Unit 16

Title:	Client Care Skills
Level:	3
Credit Value:	7

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:	Knowledge, understanding and skills
1 Understand the professional requirements of a client care interview	**1.1** Identify appropriate modes of professional conduct	**1.1** Using appropriate greetings, eg not using the client's first name unless specifically directed by the client; the importance of being approachable, whilst avoiding over familiarity, of being prepared for the interview and ensuring that the interview has a structure that enables the collection of all relevant facts; the importance of being attentive and courteous during the interview, of empathising with the client, ie letting the client speak, of being tactful and diplomatic, of being clear and straightforward at all times throughout the interview
	1.2 Identify the key elements of the interview	**1.2** Understanding the interview's purpose – to find out more from the client about their issue; the need for clear, succinct information; the purpose of questioning to elicit more relevant information; the importance of responding clearly and appropriately to client questions; the importance of establishing next steps; the need to record all relevant details accurately
	1.3 Describe the ways in which these elements are realised in the course of an interview	**1.3** Understanding that clients can be emotional, angry etc; clarifying the client's objectives with the client; letting the client speak fully but not excessively; using questioning techniques to

		focus on what is essential to the issue; understanding the limits of one's role in the interview; knowing when to escalate a question/issue; the importance of paraphrasing and summarising key information; ensuring a clear understanding at each turn of the interview
2 Know how to record all relevant information gathered from a client interview	**2.1** Produce an attendance note for an interview with a client **2.2** Produce a matter creation form for a client	**2.1** Taking notes in interviews – the function of note-taking, features of note-taking: not trying to write down everything, only recording key points, writing clearly, use of headings and sub-headings Understanding the purpose and typical features of an attendance note; the way in which information is structured, ie the attendance note should record all information clearly, accurately and in an easy to read layout; the use of paragraphs to sub-divide information; the importance of recording relevant dates, times, addresses, time spent etc and of understanding that this document is the foundation of a file for the client **2.2** The importance of understanding the requirements of a matter creation form in advance of the client interview, and of ensuring that the interview is used to obtain all relevant information germane to its production
3 Understand the relevant professional requirements of client care communications	**3.1** Write a standard client care letter	**3.1** Use of appropriate conventions: letter openings/salutations, the use of the client reference, letter titles, organising the body of the letter appropriately, use of paragraphs and sub-headings where appropriate, the importance of clear English (avoiding the use of technical jargon); ensuring the letter performs its function: confirms the client's objectives, explains all relevant issues and options, confirms next steps, keeps the client fully in the picture

	3.2 Respond to client queries using telephone and/or email	**3.2** Use of appropriate telephone conventions: the importance of a prompt response, of being prepared, of being clear and succinct, understanding the difference between face-to-face styles of communication and communication over the telephone – absence of non-verbal behaviours, the greater need for patience and tact in telephone conversations, for clearer more frequent summaries of information Use of appropriate email conventions: understanding that whilst emails have less rigid written conventions that there are still rules about acceptable language, grammar and punctuation, ie emails should still be structured, have an opening and a salutation, still contain all relevant and detailed information, should be fully punctuated and all words spelt appropriately (ie no text language, abbreviations or lack of punctuation); ensuring that the email performs its function: explains all relevant issues and options, keeps the client fully in the picture
	3.3 Write other standard correspondence on behalf of the client	**3.3** This may include: emails, additional file notes, letters to other parties involved in the case, witnesses All standard email conventions identified in 3.2 above apply; all standard attendance note conventions identified in 2.1 above apply; all standard letter writing conventions identified in 3.1 above apply
4 Understand the relevant issues and rules governing the relationship with the client	**4.1** Explain the requirement to always act impartially	**4.1** Acting in the best interests of the client without influence from outside factors; acting only with the client's approval; remaining professional at all times – not allowing one's views or emotions to affect an issue or judgment; being open and

		honest with the client whilst at the same time operating with an appropriate amount of tact and diplomacy; helping the client to understand the reality of their case
	4.2 Describe what information needs to be given to a client before they are represented	**4.2** Explaining the process they are entering into – who will be working with them, the allocation of tasks between the fee earner and non-fee earner, the calculation of the fee, the complaints procedure
	4.3 Explain the importance of client confidentiality and disclosure	**4.3** The duty is to ensure that any information received from or in connection with a client or their case or a former client or their former case will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the firm except where the client (or former client) has expressly consented to such disclosure; the duty is to disclose any information which is material to their case regardless of the source unless prohibited by law or by the duty of confidentiality to another client
	4.4 Describe the different ways in which a case may be funded	**4.4** Private paying client, fee based on hourly rate; fixed fees and when these are used; conditional fee agreements and how these work
	4.5 Explain the importance of accurate recording of administrative information (ie time recording and client billing)	**4.5** Understanding time recording – its purpose, recording the amount of time spent in units, giving the name of the fee earner, providing sufficient information in file notes to demonstrate the time spent; costing client time – knowing that bills are charged on an hourly rate of units, that different tasks attract different rates, that all time spent should be auditable through file notes and attributable to fee earners and other tasks and activities provided by non-fee earners
	4.6 Explain the current money laundering provisions affecting fee earners	**4.6** Client identity – two forms of identification required (one of which must be a passport,

		driving licence or birth certificate and the other must confirm the address of the client – utility bill, credit card or bank statement from the last 3 months); the legal obligation to disclose information relating to money laundering that has an effect on client, lawyer confidentiality; reporting concerns – understanding situations where senior colleagues need to be involved
	4.7 Identify conflicts of interest and describe your duties in the event of a conflict of interest	**4.7** The Solicitors' Code of Conduct identifies the types of conflict and one's professional responsibilities both to the client from the outset and also in the event of a conflict developing
	4.8 Identify the appropriate way in which to handle a client's money	**4.8** Knowing that client money is held, whilst work is pending, in a separate account by the practice on behalf of the client; that any accruing interest is payable to the client during this period; that only after a bill for services and/or disbursements has been drawn up is it permissible for money to be transferred between client and office accounts
	4.9 Describe why giving advice on regulated financial services is prohibited	**4.9** That the fairness and impartiality of the legal advice given is potentially compromised if financial services are not regulated; knowing that financial services are regulated by the Solicitors Financial Services Rules; that all requests have to be given to independent financial advisors (either within the business or outside)

Additional information about the unit	
Unit aim(s)	The learner will develop key professional skills, values and understanding in identifying and addressing the needs of clients
Unit expiry date	31 December 2010
Details of the relationship between the unit and relevant national occupational standards (if appropriate)	This unit may provide relevant underpinning knowledge and understanding towards units of the Legal Advice standards; specifically, Unit 1 Establish Communication with Clients, Unit 2 Support Clients to make use of the Service, Unit 3 Develop and Manage Interviews with Clients, Unit 4 Provide Information and Advice Using the Telephone, Unit 5 Provide Information to Clients, Unit 6 Support Clients to Plan, Implement And Review Action, and Unit 7 Provide Continuing Support to Clients
Details of the relationship between the unit and other standards or curricula (if appropriate)	Courses of study leading towards the achievement of the unit may offer the learner the opportunity to satisfy requirements across a number of Level 3 Key Skill areas; most specifically, Communication, Improving own learning and performance, Problem solving and Working with others
Assessment requirements specified by a sector or regulatory body (if appropriate)	na
Endorsement of the unit by a sector or other appropriate body (if required)	na
Location of the unit within the subject/sector classification	15.5 Law and Legal Services
Name of the organisation submitting the unit	ILEX (Institute of Legal Executives)
Availability for use	Only available to owning awarding body
Availability for delivery	1 September 2008