

EXPERIENCE, ACCREDITATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

VLADIMIR MIKELJEVIC:

Our Immigration Department is headed by Vladimir Mikeljevic who is a Solicitor and a Partner. Vladimir has been practising immigration and asylum law since 1996 (i.e. for over 22 years) and has been head of the Immigration Department at various leading firms of solicitors for more than 16 years.

During his career, Vladimir has dealt with approximately 2000 immigration cases. He has presented over 600 appeals in Immigration Tribunals. He has given many interviews to regional and national newspapers, radio stations and television. He has experience in preparing numerous applications for visas, extensions of stay in the UK and settlement (permanent residence) in all immigration categories, together with European law, nationality, human rights and asylum applications. Immigration law is Vladimir's only area of practice and he devotes all his time to keeping up-to-date and on top of this fast-changing and extremely complex area of law.

Vladimir is one of the most experienced immigration solicitors in the UK.

Vladimir became accredited both as an Immigration Caseworker and a Supervisor when the Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme was introduced in 2004. He was initially accredited at Level 2 (Immigration Law Senior) and in June 2011 the Law Society elevated his accreditation to the highest Level 3 (Immigration Law Advanced), which is an accreditation level reserved only for those whom the Law Society considers to have:

- a) a high level of understanding of immigration and asylum law and practice;
- b) successfully managed a range of complex cases;
- c) consistently delivered high-quality service to clients; and
- d) respect and credibility in immigration and asylum practice.

There are only 25 other firms of solicitors in England and Wales that have a solicitor accredited to Level 3 (Immigration Law Advanced), of which only 8 are outside London (as of 1 June 2019).

Vladimir is a member of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association and, therefore, always on top of any developments in this complex and fast-changing area of law. He was recognised for "outstanding legal practice" by the Good Lawyer Guide in 2010 and 2012.

On Sunday, 10th April 2016 the Sunday Times published their first supplement listing the Top 175 Solicitors in the UK based on reviews on the independent consumer ratings website VouchedFor.co.uk. We are proud, but not at all surprised, to say that Vladimir Mikeljevic was featured.

DR SASHA WILLIAMS:

Dr Sasha Williams qualified as a solicitor in 2002 and since that time has specialised in both immigration and asylum law, and in family law. In addition to providing advice and assistance to her immigration and asylum clients, Sasha has provided training for a range of professionals on immigration and asylum law including the police, social workers, social care professionals and others within the legal system. Sasha was employed to deliver undergraduate and postgraduate law modules at the University of Huddersfield and in 2017 she was invited to chair a multidisciplinary conference on issues for children seeking asylum.

Sasha has had extensive experience of working with and advising people in a wide range of situations and her success at PhD level attests to her ability to carry out meticulous research, her attention to detail, her analytical skill and her ability to argue her case persuasively, both in writing and verbally.

As is the case with Vladimir, Immigration law is Sasha's only area of practice and she devotes all her time to keeping up-to-date and on top of this fast-changing and extremely complex area of law. She also is a member of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association and, therefore, always on top of any developments in this complex and fast-changing area of law.

In 2019 our Immigration Department was awarded Acquisition International Corporate Immigration & Relocation Awards: Most Trusted Immigration Law Practitioners 2019 – UK.

OUR 100% SUCCESS RATE

We have analysed our Department's success rate in respect of the clients who have instructed us and whose cases have been completed during the five-year period between 1 June 2014 – 31 May 2019. We note the following (as of 1 June 2019):

- a) During this five-year period, only four applications prepared by our Department have eventually not succeeded; however, in two of these cases the clients decided not to challenge the refusal decisions, the third one proceeded without further assistance from our Department, while the fourth one was given a 10% chance of success from the beginning of the case. The first case relates to an application for entry clearance as a Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) Migrant, the second one to an application for entry clearance as a visitor, the third one to refugee family reunion, and the fourth one to an application for naturalisation as a British citizen. As can be seen below, these cases were extremely difficult but, despite being clearly advised of poor chances of success, the clients decided to instruct our Department to prepare their applications:

- (i) Entry clearance as a Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) Migrant (instructed in 2014):

This client and his wife had previously travelled to the USA as visitors. The wife hid her pregnancy and, once in the country, they applied for asylum. The application for asylum extended their stay until their child was born and granted the US citizenship by birth. They then left the country. Our Department clearly advised the client that his poor US immigration history, which was evident from his passport, might affect his credibility in respect of his application as an Entrepreneur. Consequently, following the submission of his application, the Entry Clearance Officer (ECO) decided to interview the client. Unfortunately, his application was refused on the grounds that the ECO did not believe that he was a genuine entrepreneur. -Our Department advised the client that the refusal decision was unreasonable and, as there was no right of appeal, to challenge it by judicial review. However, the client decided not to proceed further.

- (ii) Entry clearance as a visitor (instructed in 2015):

Prior to this client approaching our Department, the Entry Clearance Officer had already refused his two previous applications for entry clearance. The first application that was refused was for entry clearance as an adult dependant relative in which the client had indicated that he intended to live in

the UK permanently. The second application that was refused was for entry clearance as a visitor; this application was refused only 10 days before the client instructed our Department to urgently submit a fresh application as a visitor. Following the refusal of a fresh application as a visitor, our Department advised the client that the refusal decision was irrational and, as there was no right of appeal, to challenge it by judicial review. However, the client decided not to proceed further.

(iii) Refugee family reunion (instructed in 2017):

Prior to this client approaching our Department, the Entry Clearance Officer (ECO) had already refused her two previous applications for refugee family reunion. Among other issues, the reasons for refusal included the accusations of submission of forged documents and false information, which led the ECO to 'question the integrity of the application and your relationship with the sponsor'. Due to these accusations and the previous two refusals, our Department advised that a fresh application had poor prospects of success but, providing that the new application is fully and skilfully prepared, should eventually succeed on appeal. As instructed, our Department prepared a fresh application dealing in detail with all relevant issues and the previous reasons for refusal. As anticipated, the ECO refused the application again. Our Department advised the client to challenge the refusal and an appeal was lodged. The client then failed to contact us further. However, we subsequently learned that the client had received entry clearance.

