS Terms and Conditions for Counsel are set out in the Schedule to this Information Pack.

October 2024

BSO Legal Services (DLS) Terms and Conditions for Counsel

General Terms and Conditions for all Counsel Instructed by DLS

The following are the terms and conditions for all Counsel instructed by DLS.

1. Quality of Service

All Counsel must provide a high-quality service to DLS clients. This includes requirements such as responsiveness, compliance with instructions, client satisfaction and prioritising HSC clients' work. DLS will seek feedback from clients on the quality of service they receive from Counsel and will act on it.

2. Responsiveness

It is essential to the efficient running of DLS and the overall quality of legal service provided to our clients that Counsel are responsive and adhere to agreed timeframes for ongoing work. Counsel must provide written advices, directions and/or opinions promptly and in accordance with timescales specified by instructing solicitors in individual cases. If Counsel is unable to respond to their instructing solicitor within a reasonable or agreed timeframe, they must keep the solicitor advised as appropriate.

3. Performance

DLS will monitor and review the performance of all Counsel on a regular basis.

In the event of performance falling short of expected standards (including but not limited to the standards set out in the Bar Code of Conduct), DLS reserves the right to initiate a formal procedure, which may ultimately result in removal from the DLS Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel Panel and/or the DLS General Junior Counsel Bank. If DLS were to initiate such a procedure, Counsel would be notified in writing and given an opportunity to make representations.

In the event of the performance of Senior Counsel falling short of expected standards, DLS reserves the right to withdraw instructions and not instruct that Counsel in future cases.

4. Information Governance

Counsel must comply with all legal obligations in respect of information governance including the duty of confidentiality, the security of personal and commercial data, and compliance with the provisions of applicable data protection legislation.

Counsel must sign a Data Sharing Agreement prior to receipt of any instructions from DLS.

5. Electronic Briefs

DLS will provide electronic briefs only. Electronic briefs will be furnished via encrypted email or the Egress secure file sharing system, or by other secure platforms, such as SharePoint, which enable the secure electronic sharing of documents.

6. Volume of Work

Appointment to any of the DLS Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel or the DLS General Junior Counsel Bank cannot be a guarantee that a certain amount of work will be offered to any successful candidate.

There is no panel for Senior Counsel, rather Senior Counsel will be instructed on an individual case basis.

7. Acceptance of Briefs

Once appointed to a Specialist Panel, there is an expectation that Counsel will accept the briefs offered. Where a panel Counsel refuses to accept briefs without valid reason, DLS reserves the right to take appropriate action, including the removal of that Counsel from the relevant Panel.

8. Return of Briefs

DLS and its clients expect that, once Counsel has been instructed in a case, she/he will continue in that action until its conclusion. When Counsel returns a brief to DLS without valid reason, DLS reserves the right to take appropriate action including the removal of panel Counsel from the relevant Specialist Panel, or, in the case of Senior Counsel, not to instruct that Counsel in future cases.

9. Conduct

Counsel must behave professionally at all times and must not act in any way that may bring into disrepute the reputation of DLS or its clients. In the event of failure to

comply with this condition DLS reserves the right to take appropriate action, including the removal of Counsel from the relevant Specialist Panel of Junior Counsel or General Junior Counsel Bank, or in the case of Senior Counsel, not instruct that Counsel in future cases.

10. Consultations/Attendances

Our clients are geographically spread across NI and, in light of new methods of working, DLS will seek to use video conferencing where appropriate for consultations with Counsel, witnesses and experts. Where a consultation is held in person, DLS will endeavour to hold these at DLS offices to save costs and for the convenience of our clients.

11. Fees

Arrangements for payment of fees – during the lifetime of the DLS Specialist Panels of Junior Counsel & DLS General Junior Counsel Bank, DLS intends to introduce arrangements for the payment of fees via electronic means such as BACS transfer. Counsel instructed by DLS will be expected to co-operate in setting up the relevant arrangements for electronic payments, including responding promptly to any relevant communications.

(a) Counsel instructed via the General Junior Counsel Bank will be paid for all work undertaken at an **hourly rate of £40 per hour.** Bank Counsel must submit detailed time records for all work invoiced to DLS' clients. Any invoices submitted without detailed time records will not be processed for payment.
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(b) Where Counsel has travelled to Court or to client premises in the course of their work for DLS, travel/mileage expenses will be paid in line with the rates applicable in County Court cases.