J-codes

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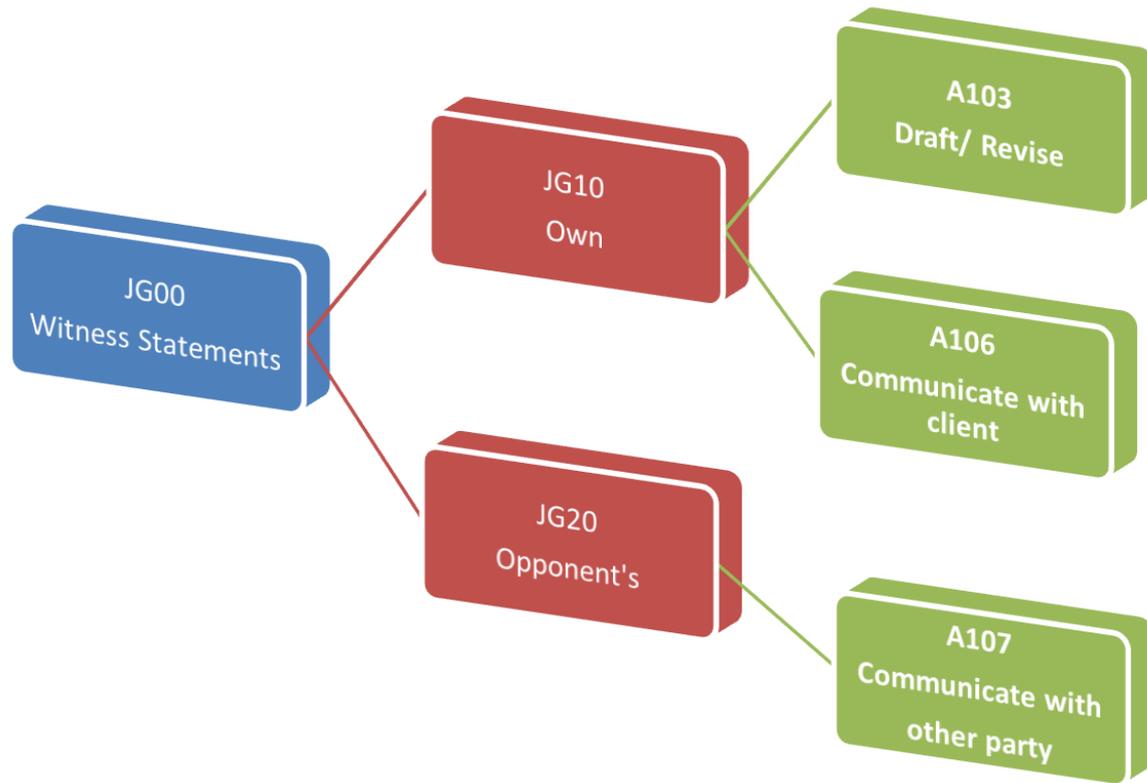
White Paper Conference

2nd March 2016

J-codes - 3 questions

- How to implement?

- How to make the cost acceptable?

- **Why?**

J-codes - the basics

J-codes – Reasons to use – Part 1

Costs managed cases

Budget preparation

Monitoring actual spend

Claims for costs

Derek Boyd,Head of Costs,Ince & Co LLP

- 'We took up the J-codes as soon as they became available, essentially because they were sure to prove useful when preparing budgets and vital to monitoring their progress.
- In relation to splitting entries that cover more than one phase/ task, I assist the fee earner to do this but of course they will be better placed to know what they did. Their adoption of the codes means that, going forward, the information should now already be split on the system.
- This is going to be of particularly significant benefit where there is a high turnover of fee earners on a long running case.
- I cannot imagine any firm that, having successfully adopted the J-codes, would not then wonder what they could possibly have done without them.

J-codes – Reasons to use – Part 2

Costs negotiations

Costs assessment

Interim applications

J-codes – Reasons to use – Part 3

Clients…..

Solicitors Regulation Authority

Code of Conduct 2011

Clients receive the best possible information, both at the time of engagement **and** when appropriate **as their matter progresses**, about the likely overall cost of their matter

(Chapter 1 Client Care Outcomes 1.13)

J-codes – Reasons to use – Part 3

Clients…..

71% of lawyers said that clients had an increased cost consciousness and there was more shopping around

Top three things clients wanted from a lawyer:-

- Clear indication of likely costs **or** the solicitor working to a fixed fee
- Regular updates on progress
- Charging system explained clearly at outset

Lexis Nexis

Bellweather Survey

2015

J-codes – Reasons to use – Part 3

Analysis….

Write once, read many…

J-codes – Reasons to use – Part 3

Fixed recoverable
  fees

J-codes – How to implement

- No time recording

- Existing system but not compatible with UTBMS codes

- Existing system is compatible with UTBMS codes

J-codes – The cost of implementation

- New software/ adapting existing software

- The time taken to time record

- Training

Cost of implementation – software

- Software suppliers

- 'Broadly mandated'

- Changing your system

Cost of implementation – time to record

The keystroke challenge

'Drafting work to expand client's witness statement to deal with continuing losses because premises remain closed' – 112 key strokes

'JG10 A103 expanding C to deal with continuing losses because premises remain closed' – 83 key strokes

Cost of implementation – training

- Improved time recording

- Getting used to the codes

- Getting data out of your system

- 'Upskilling' in Excel

- Add on programs

Head of Costs, West End firm

- 'As our software currently stands it is 'budget compliant', but not yet 'J-code compliant'.

- Time HAS to be recorded by selecting the Phase as set out in Precedent H and the activity.

- The system remembers which Phase and Activity was last used on that particular file which means you are not constantly having to scan down the whole list. It takes milliseconds. A detailed narrative also HAS to be entered before it will let you close the time entry.

- 'We have already been in touch with our software supplier who is working on the software update for J-codes'.

Steven Green,
Partner and National Head of the Costs Team, Irwin Mitchell LLP

- 'J Codes fitted well in our litigation areas......Our fee earners found them easier to understand and to use than our existing time codes

- J-codes cover comprehensively all of the litigation activities…..'

Conclusion

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