(iv) Naturalisation as a British citizen (instructed in 2017):

This client had long absences from the UK during the relevant period. His absences were well in excess of those allowed under the residence requirement and went beyond those that could be disregarded even if discretion was exercised. Consequently, the client was informed that the prospects of success in his application were poor and were estimated at no more than 10%. However, the client decided to proceed. Unfortunately, his application was refused.

- b) All other applications prepared by our Department and concluded during this five-year period were successful either at application stage or following an appeal. An appeal was necessary in four cases only, including two asylum ones.
- c) All finally-determined appeals prepared and/or presented by our Department during this five-year period (whether or not the original application had been prepared by our Department) have been allowed.

Therefore, all our Department's clients who have instructed us during this five-year period to prepare their applications have eventually succeeded with their claims and achieved their aims, providing that:

- a) at the beginning of their case our Department estimated the chance of success at more than 10%; and
- b) if their applications were refused, they followed our Department's advice to challenge the refusal decisions.

This incredible 100% success rate over the last five years (between 1 June 2014 and - 31 May 2019) in respect of clients who followed our advice and were given a chance of

success of more than 10% is mainly due to our Department's thorough and diligent preparation of cases and our impeccable attention to detail.

Please note that our Department does not only take on clients with straightforward cases. This is evident from the cases mentioned above where we were instructed after previous refusals and where the chances of success were poor. In total, almost half (i.e. 42.5%) of the clients who instructed our Department during this five-year period sought our assistance after their previous applications had been refused/rejected or as criminal/immigration offenders (e.g. overstayers, illegal entrants, those who obtained leave by false representations, etc.). Whilst such cases usually have less than 50% chance of success, our Department has still been able to prepare successful fresh applications for them or win their appeals. Our Department will never refuse to take your case on, however poor the chances of success. However, we will clearly advise you of the prospects of success so that you can make an informed decision whether or not you wish to proceed.

OUR EXCEPTIONAL STANDARDS OF SERVICE

We are not only proud of our success rate but also of the service that we offer to our existing clients. This service includes the following:

- a) Your case will be dealt with by a solicitor (rather than a caseworker or a paralegal);
- b) You will have direct access to your solicitor (rather than through a secretary); In practice, you will never need to talk to or deal with your solicitor's secretary;
- c) Whilst at his/her desk, your solicitor will never have the phone on 'do not disturb' and will always answer your calls;
- d) If not at his/her desk and you leave a message on your solicitor's voicemail, you will receive a prompt reply;
- e) All your phone calls and emails will be replied to as soon as possible and no later than within the next 24 hours (on working days). In practice, you will never have to call us twice or send us more than one email before receiving our reply. If this is not possible (e.g. because your solicitor is on annual leave) you will be informed accordingly;
- f) All documents that you forward to us for perusal will be checked promptly and no later than within the next 3 working days. If this is not possible (e.g. because your solicitor is on annual leave) you will be informed accordingly;
- g) All necessary work will be carried out promptly and not left for the last moment;
- h) Your application will be thoroughly prepared with attention to detail, which will minimise the risk of refusal;
- i) You will always be provided with an accurate and realistic fee estimate (rather than an improbable and reduced one that needs to be increased as the case progresses without any good reason);
- j) You will always be provided with the realistic prospects of success so that you can make an informed decision as to whether or not to proceed with your case.

PREPARING YOUR IMMIGRATION APPLICATION AND AVERAGE TIMES/FEEES

Please do not forget that you are purchasing services rather than a product and that there are a number of ways in which your application can be prepared, which will affect the fees

incurred, the possible outcome of your application, and your overall satisfaction with the services provided. Your application will either be successful, or it will be refused/rejected. Unfortunately, many applicants who satisfy the relevant requirements still end up with their applications being refused simply due to poor preparation.

A significant part of our work in respect of preparing your application will be spent ensuring that it is prepared to the highest standard and that no corners are cut. We will take your full instructions, carefully check all of your supporting documents, draft a detailed covering letter and create a fully-indexed and paginated copy bundle of documents, which will be submitted in support of your application. The covering letter will usually comprise about 5 pages. It will present your relevant personal circumstances in detail and explain how you satisfy the applicable requirements. In addition, the covering letter will clearly explain why each of the supporting documents is submitted and what it proves. The letter will also contain precise references to the pages where each of these documents can be found in the bundle (this is why we prepare a fully-indexed and paginated copy bundle). This way of preparing your application will greatly assist the decision-maker (i.e. Entry Clearance Officer or the Home Office) when processing the same and will eliminate the risk of the decision-maker failing to find a particular document, failing to understand why a particular document has been submitted or what it tries to prove, or misunderstanding the documents. Please do not forget that while you may know exactly why you are submitting particular documents in support of your application, this may be far from obvious to the Entry Clearance Officer or the Home Office especially as they have little time to try to understand everything. This is why mistakes by decision-makers, which may result in refusals, are far from uncommon. According to the Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency's report on entry clearance decision-making, in a third of the cases sampled, errors were identified in the way in which evidence was assessed by Entry Clearance Officers, and one can only conclude that it is similar with the applications processed by the Home Office caseworkers.

Preparing a fully-indexed and paginated copy bundle also prevents situations where the decision-maker may refuse an application alleging that a particular document has not been submitted in support of your application, as all documents will be individually and precisely listed (e.g. not just 'Bank statements' or 'Utility bills' but 'Mr xxx Barclays bank statement numbers xxx covering the period between xxx and xxx (originals)' or 'Mr xxx British Gas bill dated xxx (original)', etc) and paginated, thus eliminating any misunderstanding as to what has been submitted.

