

## ORGANISING APPOINTMENTS

Legal secretaries can be **responsible** for one or more fee **earners**. One of the most important duties of a secretary is to **organise** his/her fee **earner's** diary or fee earners' diaries. This involves good organisation and co-ordination skills. There **are** several ways of recording **appointments** and events but all have one aim in common – to be up **to** date.

### **Paper diaries** – indented subheading

Many firms **operate** paper based **diaries** and these come in various presentation forms. You can have one day on a page, **one** week viewed between left and **right** pages, or one month on a double page but this does not allow much room for writing details. The advantages of paper diaries are that anyone can make entries as it does not need any specialist **knowledge** to write the appointment, they are portable, and entries can be easily changed if written in **pencil**. The disadvantages of this system are, confidentiality is harder to **maintain**, the diary can be left behind or lost entirely which could be disastrous!

### **Electronic diaries**

#### **Justified left paragraph**

Diaries kept on a computer are very **efficient** and have many **advantages**. Reminders can be set about meetings or deadlines, **access** can be given to only those who need it therefore maintaining **confidentiality**. Diaries can be scanned to see if all fee earners expected to attend a meeting are free at that particular time, and the diary page can **be** printed. However, you need to have computer skills to be able to use the diary, it is **not** portable and restricted access can be detrimental to saving time in arranging a meeting by someone who does not **have** the password, which are all disadvantages.

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Level 2 Certificate for Legal Secretaries / Level 2 Award in Proof-reading in the Legal Environment – Proof-reading Test Answer

### Personal digital assistant – known as (PDAs)

(PDAs) are hand held electronic devices which can be taken away from the office by the fee earner and are very useful for making appointments in court, meetings, at the police station or even at lunch! These can be synchronised with the PC in the office which records the diary entry. The disadvantages of using this recording system is that batteries can run low or the fee earner can forget to take it with him/her.

### Wall planners

These cover a whole year and are usually placed in a strategic place so that all staff can access the information. It is useful to show court dates, regular meetings, public holidays, special events such as the annual Christmas party and staff holidays which help avoid staff being away at the same time. Coloured stickers can be used for different types of events' simplifying understanding the calendar.

### Appointments

Indent When booking appointments bear in mind that booking too many in a day can be very tiring for the fee earner and he/she will need time to travel to locations. Meetings can run late so back-to-back appointments should be avoided. Plan ahead and think logically. If there is a big court case coming up in the near future, then booking the fee earner on many appointments may jeopardise the preparation of a big case.

### Co-ordination of diary appointments

You will need to update both your diary and the fee earner's diary or fee earners' diaries each day. (Inconsistent space) Set aside either the beginning of the day or the end of the day to run through the diaries to ensure you all have the same information.

550 words