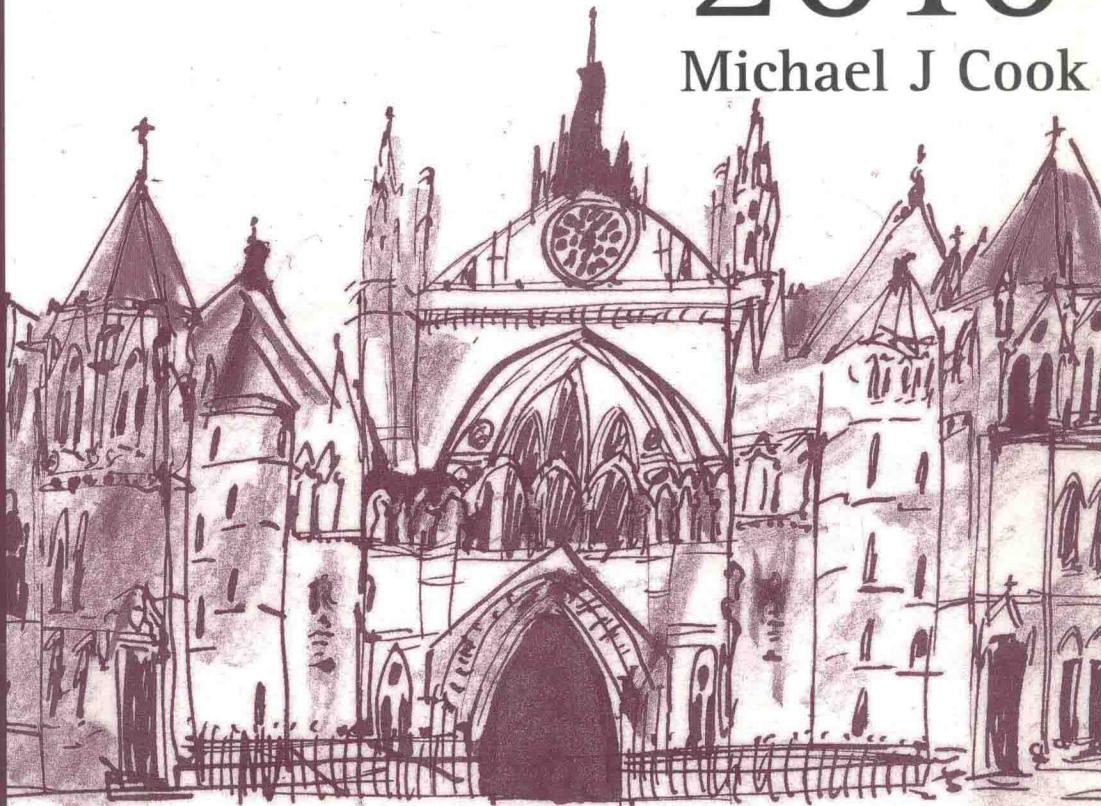


COOK *On* COSTS

2010

Michael J Cook



A guide to legal remuneration
in civil contentious and
non-contentious business



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Preface

Although the ever-changing landscape of legal costs continues to necessitate an annual publication, I must start with the elephant in the corner of the room – the twelve month Review of Civil Litigation Costs by Lord Justice Jackson, Sir Rupert. As with all elephants in the corner, or mentioning the war in that episode of *Fawlty Towers*, I do not refer to the Jackson report other than in this preface for two very good reasons. First, it has not yet been published and, second, on past experience even after it has been published nothing, especially any reform requiring primary legislation, is likely to happen for months or years or perhaps ever.

I have seen it all before. The whole of my professional life has been spent both ‘in the present economic climate’ and in holding our collective breath awaiting the outcome of one fundamental review or another, or preparing for some forthcoming earth-shattering piece of reforming legislation. The Esher Report, the Beeching Report, the Royal Commission on Legal Services leading to the Benson Report, the Horne Report, the Woolf Report and the Civil Procedure Rules, and now Jackson. I have been there and got a wardrobe-full of T-shirts.

Four months of fact finding in this country and abroad resulted in a comprehensive 663 page preliminary report with 30 appendices on disc, followed by a further four months of stimulating debate both nationally and in specialist seminars in London. Since then, all has been silence as Sir Rupert and his team of assessors prepare the final report for publication by the year end, when no doubt all hell will break loose. In Sir Rupert’s own words ‘My final report will generate protest from at least some directions and quite possibly from all directions’. I can’t wait.