The Home Office caseworkers and Entry Clearance Officers have a limited time only to process your application. Our detailed covering letter in combination with a fully-indexed and paginated copy bundle will enable them to process your application quickly and reduce the risk of misunderstanding. At the same time, this approach is very likely to put a smile on their face when they see how well your application is prepared and how easy it will be for them to process it.

You may hear that there is no requirement to submit any covering letter or a paginated copy bundle. This is true. However, apart from a very limited number of the 'specified' documents, the Immigration Rules do not usually require you to submit any particular document but leave it entirely to you to prove your case. Please do not forget that the burden of proof is on you and it is not for the decision-maker to build or investigate your case for you. If you fail to properly present and explain your case or prove that you satisfy the relevant requirements, your application is likely to be refused.

Our aim is to ensure that your application has the best possible prospects of success and this is why we have a remarkable success rate. Therefore, wherever possible, we will make sure that we reduce or eliminate a risk of refusal. If there is an issue that potentially can

endanger the outcome of your application, we will inform you accordingly and advise what needs to be done to resolve it rather than ignore it in the hope that everything will turn out fine. We are there to ensure that your application is successful rather than to simply prepare it. A refusal of an application may have severe detrimental effects on your ability to come to or live in the UK and we do not like playing with peoples' lives or taking unnecessary risks.

If you intend to make an application and can attend our office in Leeds city centre, we can always book a free consultation in order to show you samples of our covering letters and further explain how well we will prepare your application, so that you can make an informed decision in respect of what you should expect an immigration solicitor to do on your behalf and whom you wish to instruct.

Once your application is submitted, some further work will be required. Where appropriate, the Home Office will correspond with either you or us asking you to enrol biometrics, to request further information or documents, to inform you about the outcome of your application, to return your supporting documents, to arrange your citizenship ceremony, etc. You can either decide to communicate directly with the Home Office in respect of these matters or ask us to do so on your behalf. If you ask us to do so and unless there are complications or delays, this post-submission work is likely to involve a further 1-2 hours of our work (1-5 hours in nationality cases).

Sasha's hourly rate is £160 (plus VAT in the sum of £32 if applicable – see below*). Sasha's fee estimates for typical cases in respect of various immigration applications are as follows:

Type of application	Average number of hours to prepare your application	Average fee before VAT* to prepare application	Average number of hours in respect of post-submission work (if required)	Average fee before VAT* for post-submission work (if required)
Tier 1 Investors	10-20	£1,600-£3,200	1-2	£160-£320
Tier 1 Entrepreneurs	15-23	£2,400-£3,680	1-2	£160-£320
Tier 2 Migrants	12-18	£1,920-£2,880	1-2	£160-£320
Tier 4 Students and work experience	10-18	£1,600-£2,880	1-2	£160-£320
Tier 5 Youth Mobility	8-12	£1,280 -£1,920	1-2	£160-£320
Visitors	10-18	£1,600-£2,880	1-2	£160-£320
Ancestry	12-18	£1,920-£2,880	1-2	£160-£320
Spouses and partners including fiancé(e)s and proposed civil partners (where the Sponsor is not self-employed)	15-20	£2,400-£3,200	1-2	£160-£320
Spouses and partners	15-23	£2,400-£3,680	1-2	£160-£320

including fiancé(e)s and proposed civil partners (where the Sponsor is self-employed)				
Dependent relatives	15-20	£2,400-£3,200	1-2	£160-£320
Refugee family reunion	10-18	£1,600-£2,880	1-2	£160-£320
EEA nationals and family members including family permits, residence cards and registration certificates	10-18	£1,600-£2,880	1-2	£160-£320
Settlement and Permanent Residence including long residence	12-20	£1,920-£3,200	1-2	£160-£320
Adults applying for British citizenship	10-15	£1,600-£2,400	1-5	£160-£800
Children applying for British citizenship	8-12	£1,280-£1,920	1-5	£160-£800

* Whether or not VAT should be added to our fees depends on your personal circumstances and we will advise you accordingly at the outset of the case. **In general, if you are a non-EEA/EU national and reside outside the EEA/EU, or if you are in the UK with leave to enter/remain granted for up to 6 months or have no leave at all, you will most likely not need to pay VAT.**

If you wish Vladimir to deal with your case, please scroll down for his fee estimates.

Our service in respect of preparing your application within the above-quoted estimated prices will include the following:

1. Our initial conference (in person or by telephone) to take your instructions (i.e. relevant information) that usually lasts about 1½-2 hours. During this conference we will discuss the circumstances of your case in detail, inform you about the relevant immigration requirements you will need to satisfy, identify any potentially problematic areas, and advise you about the best way forward;
2. Communicating with you by phone, email and/or in person as you prefer;
3. Confirming your full instructions in writing so that you can check what we have noted down and inform us of any errors or amendments that you wish to make (this is very important as we will use these notes to draft a thorough covering letter to the Entry Clearance Officer/Home Office and if this letter contains any incorrect information you may be accused of misrepresentation or deception, which will automatically result in refusal and will have a detrimental effect on any future application);
4. Providing a list of documents that you should forward to us in support of your application. This list will depend on your instructions as your supporting documents need to corroborate your instructions;

5. Carefully perusing and assessing each document that you provide in order to ensure that that the document is adequate and useful (rather than damaging the application), and that the application benefits from it;
6. Advising what to do about the documents that may not be adequate or appropriate;
7. Preparing an approximately 5-page long covering letter to the Entry Clearance Officer/Home Office explaining your and, if relevant, your family's relationship/immigration/employment/financial history or circumstances, how you and your family satisfy each of the relevant requirements, and anything else that may be important to you and your family's application and needs to be explained or clarified;
8. Preparing a bundle containing original supporting documents, together with an additional fully indexed and paginated copy bundle of the same documents that the covering letter will refer to and which will enable the Entry Clearance Officer/Home Office to quickly and correctly identify particular documents;
9. Checking and, if necessary, amending the application form(s);
10. Submitting the application or guiding you as to how to do so (e.g. in case of online applications, etc);
11. Advising on timelines and the outcome of your application together with further steps you need to take.

