



Solicitors (Scotland) Act 1988

1988 CHAPTER 42

4 Powers of Council of Law Society where excessive fees etc charged.

After section 39 of the 1980 Act there shall be inserted the following section—

“39A Powers where excessive fees etc charged.

- (1) This section applies where the Council are satisfied, in the case of any solicitor or incorporated practice, after inquiry and after giving the solicitor or incorporated practice an opportunity of being heard, that the solicitor or incorporated practice has issued an account for professional fees and outlays of an amount which is grossly excessive (whether or not the account has been paid by or on behalf of the client or debited by the solicitor or incorporated practice to the account of any sums held on behalf of the client).
- (2) Where this section applies the Council may—
 - (a) in the case of a solicitor, withdraw his practising certificate; or
 - (b) in the case of an incorporated practice, withdraw the practising certificates of all or any of the solicitors who are directors of the incorporated practice;and a certificate so withdrawn shall cease to have effect and the solicitor shall be suspended from practice as a solicitor.
- (3) On being satisfied by the solicitor or, as the case may be, incorporated practice that he or it has complied with the requirements of subsection (4) the Council, unless they are of the opinion that the solicitor or incorporated practice is liable to disciplinary proceedings under Part IV, shall terminate the suspension from practice of the solicitor or solicitors concerned and shall restore to him or them any practising certificates held by him or them for the practice year then current.
- (4) The requirements referred to in subsection (3) are—
 - (a) to submit the account to the Auditor of the Court of Session for taxation together with all documents in the possession or control of the solicitor or incorporated practice which relate to the matters in respect of which the account was issued; and

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- (b) to refund to the client a sum not less than the relevant amount.
- (5) The Council shall be entitled to be represented at a diet for taxation by virtue of subsection (4)(a) and to make representations to the Auditor of Court.
- (6) Where, on taxation of an account by virtue of subsection (4)(a), the amount due in respect of the account as taxed is the amount specified in the account as issued, the fee of the Auditor of Court shall be paid by the Council; but in any other case the fee shall be paid by the solicitor or, as the case may be, the incorporated practice.
- (7) In subsection (4)(b) “the relevant amount” is the amount (if any) by which the sum received by the solicitor or incorporated practice in respect of the account exceeds the amount due in respect of the account as taxed.
- (8) A solicitor may, within 21 days of receiving written notice of a decision of the Council under subsection (2) to withdraw his practising certificate, appeal to the Court against that decision; and on any such appeal the Court may give such directions in the matter, including directions as to the expenses of the proceedings before the Court, as it may think fit; and the order of the Court shall be final.
- (9) The withdrawal of a solicitor’s practising certificate under subsection (2) shall be without prejudice to the operation of section 35(3) or section 37(8).”

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