In the meantime what has been happening in the real world? The law lords have disappeared, and solicitors are no longer ‘of the Supreme Court’ but ‘of the Senior Courts’ which does not have quite the same ring to it. The Supreme Court Costs Office has suffered an even worse fate: it is still the ‘SCCO’, standing for the ‘Senior Courts Costs Office’, but throughout the rules it has now become simply the ‘Costs Office’, which has a certain logic because nowadays much of its work is transferred in from the county courts which are not of course ‘Senior Courts’. I hope that makes it clear.

Remuneration certificates have been abolished and replaced by ... not very much; after considerable consultation and debate a new regime has been agreed for personal injury claims arising out of road traffic accidents which we are told will cover 70%-75% of all personal injury claims with fixed costs in three stages, and the judiciary having failed to control costs by case management are now to try to control cases by costs management using the tools of budgeting and cost-capping. All accompanied by the usual torrent of costs decisions by every level of the judiciary.

My traditional thanks to Nicholas Bacon (Chapter 40), Harry Birks (Chapter 30) and David Chalk (Chapter 42) and to a new entrant, Susan Dunn and her colleagues

Preface

at Harbour Litigation Funding on the increasingly important funding of litigation by third parties (Chapter 41). It will soon be *Cook and Co on Costs*.

The law is as at 1 November 2009.

Michael Cook
Burwood Park

Foreword to the first annual edition

For litigation practitioners, the issue of costs used to be a relative afterthought. However, over the last decade the pendulum has swung to the point where the funding of litigation – whether the case can be funded and who pays what to whom at the end – has become a new and essential skill for litigators everywhere.

Fortunately *Cook on Costs* has been there in recent years to help the profession steer its way through the costs maze. But even Michael Cook, whose authorship on this complex subject has always kept us up-to-date, has appreciated that the current pace of change is so fast that an annual edition is now required. So that is what he has produced in the first annual edition of *Cook on Costs*. This is an indispensable text for every solicitor, whose own understanding of costs and the funding of litigation by conditional fees, the state or otherwise, is essential to the overriding need to ensure that costs issues are fully explained to and understood by the client.

Like my predecessor, Phillip Ely, who wrote the foreword to the excellent first edition, I am delighted to commend to all firms the timely arrival of *Cook on Costs 2000*.

Michael Napier
President
The Law Society

Foreword to the First Edition

It is my privilege as President of the Law Society to commend Michael Cook's very practical guide to all aspects of solicitors' costs (other than criminal costs).

He modestly suggests that the book does not contain any facts and figures that cannot be found elsewhere. Recognising the ultimate and total dependence of solicitors on the costs which they receive, he presents all those facts and figures with clarity borne of experience. This book adds to the major contribution which Michael Cook has already made to the profession on this vital topic.

It is also a clear response to the need for a definitive and manageable guide to an area which requires such practical and positive skills.

I hope that it will find a place in every solicitor's office.

October 1991

P T Ely
President
The Law Society

Preface to the First Edition

When the publishers asked me to write a preface I cavilled on the two grounds that no-one reads prefaces and they serve no useful purpose. I was told that the purpose is to explain the aims and intention of the work; in other words, why I have written the book and why you should read it. Fair enough. My late partner, Lionel Cranfield, at the end of some heavy litigation used to say, 'Now we come to the interesting part – the costs!'. In the quarter of a century since Lionel was killed in the hunting field, the profession has become increasingly aware that money is the life-blood of a solicitor's practice, but I continue to be perplexed that, in spite of this realisation, most solicitors and their clients lose out financially because of the profession's basic lack of understanding and interest in all aspects of costs. In a College of Law survey of the areas of skills on which solicitors wished the Law Society's new Legal Practice course to be based, costs did not even appear in the list.

And that is why I have written this book. It does not contain any facts and figures you cannot find elsewhere – apart from it being illustrated from my collection of unreported cases – but I have tried to write about costs in an interesting, coherent and digestible way. My aim in writing the book is therefore to impart to you the understanding of, and enthusiasm for, costs that Lionel Cranfield aroused in me all those years ago.

I much appreciate the kindness of Philip Ely in writing a foreword to the book in his year as President of the Law Society. I am seriously indebted to my old friend Master Michael Devonshire of the Supreme Court Taxing Office for reading the manuscript of the book and making many useful suggestions on the condition that I did not mention his name.

The law is stated as at 1 October 1991.

Michael Cook
Limpsfield
October 1991

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TABLE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE RULES

References in the right-hand column are to paragraph numbers. Paragraph references printed in bold type indicate where the CPR is set out in part or in full.