An example of an estimated time to prepare applications for spouses, partners, dependant relatives, or Tier 1 Entrepreneurs at the lower level of the estimate is, as follows:

1½ hours	Taking your detailed instructions
1½ hours	Confirming your instructions in writing and providing a list of supporting documents
3 hours	Perusing supporting documents and resolving any issues in respect of the same
6 hours	Preparing a covering letter and a fully-indexed and paginated copy bundle of supporting documents
1 hours	Checking and, if necessary, amending your application form(s)
<u>2 hours</u>	Communicating with you (email, phone, etc.)
15 hours	TOTAL

The above fee estimates do not include disbursements, which are costs related to your case but payable to third parties, and expenses incurred in respect of your case. These may include application fees payable to the Home Office or the Entry Clearance Officer, Immigration Health Surcharge, interpreting/translating fees, expert fees (e.g. medical or country experts), courier fees, mileage and travel expenses if you need to attend the Home Office and ask us to accompany you, etc. They also do not include fees in respect of accompanying you to present your application in person or to attend an interview at the Home Office, or advice and assistance in relation to any appeal. However, wherever relevant, we will provide clear advice in respect of the costs of these disbursements/expenses and/or fees.

The above fee estimates in typical cases may, however, vary in cases with special complications. This is why, once we learn about your particular circumstances, we will provide a clear and reasonable individual fee estimate at the outset of the case, taking into account the actual features of your case, together with an indication in respect of how much

time we envisage we will spend in meetings and exchanging letters/emails and phone calls with you; how many documents we envisage perusing while preparing your case or to include in the bundle of documents to be submitted in support of your application; and how long we envisage a covering letter to be in your case. The estimate will depend on the particular circumstances of your case, including:

- a) Previous immigration history, especially refusals,
- b) The complexities of your case,
- c) Which languages you speak,
- d) Volume of supporting documents that we estimate that we will need to peruse,
- e) Whether your dependants are applying with you, etc.

Our actual fees may be higher than the estimate especially if:

- 1. during the course of this matter we find that we need to be involved in further areas not covered by the original retainer, or
- 2. if the matter does not run smoothly or encounters delays, or
- 3. if the matter turns out to be more complicated than originally envisaged, or
- 4. if you do not follow our advice, or
- 5. if we spend longer in meetings than originally envisaged, or
- 6. if, whilst dealing with your matter, we have to peruse more documents than originally envisaged, or
- 7. if the bundle of documents prepared in support of your application comprises more pages than originally envisaged, or
- 8. if the covering letter prepared in support of your application is longer than originally envisaged, or
- 9. if we spend more time on phone calls and/or letters/emails than originally envisaged.

If any of the above circumstances occur, then we will return to you to revise the estimate.

Vladimir's hourly rate is £260 (plus VAT in the sum of £52 if applicable – see above*). His fee estimates for typical cases in respect of various immigration applications are as follows:

Type of application	Average number of hours to prepare your application	Average fee before VAT* to prepare application	Average number of hours in respect of post-submission work (if required)	Average fee before VAT* for post-submission work (if required)
Tier 1 Investors	10-20	£2,600-£5,200	1-2	£260-£520
Tier 1 Entrepreneurs	15-23	£3,900-£5,980	1-2	£260-£520
Tier 2 Migrants	12-18	£3,120-£4,680	1-2	£260-£520

Tier 4 Students and work experience	10-18	£2,600-£4,680	1-2	£260-£520
Tier 5 Youth Mobility	8-12	£2,080-£3,120	1-2	£260-£520
Visitors	10-18	£2,600-£4,680	1-2	£260-£520
Ancestry	12-18	£3,120-£4,680	1-2	£260-£520
Spouses and partners including fiancé(e)s and proposed civil partners (where the Sponsor is not self-employed)	15-20	£3,900-£5,200	1-2	£260-£520
Spouses and partners including fiancé(e)s and proposed civil partners (where the Sponsor is self-employed)	15-23	£3,900-£5,980	1-2	£260-£520
Dependent relatives	15-20	£3,900-£5,200	1-2	£260-£520
Refugee family reunion	10-18	£2,600-£4,680	1-2	£260-£520
EEA nationals and family members including family permits, residence cards and registration certificates	10-18	£2,600-£4,680	1-2	£260-£520
Settlement and Permanent Residence including long residence	12-20	£3,120-£5,200	1-2	£260-£520
Adults applying for British citizenship	10-15	£2,600-£3,900	1-5	£260-£1,300
Children applying for British citizenship	8-12	£2,080-£3,120	1-5	£260-£1,300

WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN INSTRUCTING A LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE TO PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Different immigration representatives will have different approaches to preparation of applications. Not every application will be successful and, unfortunately, applications are often refused or rejected due to poor preparation.

It is of a crucial importance that you instruct a representative that has the required expertise to assist with your case. According to The Guardian *'Home Office officials have made more than 5,700 changes to the immigration rules since 2010...making the visa system nearly impossible to navigate, according to senior judges and lawyers'*:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/aug/27/revealed-immigration-rules-have-more-than-doubled-in-length-since-2010>. Sasha and Vladimir practise Immigration law only, which allows them to keep up on top of these changes and maintain their expertise.

