

Collaborative Partnership Protocol for the Legal Process (Fifth Edition)

Welcome to our New Connections Legal Process Protocol. This outlines a series of practical steps that our customers and their legal representatives should consider taking if they wish to avoid delays in securing connections to our network.

Accompanying the Protocol is a Guidance Note, which explains our requirements regarding title and legal documentation.

The Protocol is not intended to be an exhaustive list of steps or procedures to be followed in connection with all new connections legal processes, regardless of the circumstances: those will be determined by the facts of each case.

Aims of the Protocol

The Protocol aims to:

1. speed up the legal process by clarifying and monitoring the timeframe that the parties are working within and avoiding misunderstandings;
2. improve communication between our customer's legal representatives and our own solicitors, Geldards;
3. avoid confusion regarding the title information and legal documentation that we require;
4. establish a timetable for completion of the new connections legal process: compliance with the Protocol should ensure that the process is completed within a reasonable timeframe and, ideally, within 50 days from Geldards receiving instructions from us to act on a matter;
5. act as a collaborative working model and a behavioural ready reckoner.

Key Elements

The key elements of the Protocol are:

- (a) a shared commitment to act expeditiously with the aim of completing as many new connections matters as possible within 50 days of Geldards being instructed;
- (b) as part of the above commitment, agreeing to be measured against the following performance standards:
 - (i) Geldards to action and allocate new instructions within 2 working days of receipt
 - (ii) Our customers' legal representatives to reply to Geldards' initial letter/email within 5 working days of receipt
 - (iii) Our customer's legal representatives to reply to Geldards' title queries wherever possible within 10 working days of receipt or otherwise as soon as reasonably practicable
 - (iv) Geldards to issue progress reports (see below) within 2 working days of day 20 in 80% of cases
 - (v) Geldards to execute documents under WPD Power of Attorney within 2 working days of engrossment
 - (vi) Our customers to execute and return engrossed documents to Geldards (via their legal representatives) within 10 working days of receipt
- (c) monitoring progress of matters by means of a progress report issued 20 days from Geldards being instructed to enable our customers, their legal representatives, Geldards and us to assess the case status by reference to performance standards-related milestones and identify what remains to be done to achieve the 50 days completion target.
- (d) identifying title queries at an early stage in the process by means of a land ownership requirements checklist issued by Geldards with their initial correspondence and re-issued at 20 days intervals as an aide-memoire for any outstanding requirements.
- (e) implementing document signature touch points to highlight to other parties legal representatives the within 10 working days performance standard for executing and returning engrossed documents, firstly, when documents are issued for execution, secondly, when they have been executed by Geldards on our behalf and, thirdly, if the documents have not been executed and returned within that period.
- (f) providing online access to Geldards' case management system so that our customers, their legal representatives and any independent connection providers instructed by our customers can track the progress of their matters.