



COMPETITION APPEAL TRIBUNAL

**NOTICE OF A CLAIM FOR DAMAGES UNDER
SECTION 47A OF THE COMPETITION ACT 1998**

CASE NO. 1249/5/7/16

Pursuant to rule 33(8) of the Competition Appeal Tribunal Rules 2015 (S.I. 2015 No. 1648) (the “Tribunal Rules”), the Registrar gives notice of the receipt of a claim for damages (the “Claim”) on 4 April 2016, under section 47A of the Competition Act 1998 (the “Act”), by Socrates Training Limited (the “Claimant”) against The Law Society of England and Wales (the “Defendant”). The Claimant is represented by Bernard George, a solicitor and a director of the Claimant, of 3 Meadowbank, London NW3 3AY.

The Claimant is a provider of online training. The Defendant is the professional body for solicitors in England and Wales. It has developed a number of paid-for accreditation schemes for firms of solicitors, including the Conveyancing Quality Scheme (“CQS”).

According to the Claim, the Defendant and the Claimant both offer online anti-money laundering (“AML”) training for law firms on a commercial basis and also online training which helps property lawyers to avoid mortgage fraud and other financial crime. Conveyancing firms have a statutory duty to provide their staff with AML training. At some point, believed to be early in 2015, the Defendant started to require that as a condition of a law firm maintaining its CQS accreditation such a firm must buy both AML online training and mortgage fraud training from the Defendant.

The Claimant alleges that the Defendant is dominant in the market for the provision of quality certification/accreditation services to conveyancing firms, and that the Defendant’s insistence that firms must buy their AML, mortgage fraud or other financial crime training from itself rather than from the Claimant or any other provider, is an abuse of its dominant position, restricting competition in the downstream market for the provision of AML and financial crime training and causing loss to the Claimant. According to the Claimant, the inclusion of a tying clause of this kind is specifically prohibited under applicable law as being anti-competitive.

The Claimant seeks:

- (1) An injunction restraining the Defendant from continuing to abuse its dominant position.
- (2) A declaration that the Defendant has abused its dominant position.
- (3) A declaration that the tying clause is illegal and unenforceable.
- (4) Damages.
- (5) Interest.
- (6) Costs.
- (7) Such further or other relief as the Tribunal considers appropriate.

The Claimant has applied for fast-track designation of the proceedings pursuant to Rule 58 of the Tribunal Rules.

Further details concerning the procedures of the Competition Appeal Tribunal can be found on its website at www.catribunal.org.uk. Alternatively, the Tribunal Registry can be contacted by post at Victoria House, Bloomsbury Place, London WC1A 2EB, or by telephone (020 7979 7979), fax (020 7979 7978) or email (registry@catribunal.org.uk). Please quote the case number mentioned above in all communications.

Charles Dhanowa OBE, QC (Hon)
Registrar

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