Furthermore, it is also vital that you instruct a representative who will spend sufficient time to prepare your application and/or appeal. You should not instruct someone simply because they offer a low quote. A low quote usually means that less time will be spent preparing your application and appeal. You should, therefore, always ask your prospective representative to explain to you how much they plan to spend in meetings with you, communicating with you by email or phone, and preparing your application/appeal. If they are evasive, that could mean that they do not want you to know how little time they intend to spend on your case. If, on the other hand, despite the low quote they reassure you that you will be able to see and contact them as often as you need to and that they will spend as much time as required to prepare your case, think whether their low quote can really cover such work and whether these are just empty promises. In their article about unscrupulous immigration representatives, The Independent referred to the High Court ruling that some '*solicitors were instructing paralegals and unqualified people to draft applications which fall "well below acceptable standards" and which judges must reject as "unarguable and totally without merit"*'. Some '*are failing to include relevant evidence provided to them by clients in court submissions, making their claims unwinnable simply because important facts are omitted*': <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/immigration-solicitors-exploit-migrants-rogue-substandard-lawyers-a8325706.html>.

We are regularly contacted by those whose cases were seriously damaged or destroyed due to poor preparation or advice, as a consequence of which they have lost their chances to stay in the UK, obtain permanent residence, work in the UK, become British citizens, or have received immigration bans, etc. Many of them believe that the Home Office and the Tribunal will be sympathetic to their misfortune and grant their fresh applications/appeals because it is clear that they have received poor advice. However, in case of *Mansur (immigration adviser's failings: Article 8) Bangladesh* [2018] UKUT 00274 the Upper Tribunal indicated that '*a person who takes such advice will normally have to live with the consequences*': <https://tribunalsdecisions.service.gov.uk/uti/ac/2018-ukut-00274-iac>. Therefore, we cannot stress enough how important is that you carefully choose the representatives you are going to instruct to assist with your case.

In order to reduce the time they spend on your case and, therefore, justify their lower and/or fixed fees, some unscrupulous immigration representatives may employ the following practices, which may increase the risk of refusal:

1. Rather than spending sufficient time to collect your instructions in full and fully investigate possible problematic areas, they may take your brief and basic instructions only, which may result in an oversight of a non-obvious problematic issue;
2. They may submit the supporting documents you forward to them without fully checking them and/or without alerting you to any problems with the documents. As a result you will not be advised about how to best select, improve, augment, present or explain your documents so as to avoid any negative issues the documents individually or collectively may create for your case;
3. They may not draft a detailed covering letter or may prepare one which mainly contains non-specific and general information referring to caselaw that is copied and pasted from one case to another. The main purpose of such letters is to 'impress' you rather than the Entry Clearance Officer/Home Office. However, any failure to provide clarifications and explanations that are essential in your particular case may result in the failure of the Entry Clearance Officer/Home Office to properly understand your

circumstances, or in misunderstandings, both of which may endanger the outcome of your application;

4. They may be difficult to approach and you may not be able to talk to or contact them when you need to. Some of them may not even include time to communicate with you in their fixed fee, which should be taken as a strong indication that they will try to avoid any contact with you and may always be 'unavailable'. As a result, you may not be able to alert them to any problems and/or may become unnecessarily stressed and frustrated with the process;
5. They may submit your application without providing a draft for your approval, running the risk of submitting incorrect information, which may result in you being accused of making misrepresentations and/or deception;
6. They may do everything at the last minute in order to avoid spending extra but necessary time correcting mistakes or clarifying issues (as you will not be aware of such mistakes/issues or there will be no time left to amend them), which in turn may endanger the outcome of your application;
7. They may pass the conduct of your matter to their junior and less experienced colleagues without your knowledge.

Our thorough and detailed approach to preparing an application ensures that no corners are cut and that the risk of refusal is minimised by reducing the possibility of the Entry Clearance Officer/Home Office misunderstanding or failing to understand relevant points and/or documents. This results in our exceptional success rate (please see above 'Our Success Rate').

Either Sasha or Vladimir will personally deal with your case from beginning to end, and you will have their direct telephone number and, of course, their email address, so that you can always have direct access to him or her (rather than their secretary). In practice, you will never have to call either Sasha or Vladimir twice or send two emails before hearing from them, as they always reply quickly to calls and emails. Sasha and Vladimir will always keep you informed about progress and will ensure that your case is processed in a timely manner with sufficient time spent to make necessary amendments.

With lengthy delays and uncertainties in respect of appeals (if available at all), it is extremely important that applicants put their full efforts in their application as they may not have a second chance to do so or may face significant costs, delay and stress if pursuing their rights through the appeal process.

TYPICAL TIMESCALES AND STAGES

As already indicated (please see above 'Our Standards of Service'), we aim to provide the highest quality service, be extremely responsive and directly accessed (by eliminating the need to contact us through a secretary) and promptly deal with your application. Therefore, a delay (if any) is likely to be caused by difficulties in obtaining certain documents or the inaction of the Entry Clearance Office/Home Office. If you have all relevant documents or once you produce them, we should normally be able to prepare your application within days. However, we will always discuss this with you.

The typical stages in respect of preparing your application are:

1. Taking your detailed instructions

2. Confirming your detailed instructions in writing and providing a list of documents that you should forward to us in support of your application
3. Carefully perusing all your supporting documents and resolving any issues in respect of the same
4. Preparing a covering letter to be submitted in support of your application
5. Checking and, if necessary, amending your application form(s)
6. Preparing a fully-indexed and paginated copy bundle of supporting documents to be submitted in support of your application
7. Submitting your application or assisting you with submitting the same
8. Informing you about the outcome and next steps.

In respect of how long it may take the Entry Clearance Officer or the Home Office to process your application, please read the current processing times: <https://www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times>.