Civil Procedure Rules 1998,	
SI 1998/3132	2.22, 5.22, 5.23, 5.29, 9.10, 10.9, 10.11, 10.14, 10.19, 11.40, 17.13, 14.29, 20.14, 22.18, 22.19, 32.41, 42.56
Pt 1	
r 1.1(2)	11.38
1.4(2)(i)	11.15
Pt 2	
r 2.3(1)	38.7
(e)	37.2
2.11	30.52
Pt 3	
r 3.1	13.29
(1)	11.27
(2)	13.28
(a)	11.66, 30.52
(f)	13.29
(m)	10.10, 10.12 13.29
(3)	13.28
(a)	11.27
(5), (6)	13.28
(7)	14.20, 16.23
3.2(5)	13.29
3.4	13.12
(4)	37.2
3.9	42.108
(1), (2)	42.96
Pt 6	
r 6.7	30.17
Pt 7	6.7, 11.74
PD 7	6.7
Pt 8	2.4, 2.25, 2.26, 5.9, 5.25, 6.18, 6.19, 10.1, 11.74, 16.3, 17.11, 27.23, 30.89
Pt 11	
r 11.8(2)	42.151
Pt 14	
r 14.22	27.23
Civil Procedure Rules 1998, SI 1998/3132 –	
<i>contd</i>	
Pt 71	
PD 17	11.74
Pt 19	
r 19.2	13.7
PD 19	
para 16	39.1
Pt 20	11.17, 14.3, 34.15
r 20.3	14.3
20.4	27.14
Pt 21	42.49
r 21.1(2)	37.1
21.2(1)	37.2
(3)	37.2
21.8	37.6
21.9(6)	37.2
21.11A	37.6
(1)–(6)	37.7
PD 21	
para 8A.1	37.6, 37.8
8A.2	37.8
Pt 23	5.15, 5.21, 10.15, 30.10, 30.17, 30.23, 30.52, 30.64, 32.29
Pt 24	13.12, 13.21
PD 24	
para 4, 5	13.29
Pt 25	
r 25.1(1)(m)	6.24
25.6	6.10
25.7	6.10
25.12	13.1, 13.10, 13.32
(1)–(3)	13.1, 13.10, 13.11
25.13	13.1, 13.10, 13.15, 13.32, 13.33
(1)	13.12
(2)	13.12
(a)	13.27
(ii)	13.24
(c)	13.3
(g)	13.27, 13.37

Civil Procedure Rules 1998, SI 1998/3132 –	
<i>contd</i>	
Pt 25 – <i>contd</i>	
r 25.14	13.1, 13.10, 13.32
(1), (2)	13.13
25.15	13.1, 13.10, 13.29, 13.32
(1)	13.14 , 13.42
(2)	13.14
Pt 26	
r 26.2	6.7
26.6	26.1, 27.1
(6)	28.1
26.7(3)	26.2
Pt 27	
r 27.2	14.43
27.14	25.1, 26.1, 26.4, 26.16
(1)–(6)	26.2
PD 27	26.1, 26.3
para 7.1–7.3	26.3
Pt 31	
r 31.1A(1)	30.13
31.14	42.103
31.16	11.22
Pt 34	34.19
Pt 35	
r 35.4(4)	21.4
35.15	31.7
PD 35	31.7
Pt 36	8.4, 9.8, 10.10, 11.38, 11.55,
	11.56, 11.57, 14.1,
	14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.6,
	14.8, 14.10, 14.16,
	14.18, 14.20, 14.22,
	14.25, 14.27, 14.29,
	14.30, 14.40, 14.41,
	14.42, 14.43, 18.4,
	27.58, 42.44, 42.46,
	42.154, 42.157
r 36.1(1)	14.5
(2)	14.5 , 14.6, 14.40, 42.176
36.2	14.7
(2)(c)	14.8
36.3(1)	14.9
(2)	14.9
(3), (4)	14.9 , 14.10
(5)–(7)	14.9
36.4(1), (2)	14.11
36.5(1)–(7)	14.12
36.6(1)–(5)	14.13
36.7(1), (2)	14.14
36.8(1)–(3)	14.15
36.9(1), (2)	14.17
(3), (4)	14.17
(5)	14.17 , 14.18
36.10	14.6, 14.10, 14.20, 14.40
(1)–(6)	14.19
36.11	14.6, 14.22, 14.40
(1)	14.21

