

Client Care Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out how the Practice will:

- provide a professional, consistent service to clients,
- agree and document scope and fees clearly,
- communicate promptly and transparently,
- protect clients' information,
- handle complaints fairly and record them, and
- meet AAT Practice Assurance expectations and all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all partners/directors, staff, contractors, and temporary staff,
- all client types (individuals, sole traders, partnerships, limited companies, charities where applicable),
- all services provided by the Practice (e.g., bookkeeping, accounts preparation, VAT, payroll, tax services, company secretarial/TCSP if applicable).

Service standards (what clients can expect)

The Practice will:

- act with integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, and professional behaviour,
- provide services only where we have the competence, capacity, and authority to do so,
- deal with client matters promptly, prioritising statutory deadlines,
- keep clients informed of progress and delays,
- treat clients fairly and with respect.

Service targets (internal):

- Acknowledge client emails/calls within **[1 working day]** (unless out-of-office message indicates otherwise).
- Provide an estimated timescale for completion once we have received all required information.
- Escalate urgent statutory deadline risks to a manager/client partner immediately.

Client acceptance and onboarding

Before accepting a new client, the Practice will:

- confirm the client's needs and whether we can meet them,
- complete required AML checks and risk assessment where applicable,
- confirm identity/beneficial ownership and complete sanctions/PEP screening where required,
- agree scope, responsibilities, and fees in writing before starting work,
- set up the client record in our practice management system and retain onboarding evidence.

No work starts until:

- AML checks are complete (where required), and
- the engagement letter/terms of business are issued and accepted.

Engagement letters, scope, and responsibilities

The Practice will issue an engagement letter (or equivalent written terms) which sets out:

- services included and not included,
- key responsibilities of the Practice and the client (including deadlines for providing information),
- fee basis, billing schedule, and payment terms,
- how we handle third-party communications (e.g., HMRC authorisations),
- record retention and data protection summary,
- how to raise a complaint.

Scope changes

If the scope changes, the Practice will:

- confirm the change in writing,
- agree any fee changes before completing additional work,
- record the change on the client file.

Fees, billing, and transparency

The Practice will:

- explain fees in a way the client can understand,
- provide estimates where appropriate, noting assumptions,
- inform the client promptly if costs are likely to be higher than expected,
- provide invoices that clearly describe the work billed,
- apply fair debt management and work-on-hold procedures where necessary.

If the client disputes an invoice, the Practice will:

- acknowledge the dispute promptly,
- investigate within 10 working days
- document the outcome and any agreed resolution.

Communication and records

The Practice will maintain adequate records to support:

- work performed, advice provided, and decisions made,
- client instructions and approvals,
- key communications and deliverables.

Clients will be asked to:

- provide complete information in a timely manner,
- review outputs promptly and raise issues without delay,
- keep us informed of material changes (e.g., address, business activities, directors/shareholders).

Confidentiality and data protection

The Practice will:

- keep client information confidential, except where disclosure is required by law or professional obligations,
- store and transmit client information securely,
- restrict access to client data to those who need it for their role,
- follow our data protection policy and privacy notice.

Quality control and review

The Practice will:

- supervise work appropriately based on risk and complexity,
- apply checklists and review steps for key services,
- perform periodic file reviews and record outcomes,
- take corrective action and provide training where issues are identified.

Complaints policy (how clients can complain)

We aim to resolve concerns quickly and fairly.

How to complain

Clients can raise concerns by: Mark Jackson-Stapleton

- Email: mark@jacksonstapleton.co.uk
- Phone: 01724 786112
- Post: 1-3 Laneham Street, Scunthorpe, DN15 6LJ

Complaints handler

Complaints are handled by: **Mark Jackson-Stapleton, Managing Director** or a nominated director/partner not directly responsible for the matter, where possible).

Process

1. We will acknowledge the complaint within **[2 working days]**.
2. We will investigate and respond within **[10 working days]**.
3. If more time is needed, we will explain why and provide a new response date.
4. We will confirm the outcome in writing, including any remedial action (if applicable).
5. We will record the complaint in the complaints log and review any lessons learned.

Escalation

If the client remains dissatisfied, we will explain any available escalation routes (including external routes where applicable).

Disengagement (ending the client relationship)

The Practice may disengage where appropriate, including:

- non-payment,
- breakdown in communication,
- failure to provide information,
- unethical or illegal behaviour suspected or identified,
- conflicts of interest that cannot be managed.

We will:

- confirm disengagement in writing,
- explain what work has and has not been completed,
- advise of deadlines the client should be aware of,
- arrange transfer of information to a new adviser where authorised and appropriate,
- comply with legal/professional obligations (including AML considerations).

Training and awareness

All staff will be trained on:

- client care expectations and tone of communication,
- complaints handling and escalation,
- confidentiality and data protection,
- engagement letter and scope control.

Review and version control

This policy is reviewed at least annually and after any material changes to:

- services offered,
- office structure,
- systems and processes,
- relevant regulations.