

New Connections Legal Process Improvements

WPD's New *Collaborative Partnership Protocol*

1. Adopt a collaborative working approach

Break the traditional lawyers' adversarial mind-set

- Emphasise the importance of co-working to achieve shared outcomes
- Avoiding the use (and associated mind-set) of confrontational labels such as "the other side" in favour of "customer's legal representatives"
- Adopting a 'help and assist' attitude (e.g. asking if Geldards can help to expedite matters) to break the traditional lawyers' adversarial mind-set. Lawyers don't do this and we think it could have a transformational effect.

2. Focus on the target connection date

Ensure customers' lawyer is aware of the target connection date

- The majority of customers' lawyers are unaware that there is a target connection date and so Geldards will get this message across. All too often, realising that the date is fast approaching, customers push their lawyers into action when it's too late.
- We will explain to our customer the importance of instructing lawyers about the connection target date. Even when Geldards mention the connection date, it is often met with indifference - the point being that unless and until our customer instructs their lawyer act by a certain date, improvements in completion times are going to be hard to achieve.

3. 50 days to completion

Geldards' aim to complete within 50 days of instruction

- Geldards will set out their intentions at the start of the transaction as a framework for management and monitoring of the transaction timeline.
- Geldards will send Collaborative Partnership progress reports to customers' lawyers which will identify whether a transaction is on track for completion by the target connection date.

4. Chase intelligently and unconventionally

As a tag team, with WPD chasing the customer

- Adopting a common sense, pragmatic and results-based approach.
- Breaking with the traditional lawyer protocol, if written chasers aren't effective, Geldards will use the phone. If that doesn't work, ask WPD to contact the customer.

5. Improved procedures and standard documents

We will drive continuous *time to complete* improvement through incremental changes to Geldards' procedures and standard documents.

- Geldards' initial communication to our customers' lawyers will ask them to adopt the Protocol and will provide a guidance note to assist them in dealing with the documents and procedures. This will avoid delays in completing the transaction.
- Geldards will issue draft engrossments which are pre-populated with owner and property details drawn from the Land Registry. Currently a watermarked draft is issued with a request for our customers' lawyer to fill in the blanks.
- At the same time, title queries/requisitions will be raised.

- Standard heads of terms for WPD's principal legal transactions, to form the basis of landowners' instruction to their lawyers, are available on our website.
- A suite of authorised variations from our standard heads of terms have been provided to Geldards to reduce the number of requests for instructions made back to WPD.
- Our standard legal documents will be continuously reviewed to identify efficiency improvements.

6. **Dispense with cost undertakings**

We will no longer require cost undertakings before starting the legal process

- Waiting for cost undertakings from our customers' lawyers distracts attention away from the main transaction and delays the start of the legal process.
- To rely on trust that costs will be paid by our customer is a radical change, as it leaves WPD potentially exposed in cases which do not proceed.

7. **KPI measures of both sides performance**

We measure performance on both sides of a transaction to identify where delays are happening so that we can focus our efforts

- For example, in addition to measuring Geldards' performance, we measure average time taken by customers' solicitors to reply to title queries/requisitions.
- We publish monthly KPI reports of our own, Geldards and our customers lawyers' performance.