Civil Procedure Rules 1998, SI 1998/3132 –	
<i>contd</i>	
Pt 36 – <i>contd</i>	
r 36.11 (2)–(8)	14.21
36.12(1)–(3)	14.23
36.13	14.25
(1)	14.24 , 42.174
(2), (3)	14.24
36.14	14.6, 14.20, 14.27, 14.40
(1)	14.26
(2), (3)	14.26 , 14.27
(1)–(6)	14.26
36.15(1)–(9)	14.28
36.21	18.4, 14.27, 42.176
PD 36	
para 1.1, 1.2	14.31
2.1, 2.2	14.32
3.1–3.3	14.33
PD 36B	14.34
para 1.1, 1.2	14.35
2.1, 2.2	14.36
3.1–3.6	14.37
4.1–4.5	14.38
5.1, 5.4	14.39
Pt 37	
r 37.1, 37.2	30.58
37.3	30.58
37.4–36.8	30.58
Pt 38	
r 38.6	11.54
(1)–(3)	16.24
Pt 40	
r 40.8(1)	18.2
40.9	16.22
40.12	16.25
40.14	42.61
PD 40	
para 4.1–4.5	16.26
Pt 41	9.3
Pt 43	8.4, 11.2, 15.2, 15.3, 15.5, 28.1,
	30.25, 30.48
r 43.2	9.3, 10.1, 42.85
(1)	9.2 , 42.83, 42.86
(d)	9.2 , 30.10
(2)	9.2 , 20.7, 20.11, 42.86
(3)	9.2 , 42.44, 42.47, 42.86
(4)	9.2 , 42.47, 42.86
43.3	9.4 , 9.5
43.4	9.6 , 9.7
Pt 44	8.4, 10.15, 11.1, 11.51, 14.1,
	14.30, 15.2, 15.3,
	15.5, 15.52, 16.19,
	20.7, 20.11, 28.1,
	29.7, 42.43, 42.47
r 44.1	11.2
44.2	11.3 , 11.4, 11.5

Civil Procedure Rules 1998, SI 1998/3132 –
*contd*Pt 44 – *contd*

r 44.3	10.10, 10.12, 11.7, 11.12, 11.13, 11.26, 11.28, 14.6, 14.20, 14.27, 14.30, 15.24, 19.2, 19.26, 35.5
(1)	11.6
(2)	11.6 , 11.14, 15.2, 15.7, 15.11, 16.4
(a)	11.11, 11.12, 11.13, 11.14, 11.24, 15.39, 17.1
(b)	11.10, 11.12, 11.16
(3)	11.6
(4)	11.6 , 11.12, 11.14, 11.17, 11.55, 14.1, 15.21
(a)	11.18, 11.25, 11.54, 33.6
(b)	11.18
(c)	14.27, 14.40
(5)	11.6 , 11.14, 11.17, 11.18
(a)	33.6
(6)	11.6 , 11.14, 11.16, 11.23, 15.44
(a)	11.16, 11.17, 11.18, 11.21, 15.36
(b)	11.16, 15.36
(c)	11.16, 15.36
(d), (e)	11.16, 15.36
(f)	11.13, 11.14, 11.16, 11.18, 15.36
(g)	15.36, 18.5
(7)	11.6 , 11.14, 11.16, 11.18, 14.27, 16.13
(8)	11.6 , 11.27, 11.28, 30.75
(9)	11.6 , 11.17, 11.18
44.3A	9.3, 11.30, 29.11 , 29.16, 29.17
(1)	9.3, 29.11 , 42.89
(2)	29.11 , 29.15, 42.89
44.3B	11.30, 29.17, 42.91, 42.95, 42.107, 42.145
(1)	42.92
(b)	42.25
(c)	42.110, 42.111
(d)	42.110
(2)	42.92
44.3C	11.32, 11.33
44.4	11.35 , 29.18, 30.23
(1)	14.20, 21.5, 42.166
(2)	11.37, 21.5, 42.166
(b)	17.9, 39.5
(4)	11.36

Civil Procedure Rules 1998, SI 1998/3132 –
*contd*Pt 44 – *contd*

r 44.5	11.52, 21.3, 21.7, 22.17, 22.20, 22.22, 23.1, 23.7, 23.8, 23.15, 29.9, 29.17, 30.30, 42.98
(1)	21.4 , 42.167
(a)	39.5
(2)	21.4
(3) ...	11.26, 11.42, 11.46, 11.47, 21.4 , 22.19, 42.166
44.6	11.59
44.7	11.60 , 29.1, 29.2 , 30.1, 35.4
44.8	11.63 , 11.64, 29.22, 30.59, 30.81
44.9	11.67, 15.2, 26.2, 26.4
(1)	26.5
(2)	26.5 , 26.6, 26.10
44.10	11.68, 15.2
(1)–(3)	27.18
44.11 ...	11.69, 15.2, 26.2, 26.4, 26.6, 26.7
(1)	11.65 , 26.8 , 26.10
(2)	11.65 , 26.8
44.12	15.2
(1)	11.71
(b)	14.10
(1A)	11.71
(2)	11.71 , 18.3
44.12A	11.72 , 11.74, 16.3, 30.89, 42.163
44.12B	11.72A , 42.97
44.13(1)	11.75 , 16.10
(1A)–(4)	11.75
44.14	11.26, 11.76, 15.43, 30.23, 30.24, 33.5
(1)	33.1
(2)(a), (b)	33.1 , 30.23
(3)	33.1 , 33.4
44.15	11.77, 42.107
(1)	42.95, 42.101
(2)	42.101
(3)	10.1, 42.101
44.16	11.78, 42.42
(1), (2)	42.113
44.17	11.79, 19.11
(b)	19.12
44.18(1)–(7)	10.15 , 11.80
44.19(1)–(3)	10.15 , 11.81
44.20	10.15 , 11.82
Pt 45	4.7, 8.4, 14.30, 15.2, 15.3, 15.5, 17.11, 20.7, 20.11, 25.1, 25.20, 25.23, 25.27, 27.53, 42.43, 42.47, 42.162
Section I (rr 45.1–45.6)	25.1

