

focus on...

Notarial Services

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Notary Public?

A Notary is a qualified lawyer – a member of the third and oldest branch of the legal profession in the United Kingdom. He is appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and is subject to regulation by the Court of Faculties. The rules which affect Notaries are very similar to the rules which affect Solicitors. They must be fully insured and maintain fidelity cover for the protection of their clients and the public. They must keep clients' money separately from their own and comply with stringent practice rules and rules relating to conduct and discipline. Notaries have to renew their practising certificates every year and can only do so if they have complied with the rules.

What do Notaries do?

Their role is usually concerned with documents which have to be used abroad, although they do have specific domestic functions to perform in connection with Bills of Exchange and Ship's Protests. Examples of documents which notaries are commonly asked to notarise are:

- Certifying passports
- Powers of Attorney, particularly with regard to foreign property transactions
- Property sale or mortgage documents for use in the United States
- Sponsorship documents
- Adoption documents for inter country adoption

What do I need to bring with me?

You will always be required to bring with you at least one form of identification, usually your passport. If the document is a commercial document and is being signed on behalf of a company, then you will need to bring evidence that you are authorised to sign documents on the company's behalf.

Do I need to make an appointment?

Yes but we are usually able to see clients at short notice and we will always try to find time if the matter is particularly urgent.

How much will it cost?

This depends on the nature of the document but we basically charge on a time basis calculated on our normal commercial charge-out rates of £215 per hour. Very few documents take less than 15 minutes to notarise. A very simple, pre-printed form may take less than this and be charged accordingly. Some US property documents are voluminous, requiring a great deal of notarisation, often in the presence of two other witnesses. These may take up to an hour to deal with. We will always be able to give an estimate of our costs based on the information you give us.