APPEALS

Our applications are very thoroughly prepared and we have an impressive success rate (please see above). Providing that you follow our instructions, it is therefore highly unlikely that an application prepared by us will be refused and that you will need to appeal. If this is not the case, we will inform you accordingly. However, we will also try to assist you if your application has been prepared by alternative representatives and refused. We will assess your case and inform you about any options that you may have and whether you should appeal against the refusal of prepare a fresh application (which may be quicker and easier to do, especially if your original application has not been prepared properly).

Preparing your appeal before the First-tier Tribunal

If, however, you need to appeal, our usual work in respect of preparing your appeal before the First-tier Tribunal will involve approximately 15 to 25 hours resulting in fees in the region of £2,400 and £3,200 (if applicable, plus VAT @ 20% i.e. in the region of £480-£640; please see above if VAT is likely to be payable), if Sasha is dealing with it. If, however, Vladimir is preparing your appeal, his fees for the same number of hours are likely to be between £3,900 and £6,500 (if applicable, plus VAT @ 20% i.e. in the region of £780-£1,300; please see above if VAT is likely to be payable). Our fees will depend on how complex the issues in your appeal are, how many witnesses you have, whether or not we need to instruct an expert witness, volume of supporting documents, what languages you speak, etc.

Presenting your appeal in the First-tier Tribunal

Depending on the relevant issues, your appeal will be presented either by Vladimir or by a specialist immigration Counsel/barrister. If your appeal is to be presented by Counsel/barrister, we will recommend only highly-experienced and specialist immigration barristers. We will offer you a choice of at least two barristers and provide their credentials so that you can decide whom you wish to present your appeal. Their fees cover perusing your appeal papers, as prepared by us and forwarded to them, and presenting your appeal on the specified day. They tend to offer fixed fees, which vary depending on their experience and expertise but usually are between £750 and £1,500 (if applicable, plus VAT in the sum of £150-£300) to present your appeal before the First-tier Tribunal on a specified day. If you wish Vladimir to present your appeal, his fees will be charged at his standard rate of £260

per hour (if applicable, plus VAT in the sum of £52). His fees will depend on how much actual time he spends in respect of presenting your appeal and this could typically be between 2½ and 7 hours resulting in fees in the sum of £650 and £1,820 (if applicable, plus VAT in the sum of £130-£364, in these examples).

The above fee estimates do not include disbursements, which are costs related to your case but payable to third parties and expenses incurred in respect of your case. These may include appeal fees payable to the First-Tier Tribunal, interpreting/translating fees, expert fees (e.g. medical or country experts), mileage and travel expenses in respect of attending your appeal hearing, etc. However, wherever relevant, we will provide clear advice in respect of the costs of these disbursements and expenses.

OUR ADVICE

Our aim is to provide straightforward, friendly and strictly confidential expert advice, together with an exemplary client care service.

You can rest assured that we will always give honest advice in respect of the chances of success. If we think that a proposed application or appeal is unlikely to succeed we will advise you accordingly so you can decide whether or not to proceed. We will never mislead you into thinking that your case is stronger than we believe it actually is.

WHAT IMMIGRATION JUDGES SAY ABOUT US

Immigration Judges/Adjudicators rarely comment on the good work of the immigration solicitors representing applicants/appellants. However, here are some remarks made by Immigration Judges in respect of the quality of bundles of documents and other paperwork prepared by Vladimir in support of his clients' applications and appeals, as recorded in the Tribunal's Determinations:

1. Immigration Judge Simon Batiste:

'I found the material relating to the appellant and her son to be perhaps the most impressive bundle of documents relating to an appellant that I have seen while sitting as an immigration judge'

2. Immigration Judge DJB Trotter:

'I am grateful to Mr Mikeljevic for the comprehensive bundle which was thoroughly prepared and extremely helpful'

3. Immigration Judge Kelly:

'Nothing in my reasoning is intended to imply criticism of the reasons behind the original decision. Had I not had the benefit of the explanations and further evidence that have been placed before me, I may well have come to the same conclusion as the respondent. As it is, I find that the appeal should be allowed'

4. Adjudicator Ian F Macdonald:

'I have to say that the bundle of documents produced on behalf of the Appellant is impressive and is a credit to the Appellant's representatives''

5. Adjudicator Dr AE Thorndike:

'I have to acknowledge the bundle of written evidence put forward by Mr. Mikeljevic and his firm, most particularly the skeleton argument, which was very helpful. I congratulate him on his efforts'

6. Adjudicator GW Glossop:

'I am grateful to the Appellant's solicitor for providing such a comprehensive bundle of objective material'

7. Adjudicator IF Macdonald:

'I find that the Appellant has produced overwhelming documentary evidence to show that she is genuinely married to the Sponsor and that her children are the biological children of herself and her husband the Sponsor'

8. Adjudicator Dr AE Thorndike:

'Mr. Mikeljevic had prepared a comprehensive and very well structured written submission and it was agreed that this would stand as read...It remains only for me to state my appreciation to Mr. Mikeljevic for a well prepared case'

OUR CLIENT REVIEWS

Here are some of the postings by Vladimir's clients, as published on independent online review services and copied below. You can find all these reviews on the following websites:

- a) the Good Lawyer Guide: <http://www.goodlawyerguide.co.uk/lawyers/87991-vladimir-mikeljevic>; and
- b) VouchedFor: <https://www.vouchedfor.co.uk/solicitor/leeds/10792-vladimir-mikeljevic>.

Client 1

'We chose Vladimir on recommendation for complex immigration matters. We were in a difficult situation after being rejected once by the UKBA so we decided to use him, and follow his advice. We are so glad we did and won an very difficult and complex case. His attention to every tiny detail and professionalism proved we'd made the right decision. We had a deadline that we didn't think we would ever meet but he did and the visa was granted immediately! We have already recommended him!'