Civil Procedure Rules 1998, SI 1998/3132 –	
<i>contd</i>	
Pt 45 – <i>contd</i>	
r 45.1(1)–(4)	25.2
45.2(1)	25.3
45.2A(1), (2)	25.4
45.3	25.5A, 25.27
(1), (2)	25.5
45.4	25.6
45.4A(1)–(2)	25.7
45.5	25.8
(3)	11.42, 11.43, 42.112
45.6	25.9
Section II (rr 45.7–45.14) ...	25.1, 27.25,
	27.34, 27.46, 42.135
r 45.7	17.11, 42.135
(1)–(4)	27.26
45.8	17.11, 27.27 , 42.135
45.9	17.11, 42.135
(1)	27.28
(2)	27.28 , 27.37
(3)	27.28
45.10	17.11, 42.135
(1), (2)	27.29
45.11	17.11, 42.135
(1), (2)	27.30
45.12	17.11, 42.135
(1)–(3)	27.31
45.13	17.11, 42.135
(1), (2)	27.32
45.14	17.11, 27.33 , 42.135
Section III (rr 45.15–45.19)	27.44,
	29.17, 42.118
r 45.15(1)–(5)	42.119
(6)	42.119
(b)	42.122
45.16	14.30, 42.120 , 42.122
45.17(1)–(5)	42.121
45.18(1)–(4)	42.123
45.19(1)–(3)	42.124
Section IV (rr 45.20–45.22)	42.114,
	42.125
r 45.20	27.44
(1)–(3)	42.126
45.21	27.44, 42.127
45.22	27.44
(1), (2)	42.129
Section V (rr 45.23–45.25)	42.114,
	42.129
r 45.23(1)–(3)	42.130
45.24(1), (2)	42.131
45.25(1)–(3)	42.132
45.26(1)–(4)	42.133
Pt 46	4.7, 8.4, 15.2, 15.3, 15.5, 20.7,
	20.11, 26.10, 27.4,
	27.18, 42.43, 42.47
r 46.1	25.27
(1), (2)	27.5

Civil Procedure Rules 1998, SI 1998/3132 –	
<i>contd</i>	
Pt 46 – <i>contd</i>	
r 46.2	17.11, 27.14, 38.8
(1), (2)	27.8
(3)–(6)	27.9, 27.14
46.3	38.8
(1)–(4)	27.10
(5)	27.10 , 38.8
(6)	27.10 , 27.13
(7), (8)	27.10
46.4(1)–(5)	27.16
Pt 47 ...	8.4, 15.2, 15.3, 15.5, 20.7, 20.11,
	28.1, 29.8, 30.1,
	30.23, 42.43, 42.47,
	42.88
Section I (rr 41A–40.4)	
r 47.1	30.2
47.2	30.5
47.3(1), (2)	30.8
47.4	30.56
(1)	30.11
(2)	30.11 , 30.13
(3), (4)	30.11
Section II (rr 47.5–47.10)	30.14
r 47.5	30.14
(2)	30.17
47.6(1)	30.15
(2)	30.15 , 30.17
(3)	30.15
47.7	15.4, 30.18 , 30.21, 40.49
47.8(1)	30.21 , 30.23
(2)	30.21
(3)	30.21 , 30.23
(b)	30.23
(4)	30.21 , 30.24
47.9(1)–(5)	30.50
47.10(1), (2)	30.54
Section III (rr 47.11–47.12)	30.57
r 47.11	5.29
(1)–(4)	30.57
47.12	30.52
(1), (2)	30.62
(3)	30.62 , 30.64
(4), (5)	30.62
Section IV (rr 47.13–47.14)	30.65
r 47.13(1), (2)	30.65
47.14	42.61
(1), (2)	30.68
(3)	30.68 , 30.70
(4), (5)	30.68
(6)	5.29, 30.68
(7)	5.29, 30.68
Section V (rr 47.15–47.16)	30.73
r 47.15	5.29, 11.28, 30.52, 30.74
(1)–(4)	30.73
47.16	5.29, 30.52
(1)–(6)	30.76

