STEWARTS

Job description

Job title:	Head of Business Acceptance
Reporting to:	Risk and Funding Partner, Money Laundering Compliance Office (MLCO), Managing Partner
Department:	Compliance
Working with:	COLP, MLCO, New Business Intake Team (NBI), Risk & Funding Committee (RFC), Compliance, Accounts, Business Services Heads, partners, solicitors and paralegals firm-wide
Purpose of role:	Head of the NBI and MLRO, with responsibility for ensuring Stewarts' case opening, conflict checking, anti-money laundering (AML), counter-terrorist financing (CTF) and related anti-financial crime and client due diligence (CDD) procedures are fully and meaningfully followed. Liaising with partners, fee earners and other relevant stakeholders whenever issues arise. Advising the RFC in relation to conflicts, high risk clients or matters and related issues. Responsible, as the firm's Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO), for identification and analysis of potential money laundering, facilitation of tax evasion and other financial crime related risks in new and ongoing matters. Receives internal money laundering reports and determines whether they must be reported externally and advises partners and fee earners about money laundering reporting requirements and thresholds. This role works closely with the Director of Regulatory Compliance and DPO, who leads the firm's wider SRA regulatory compliance, data protection, complaints, supervision, audit, risk reporting framework. Where issues overlap, the role will coordinate with the Director of Regulatory Compliance and DPO, the COLP, MLCO and/or RFC as appropriate.
Hours:	Permanent, full-time
Reviewed:	August 2026

Job responsibilities:

1. Drafting and maintaining the firm's conflict checking, case opening, anti-money laundering (AML) and related due diligence in relation to customer/client, funder, fee sharing or referral arrangement due diligence (CDD) procedures, and other anti-financial crime policies, controls and procedures and workflows, in compliance with regulatory requirements.

2. Managing and supervising the NBI in client and matter onboarding and ongoing Conflicts AML and anti-financial crime monitoring.

3. Ensuring that additional screening searches and enhanced due diligence are undertaken and analysed in relation to new and existing high-risk clients or matters, including potential politically exposed persons (PEPs), clients or matters that are located or operating in a high-risk jurisdiction, may infringe international sanctions, generate adverse media or potential reputational risks for the firm and any other issues which might be identified as high risk.

4. Advising the RFC in respect of client conflicts of interest, confidentiality vs disclosure obligations in relation to new matter intake, commercial conflicts and matters under applicable RFC policies, in consideration of regulatory requirements and internal policies, including commercial conflict policies and the firm's responsible business intake policy.

5. Periodic reporting to the Managing Partner and Executive Committee of onboarding metrics and any key developments or issues relating to client onboarding, conflicts, AML and anti-financial crime compliance.

6. Maintaining central register of high-risk clients and ensuring appropriate enhanced ongoing monitoring is applied for clients on the register.

7. Maintaining appropriate records and reporting on New Business Intake and updating related policies, controls and procedures considering business intake decisions

8. Dealing with issues escalated by NBI, liaising with partners, fee earners and RFC to resolve conflicts, money laundering and other anti-financial crime risks and compliance issues that arise.

9. Advising partners and fee earners on AML/CDD and anti-financial crime-related risks and requirements, including undertaking enhanced (or simplified) due diligence where appropriate under applicable firm procedures.

10. Maintaining firm-wide risk assessments, policies, controls and procedures for New Business Intake and conflict checking, AML, sanctions, and related anti-financial crime controls.

11. Monitoring new and amended legislation and regulatory changes and sectoral guidance, disseminating information to colleagues, developing and implementing new and amended policies, controls and procedures as necessary.

12. Responsible as MLRO for receiving internal money laundering and terrorist financing reports, analysis of such reports and submission of suspicious activity reports (SARs) where appropriate. Maintaining MLRO Register to record decision making. Working closely with MLCO in relation to internal and external money laundering reporting, and all AML and anti-financial crime related policies, controls and procedures.

13. Ensuring that information barriers are established with effective and proportionate controls and enforced as appropriate to conflict or confidential information risks identified for new and existing clients/matters. Ensuring firm's Intapp Walls information barrier systems are maintained, updated and audited.

14. Assisting and collaborating with other stakeholders across the firm with other regulatory, professional conduct and ethics-related enquiries, tasks and projects.

15. Coordinating external, independent audit of firm's AML controls, policies and procedures, liaising with auditors and implementing recommendations where required.

16. To work alongside the Regulatory Compliance Director & DPO and Compliance department to ensure a seamless multi-faceted service to the firm.

17. Liaising and collaborating with other areas of the business and key stakeholders, including fee earners and members of HR, IT, Projects, Accounts and Marketing, on regular processes (including input in relation to annual practising certificate and PII renewals where NBI, conflicts, AML, sanctions or anti- financial crime issues arise) and firm-wide projects.

18. Preparing and delivering firm-wide and department specific training in relation to new case/client and conflict checking procedures and post-matter inception requirements information barriers, AML, anti-facilitation of tax evasion, anti-bribery and corruption, anti-fraud and other anti-financial crime related risks, coordinating with Regulatory Compliance Team where wider compliance or data protection content is involved.

19. Providing ad hoc risk assessment, due diligence and ongoing monitoring support and advice in relation to client service providers and other third parties as required.

20. Negotiating and maintaining firm's relationships and contracts with risk screening, due diligence and other software providers relating to AML and anti-financial crime functions. Identifying requirements for new or updated services and systems when necessary and leading on related internal projects when required.

Essential skills and experience:

- A minimum of 8 years' experience with compliance work relating to client onboarding, conflicts of interest and anti-financial crime, including management experience. Compliance professional or qualified lawyer.

- Previous experience working as a MLRO, Deputy MLRO or directly supporting a MLRO within a law firm.

- Strong current knowledge of SRA Codes of Conduct and client care principles including, but not limited to, solicitors' core duties towards conflicts of interests, understanding, assessing and advising on the duties of confidentiality as they relate to new business intake.

- Strong current knowledge of UK AML, sanctions and anti-financial crime legislation, including Proceeds of Crime Act, Money Laundering Regulations, Criminal Finances Act, Bribery Act and Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act, and related industry and national guidance.

- Project management or other significant experience of leading and implementing large compliance initiatives.

- Strong ability to influence and persuade senior personnel and other key stakeholders.

- Proven ability to manage and supervise others.

- An understanding of funding options for litigation.

- An understanding of the nature of high value and complex litigation.

- Excellent judgement and discretion regarding confidential and commercial information.

- Able to design and develop new processes, utilising current technology, in collaboration with our IT and Projects teams.
- Highly computer literate, including the preparation of Excel spreadsheets.
- Highly numerate with strong analytical skills.

General skills:

- Well organised, uses initiative, prioritises appropriately, applies self, shows attention to detail, manages own workload and meets deadlines. Professional and calm under pressure.
- Demonstrates excellent communication and interpersonal skills (respectful, positive, articulate, professional and sympathetic).
- Delivers helpful internal services with a "can do" approach, shows commercial awareness and represents the department/firm appropriately.
- Strong team player who has proven ability to lead a team, including through periods of change.
- Shares information and ideas.
- Professional in attitude and able to work under pressure.
- Shows sound judgement and decision-making skills; acts pro-actively and within boundaries.
- Strong negotiation skills and the ability to manage competing requests from many internal stakeholders.
- Shows commitment, passion and enthusiasm.
- Is a respectful, reliable and supportive team player.
- Reflects the firm's values and culture.