Client 2

'My sister recommended Vladimir to me to handle my immigration matter and he did a thoroughly brilliant job in handling my case, paying attention to every little detail and covering every loose end before submitting my application. His advice and support was a major contributing factor in my application being successful. He is a very professional lawyer and his knowledge in immigration cases is impeccable and I would gladly recommend Vladimir to anyone who is looking for a good lawyer.'

Client 3

'I used his services on several occasions for different issues. The most important was my immigration issue, when Vladimir managed to find a legal solution in a situation where the outcome seemed unfavorable. I was really impressed the way in which my application was prepared and presented. His expertise, exemplary professionalism and accuracy were essential in securing a successful conclusion. I would have no hesitation in recommending Vladimir to anyone requiring immigration advice.'

Client 4

'I have used Vladimir for my visa extension in 2009 and now I used him again in 2012 for my Indefinite Leave to Remain application. In both instances he handled my application with the utmost professionalism and provided me with excellent advice. He always kept me informed and clearly articulated his requirements.'

Client 5

'I chose Vladimir because of his excellent reviews and I wasn't disappointed! Vladimir handled my husband's visa application sensitively and I was impressed by his knowledge and respect. My husband's visa application was granted thanks to Vladimir's hard work and flawless preparation. I would not hesitate to recommend him to anyone requiring immigration advice!'

Client 6

'I instructed Vladimir in July last year, my cases had been going on for sometime as I used two sets of solicitors in London who did not give me proper advice. I found this solicitor very informative, helpful, supportive and professional in every way. He was always available to give me good advise and submitted my application which has now allowed me to stay here with my family. I would recommend him to anyone seeking immigration advice.'

Client 7

'Vladimir comes highly recommended and his credentials are true to the letter. Vladimir helped me resolve my issue. He was attentive, friendly, professional, knowledgeable, respectful, and more. He showed empathy as well as a proactive, hands-on approach. His approach set me at ease and I was able to logically re-assess my position. My well prepared application was granted, thanks to Vladimir. I would highly recommend his services and his firm for those who truly need lawyers with a human touch.'

Client 8

'Superb service from Vladimir Mikeljevic over the course of about a year. He was at all times informed, helpful, accessible, and very quick (i.e. typically the same day) in responding to any correspondence or matters that required attention. He retained the same calm, measured manner throughout, and when the visa submission office made a significant error, he acted immediately and decisively in a way that prevented it from becoming a problem. He gave clear advice from the start, and saw matters through to a smooth and successful conclusion. Outstanding service.'

Client 9

'I had reached a point of despair, having previously engaged two Official Immigration Companies and a further two Immigration Solicitors at great expense without any progress. During my first meeting with Vladimir Mikeljevic I felt a new lease of life because of his

friendly and honest understanding of my situation. Over a considerable length of time and what eventually turned out to be a very complicated case, Vladimir researched and pursued every possible case history and avenue relating to my circumstances, he then explained every detail in language that I understood. Eventually my Immigration Case had a positive outcome only through the total commitment, understanding and expertise of Vladimir, who always gave the impression that he regarded my case as his top priority. If you desire a totally honest opinion with commitment, don't hesitate to consult Vladimir first!

Client 10

'I was recommended to Vladimir by the University of Leeds. Not only is he extremely knowledgeable with immigration laws I was impressed with the speed at which he responded to all my questions. I would highly recommend Vladimir to anyone who requires help with immigration / VISAs.'

Client 11

'Vladimir was recommended to us by another lawyer as being the best they knew. He has been very efficient, clear, organised, knowledgeable, very quick to answer emails and our matter had a positive outcome much sooner than we expected.'

Client 12

'Vladimir figured out what my problem was almost before I did, and he sorted it out incredibly fast. His understanding of the law is better than that of the Home Office officials we dealt with, his attitude is unfailingly positive. It is in the nature of immigration problems to make one anxious, and I can't imagine anyone better to give you confidence that it will all turn out well. And best of all, it did.'

Client 13

'What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a Solicitor?

I was in a pretty tight situation after my application to stay in the UK with my wife was rejected by the UKBA. My previous lawyers advice during my application was poor, which left my application lacking in several areas. The complexity of my living arrangements and finances didn't help at all. Also, the UKBA had seized my passport to ensure I was leaving the UK. I was also at risk of being an over-stayer.

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

Vladimir paid close attention to the complex details of my case and offered me multiple possible approaches to use in securing a new visa. We sat down and assessed every option in detail and decided to choose the most suitable method. He was able to get the UKBA to move my passport to an application centre so I could make my application in person.

What is your current situation? Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

My application was accepted within 2 weeks and I am currently staying in the UK with my wife. My prospects of staying in the UK long term have also been improved as I was able to avoid becoming an over-stayer.

What could they have done better?

Vladimir's advice and service was of a very high standard. As I am currently happy with my situation, I don't think I would have changed anything.'

Client 14

'What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a Solicitor?

I was needing assistance in applying for My Husband's Visa Application to the UK for the very first time after being married recently but we had a few challenges/uncertainties.

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

Vladimir sat and went through our uncertainties and worked out the bests course of action for us to take. He was calm and honest in his manner throughout. He kept us updated every step of the way and replied to within 24 hours of us seeking advise or answers to questions.

What is your current situation? Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

My Husband was granted his Visa and is able to come live with me.

What could they have done better?

Just keep doing that good that you are'

Client 15

'What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a Solicitor?

Applying for ILR and then citizenship.

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

Reviewing the application process to the Home Office. He took me through all the documents that were needed for the applications (ILR and citizenship). He reviewed and double-checked the documents I provided were sufficient for the application and that all the information I provided were accurate. He also prepared a covering letter to the Home Office which was well-written, guided and prepared for the Home Office worker to go through the application fairly quickly, this indeed is the utmost important factor of the application.

What is your current situation? Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

Yes. Both of my ILR and then the citizenship applications were approved by the Home Office the first time Vladimir sent my applications across.

