Tips for Law Students – Initial Client Meeting

Family lawyers Laura George and Samantha Edwards hosted a workshop for law students at Bournemouth University this week explaining practical tips for the initial meeting with clients.

Practical tips for law students - meeting a client for the first time

Some clients will already be familiar with the firm and liaise with lawyers and for others, the first meeting will be their first time attending solicitors offices or meeting on zoom. It is therefore important that clients feel as comfortable as possible and are greeted appropriately; body language is as important as spoken words.

The lawyer should prepare for the interview to ensure that it is well structured and the lawyer obtains the information required to provide relevant and accurate advice. The client should be listened to and their emotions understood, but it is also important for clients to understand at an early stage what will and will not be considered relevant so that unnecessary costs are avoided.

All of the lawyers in Lester Aldridge's family team are Resolution lawyers and are focused on reaching a fair settlement for their clients in a constructive manner. The use of language is important both in the initial meeting and all correspondence.

Most clients will not be familiar with legalese and therefore it is important to use basic language where possible and explain any necessary legal terms. It is always helpful to summarise what the client needs to know in the first meeting and what the next steps will be. For example, they will receive an email with a letter of engagement setting out the terms of engagement and once the file opening process is complete a letter will be sent summarising what was discussed and the options going forward.

A note of the first meeting should always be made.

The purpose of the initial meeting is to obtain sufficient information to enable the lawyer to provide initial advice on the options available, the best way forward in the circumstances and the likely costs involved and for the client to feel more informed about the options available to resolve any issues that need to be addressed.

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If you're ready to start your law career, we've got great opportunities for graduates. Find out more about training contracts at Lester Aldridge here.

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