

letters



Send your letters to: *Law Society Gazette*, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7, or email: gazette@lawsociety.ie

Disposal of court papers – warning!

From: Valerie Peart, Pearts, 24/26 Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin 7

At a recent meeting of the Supreme and High (Civil) Court Offices, Customer Service, User-Group Meeting, the growing difficulty of court papers being left in courtrooms was brought to our attention.

In an attempt to raise awareness about this issue, I agreed to circulate all solicitors to advise them about the problem.

The Courts Service has advised that there is an increasing number of court papers, Lever

Arch files and other bulky court papers being left in courtrooms after a case has concluded. The volumes of papers now lying around in courtrooms is causing a difficulty and, indeed, could amount to being a health and safety issue should it continue.

To date, the Courts Service has dealt with this problem by shredding such papers. However, they are no longer in a position to meet the cost of this shredding. Although the Courts Service is conscious of the sensitive nature of much of the material in these papers, the

extent of the problem is such that we are advised that registrars will soon be instructed to remove these papers from court for normal disposal. This means that they will be placed in refuse bins or a skip for removal.

As with any client papers, the issue of confidentiality is paramount and so I thought it prudent to notify all solicitors of the potential risks, were papers simply to be placed in an open skip, as is proposed.

All solicitors, therefore, are being requested to promptly remove all court papers and files

as soon as a case comes to an end.

As town agents, when asked to do so, we already collect such papers and arrange for delivery to solicitors for whom we act. We would be happy to accept instructions from anyone who might need help in this regard.

In any case, the purpose of this letter is to let all solicitors know about the problem, in the hope of soon arriving at a solution and thereby preventing further problems.

If anyone needs further information, please feel free to get in touch with us.

Cost of obtaining photocopied hospital medical records on behalf of clients

From: Manus Sweeney & Co, Suite 226, Capel Building, Mary's Abbey, Dublin 7

It has come to this writer's attention that certain Dublin hospitals have been charging anything between 60 cent and €1 per page for 'photocopying,

including post and packaging' when sent a standard request for copy medical records from solicitors, with the usual signed authority of the client accompanying same.

Where photocopies of records are released under the

Freedom of Information Act, the act allows for the photocopying costs to be charged to the requester. The standard rate per page is 4 cent. The schedule of charges is set out in the CPU Notice, number 11, which is available on www.foi.gov.ie.

I would respectfully suggest that, where copy medical records are sought, formal application for same be made under the *Freedom of Information Act* and that reference is made to the 'standard rate per page' and 'schedule of charges', as cited above. **G**



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