Civil Procedure Rules 1998, SI 1998/3132 – <i>contd</i>	Civil Procedure Rules 1998, SI 1998/3132 – <i>contd</i>
Pt 47 – <i>contd</i>	Pt 48 – <i>contd</i>
Section VI (rr 47.17–47.17A) 30.82	r 48.10 (1)–(6) 5.28
r 47.17 30.82	Pt 49
47.17A 30.83	r 49(2) 20.20
(1)–(6) 36.7	Pt 50 25.23
Section VII (rr 47.18–47.23) 30.84	Pt 52 29.30, 31.1, 31.2, 31.15
r 47.18(1), (1A) 30.84	r 52.4 31.8
(2) 30.84	52.9(1), (2) 13.42
47.19 30.86, 30.87 , 30.89	52.11(3) 31.3
(1) 30.86	Pt 54
47.20 30.91	r 54.8 16.14
(1) 31.9	Section II (rr 55.11–55.19) 25.22
47.21 30.92, 31.1, 31.11	Pt 55
47.22 30.93	PD 55
(1), (2) 31.12	para 8.5, 8.6 16.14
47.23 30.94, 31.14	Pt 62 20.7, 20.20
Pt 48 ... 8.4, 15.2, 15.3, 15.5, 20.7, 20.11,	r 62.18 20.21
28.1, 42.43, 42.47,	Pt 67
42.146	r 67.3 5.29
r 48.1(1), (2) 34.1	PD 67 5.29
(3) 34.1	Pt 70
(a) 34.2	r 70.5(4) 25.27
48.2 34.17, 34.19	Pt 71
(1) 34.3 , 34.10	r 71.2 25.27
(a) 34.5	Pt 72
(2) 34.3	r 72.8(6)(a) 25.27
48.3 34.2, 35.1, 35.4, 35.5, 36.5	72.10(1)(b) 25.27
(1), (2) 35.2	Sch 1 RSC 6.18, 25.22
48.4(1)–(3) 36.1	Ord 23 13.38
48.5 16.5, 37.5, 38.10	r 1 13.10
(1)–(4) 37.3	Ord 62 4.7, 11.36, 15.1, 21.10,
r 48.6 38.7	25.23, 25.27, 30.10
(1) 38.2	r 18(1) 38.10
(2) 38.2 , 38.11	19(4)(b) 30.10
(3) 38.2 , 38.5 , 38.8, 38.9	Appendix 2 21.9, 21.10, 23.12
(a) 38.10	3 8.1, 25.14
(4) 38.2 , 38.5 , 38.9, 38.10	Pt II 25.15
(a), (b) 38.6	, Pt III 25.16
(5) 38.2	Ord 106 6.18, 6.19
(6) 38.2 , 38.12	Sch 2 CCR 25.22
48.6A 39.2	Ord 11
(1)–(6) 39.1	r 10 15.10
48.7 32.3, 32.5, 32.7	Ord 13
(1) 32.2	r 8 13.10
(2) 32.2 , 33.3, 33.19	Ord 37
(3)–(7) 32.2	Ord 38 4.7, 15.1, 25.18
48.8 2.28, 2.37, 5.21, 5.26 , 5.27	r 18(1), (2) 25.18
(1) 5.26	Appendix B Pt I 25.19
(1A) 2.33, 5.23	Pt II 25.20
(2) 5.6 , 21.5, 22.23	Ord 49
(a) 2.27	r 18 5.22
(c) 2.27	Pre-Action Protocols
(3), (4) 42.136	Practice Direction–Protocols 42.112
48.10 5.21, 5.28 , 5.29	

TABLE OF PRACTICE DIRECTIONS ABOUT COSTS SUPPLEMENTING CPR PARTS 43–48

References in the right-hand column are to paragraph numbers. Paragraph references printed in bold type indicate where the Section is set out in part or in full.

Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 43	Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 43 – <i>contd</i>
Section 1: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rules 43	para 5.11, 5.12 12.12
para 1.1–1.5 9.1	5.13, 5.14 12.13
Section 2: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 43.2	5.15 12.14
para 2.1 9.3, 42.87	5.16 12.15
2.2 9.3, 42.87, 42.88	5.17 12.16
2.3–2.5 9.3, 42.87	5.18, 5.19 12.17
Section 3: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rules 43.3 & 43.4	5.20 12.18
para 3.1–3.3 9.5	5.21 12.19
3.4 9.7	Section 6: Estimates of Costs 2.22, 10.10
3.5 9.7, 30.48	para 6.1–6.5 10.1 6.5A 10.1, 10.6 6.6 10.1
3.6 9.7	Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 44 10.15, 11.1, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 42.103
3.7 9.7, 30.48	Section 7: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.2
3.8 9.7	para 7.1–7.3 11.4
Section 4: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 43 9.1	Section 8: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.3
para 4.1 30.26, 30.48	para 8.1–8.4 11.7 8.5 11.7, 16.7, 16.8 8.6 11.7 8.7 11.8 (2), (3) 11.19 8.8 11.9
4.2 30.26, 30.42	Section 9: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.3A
4.3, 4.4 30.26	para 9.1, 9.2 29.12, 42.90
4.5 30.26, 30.43	Section 10: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.3B
4.6 30.26	para 10.1, 10.2 42.95
4.12 30.26, 30.48	Section 10A: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.3C
4.13–4.15 30.26	para 10A.1, 10A.2 11.34
4.16 30.26, 30.27	
(6) 30.38	
4.17 30.26	
4.18 30.26	
Section 5: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 43 12.6, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6	
para 5.1 12.7, 38.7	
5.2 12.8	
5.3–5.6 12.9	
5.7, 5.8 12.10	
5.9, 5.10 12.11	

Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 44 – <i>contd</i>	
Section 11: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.5	11.39
para 11.1	11.40 , 11.41, 42.99 , 42.166
11.2	11.40 , 11.41, 11.45, 42.99
11.3	11.40 , 11.37, 42.99
11.4	11.40 , 42.99
11.5	11.40 , 42.99 , 42.166
11.6	11.36 , 42.99
11.7 ...	11.40 , 42.99 , 42.100, 42.147, 42.166
11.8	11.40 , 42.99
(1)(b)	42.146
(2)	42.100, 42.151, 42.152
11.9	11.40 , 42.99
11.10	11.40 , 42.99 , 42.166
11.11	11.40 , 42.99
Section 12: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.7	
para 12.1–12.3	11.61
Section 13: Summary Assessment: General Provisions	
para 13.1	29.3 , 29.4
13.2	15.52, 29.3 , 29.5, 35.4
13.3	29.3 , 29.5, 35.4
13.4	29.3 , 29.6
13.5	29.3 , 29.7, 30.86
13.6	29.3 , 29.7
13.7	29.3
13.8	29.3 , 29.5
13.9	29.3
13.10, 13.11	29.3 , 29.6
13.12	29.3
13.13	29.3 , 29.6
Section 14: Summary Assessment where Costs Claimed Include an Additional Liability	
para 14.1	29.14 , 29.16
14.2	29.14
14.3	29.21, 29.14
14.4	29.14
14.5–14.8	29.15
14.9	29.15 , 42.108
(3)	42.100
Section 15: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.9	
para 15.1	26.6
Section 16: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.11	
para 16.1–16.3	11.70 , 26.9
Section 17: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.12A	
para 17.1	11.73
17.2	11.73
17.3–17.7	11.73
Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 44 – <i>contd</i>	
para 17.8	11.73
17.9–17.11	11.73
Section 18: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.14	
para 18.1–18.3	33.2
Section 19: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.15	
para 19.1	42.102
19.2	42.104 , 42.107
(5)	42.95
19.3	42.105
19.4	42.107
(3)(b)	42.107
19.5	42.106
19.6	42.106
Section 20: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.16	
para 20.1, 20.2	42.115
20.3	42.116
20.4–20.8	42.117
Section 21: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 44.17	19.12
para 21.1–21.11A	19.12
21.12–21.14	19.42
21.15	19.43
21.16–21.19A	19.22
21.20	19.44
Section 22: Orders for Costs to which Section 11 of the Access to Justice Act 1999 Applies	
para 22.1–22.5	19.45
22.6	19.13, 19.45
22.7–22.9	19.45
Section 23: Determination Proceedings and Similar Proceedings Under the Community Legal Service (Costs) Regulations 2000	
para 23.1–23.2A	19.46
23.3, 23.4	19.46
23.8–23.10	19.46
23.11–23.17	19.47
Section 23A: Costs capping orders CPR Part 44	
para 23A.1–23A.5	10.15
Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 45	15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 25.1, 25.13
para 24.1, 24.2	25.10
24A	25.11
Section 25: Fixed Costs on the Issue of a Default Costs Certificate	
para 25.1, 25.2	25.12

Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 45 – <i>contd</i>	Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 47 – <i>contd</i>	
Section 25A: Road Traffic Accidents:	Section 34: Practice Direction	
Fixed Recoverable Costs in	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.8	
Costs-Only Proceedings	para 34.1	30.22
27.26, 27.35, 27.43		
para 25A.1–25A.4	Section 35: Practice Direction	
27.35	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.9	
25A.5	para 35.1	30.51
27.36	35.2	30.51, 42.100
25A.6	35.3–35.5	30.51
27.37	35.6(2)	30.52
25A.7	35.7	30.51, 30.52
27.38		
25A.8, 25A.9	Section 36: Practice Direction	
27.39	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.10	
25A.10	para 36.1–36.3	30.55
27.40	36.4	30.55, 30.56
Section 25B: Fixed Recoverable	36.5	30.55, 30.56
Success Fees in Employer's		
Liability Disease Claims	Section 37: Practice Direction	
para 25B.1	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.11	
27.41	para 37.1–37.8	30.58
Practice Direction Supplementing		
CPR Part 46	Section 38: Practice Direction	
15.4, 15.5, 15.6	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.12	
Section 26: Practice Direction	para 38.1–38.4	30.63
Supplementing CPR Rule 46.1		
para 26.1–26.3	Section 39: Practice Direction	
27.6	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.13	
26.4	para 39.1	30.66
Section 27: Power to Award More or		
Less than the amount of fast	Section 40: Practice Direction	
track trial costs	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.14	
para 27.1–7.3	para 40.1	30.69
27.11	40.2	30.69
Practice Direction Supplementing	(d)	30.69, 30.70
CPR Part 47	40.3–40.4	30.69
Section 28: Practice Direction	40.5	30.69, 30.70
Supplementing CPR Rule 47.1	40.6	30.69
para 28.1(1)–(4)	(2)	30.67, 30.70
30.3	40.7–40.11	30.69
(5)	40.12	30.69, 30.70
Section 29: Practice Direction	40.13	30.69
Supplementing CPR Rule 47.2	40.14	17.9, 30.69
para 29.1	40.15, 40.16	30.69
Section 30: Practice Direction		
Supplementing CPR Rule 47.3	Section 41: Practice Direction	
para 30.1	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.15	
Section 31: Practice Direction	para 41.1	30.74
Supplementing CPR Rule 47.4		
para 31.1–31.2	Section 42: Practice Direction	
30.12	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.16	
Section 32: Practice Direction	para 42.1–42.12	30.77
Supplementing CPR Rule 47.6		
para 32.1, 32.2	Section 44: Practice Direction	
30.16	Supplementing	
32.3	CPR Rule 47.17A	
30.16, 30.17	para 44.1–44.10	36.8
32.4		
30.16, 42.109	Section 45: Practice Direction	
32.5	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.18	
42.110	para 45.1	30.85, 30.86
(1)–(3)	45.2	30.85
30.16	45.3	30.85, 30.86
32.6	45.4, 45.5	30.85
30.16		
32.7	Section 46: Practice Direction	
30.16, 42.111	Supplementing CPR Rule 47.19	
32.8, 32.9		
30.16		
32.10		
30.16		
(2)		
30.17		
32.11		
30.16		
Section 33: Practice Direction		
Supplementing CPR Rule 47.7		
para 33.1–33.4		
30.19		

Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 47 – <i>contd</i> para 46.1–46.4 30.88 Section 47: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 47.20 para 47.1, 47.2 31.10 Section 48: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 47.22 para 48.1–48.4 31.13 Section 49A: Costs payable by the trustee for Civil Recovery para 49A.1–49A.9 30.90	Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 48 – <i>contd</i> para 50.1 35.3 , 35.4 50.2, 50.3 35.3 50.4 35.3 , 35.4 Section 51: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 48.5 para 51.1 37.4 Section 52: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 48.6 para 52.1–52.4 38.3 52.5 38.3 , 38.12	Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Part 48 – <i>contd</i> Section 53: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 48.7 para 53.1–53.10 32.4 Section 54: Basis of Detailed Assessment of Solicitor and Client Costs: Rule 48.8 para 54.1 5.31 54.2 5.31 54.3, 54.4 5.31 54.5–54.8 42.137 Section 56: Practice Direction Supplementing CPR Rule 48.10 para 56.1–56.19 5.33 56.19 5.22
Schedule of Costs Precedents		
Precedent A 30.43 , 30.44 B 30.43 , 30.45 C 30.43 , 30.46 D 30.43 , 30.47 F 30.48 , 30.49 G 30.52 , 30.53 H 10.2 K 5.14 L 5.29 M 5.23		