What could they have done better?

Honestly, he was excellent in everything the applications required. He explained this very clearly and is very professional yet he remained this friendly environment as well which is great in my opinion.'

Client 16

'What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a Solicitor?

Unfamiliar with immigration law, we contacted Mr Mikeljevic as a result of a random internet search for best solicitors in the UK. From our first conversation, we immediately felt confident in his expertise, professionalism, and ability to help us with our specific case details. After instructing Mr Mikeljevic, we were able to quickly gather all support materials in an organized fashion thanks to the detailed instructions he provided.

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

After instructing Mr Mikeljevic, we were able to quickly gather all support materials in an organized fashion thanks to the detailed instructions he provided. Although we still had a myriad of questions, concerns, and fears, he was calm and confident the entire time which helped alleviate our anxieties. It was still a stressful process, but we could not have done it without his assistance. In addition to his knowledge, we both appreciated his kindness, understanding, and sense of humor. We know he has been invited to many weddings and anniversary parties as a result of his efforts to help clients remain together. We would highly recommend Mr Mikeljevic and hope his firm appreciates what an asset he is to their team.

What is your current situation? Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

I received my visa and it was the outcome I was hoping for.'

Client 17

'What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a Solicitor?

My application for a student visa was rejected when I applied before the start of my first year at university. Having found out I was rejected, I appointed Mr Mikeljevic due to his excellent track record and knowledge on immigration procedures.

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

Mr Mikeljevic understood my situation of not wanting to miss any work at university and made sure my application was perfect and thoroughly accurate in order to get the visa as soon as possible. He explained everything I needed to do in detail and reassured me that everything would be fine. It was a stressful situation being on my own in the UK without the help of my parents to apply for the visa, but thanks to Mr Mikeljevic it was quickly dealt with.

What is your current situation? Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

Yes, thankfully I did not miss any university lectures or exams and went back to my home country to apply for the visa where I received it in 8 days.

What could they have done better?

Honestly he was excellent in every aspect and I can not think of anything that he could have done better- he really knows what he is doing.'

Client 18

'What could they have done better?

Nothing.

What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a legal adviser?

My partner had been refused a visa and had been asked to leave the country. I interviewed several solicitors most of whom wanted to appeal which would have taken up to 3 years. Only Vladimir was honest with us and said the best course of action was to leave the country and reapply. He then helped us prepare the new application with a lot of advice all of which was spot on and the application was accepted. I can't praise him enough because he could have earned far higher fees going down the long winded appeal route which would have been a big strain on us and probably would have been unsuccessful.

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

Vladimir gave me oral and written advice on how to prepare the forms and what documents to include and what to include in the accompanying letter. After I had prepared the documents he then vetted them and provided advice on how to make them perfect.

Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

Yes, my partner got a leave to stay visa and is on a five-year route to becoming a citizen.'

Client 19

'What could they have done better?

I can't see how Vladimir could have done any better.

What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a legal adviser?
Needing to secure a Spousal Visa for my wife, who is a US citizen (I am a UK citizen).

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

Vladimir knew exactly what our requirements and necessities were, and how to get there, from start to finish. He was very patient and thorough, not only in terms of communication with us, but also in terms of the preparation of the substantial bundle of evidence demanded by the Home Office. It would have been quite a daunting task had Vladimir not been there to walk us methodically through the various steps, as well as organising and steering our entire approach to the Home Office.

Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

Yes. My wife obtained her Spousal Visa upon our first application.'

Client 20

'What could they have done better?

I CAN HONESTLY SAY "Nothing"

What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a legal adviser?

I originally went to a non-competent solicitor so she can help me in obtaining a visa so my wife can join me. The application failed because of her incompetence. Then I came across Vladimir who is everything a solicitor should be through, professional, patient, knowledgeable and extremely efficient. I can't recommend him enough.

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

he reunited me with my wife.

Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

YES.'

Client 21

'What could they have done better?

Vladimir is an expert advisor with phenomenal knowledge of visa rules and regulations, always keeping an eye on changes in regulations or new regulations coming out. He takes care of the smallest details whilst preparing visa applications and I couldn't flaw his expertise.

What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a legal adviser?

For leave to remain as spouse of a British national.

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

Vladimir helped me with 3 successful applications over 5 years. The first application being in 2013, second in 2015 and the most recent and significant indefinite leave to remain application in 2018. Vladimir has been a great legal advisor who has impeccable knowledge and experience in immigration matters and I can't recommend him enough.

Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

Yes. All my 3 applications to home office have been successful under Vladimir's expert advice.'

Client 22

'What could they have done better?

Vladimir is an expert advisor with phenomenal knowledge of visa rules and regulations, always keeping an eye on changes in regulations or new regulations coming out. He takes care of the smallest details whilst preparing visa applications and I couldn't flaw his expertise.

What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a legal adviser?

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Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

Yes. All my 3 applications to home office have been successful under Vladimir's expert advice.'

Client 23

'What could they have done better?

No, I cannot have asked for my case to be handled any better. Vladimir went above and beyond to make sure my issue was rectified.

What were the circumstances that caused you to look for a legal adviser?

A refusal decision on my Tier 2 Visa application that required particular specialised knowledge of Immigration law to be tackled.

How did Vladimir Mikeljevic help you?

Vladimir was extremely helpful throughout the whole process from the beginning to the end. He showed a very clear and masterful understanding of immigration issues, as well as the diligence required for efficient execution and tackling of the issue. Furthermore, he showed a genuine concern and empathy for my situation.

Have you seen the outcome you were hoping for?

Regarding the specific outcome of providing the required advice and counsel, yes I certainly have. But I am currently awaiting word from the UKVI, although I feel positive about it. And regardless of the eventual outcome, I am still grateful for his services, which have by far surpassed that of other Solicitors I have had experience working with in the past.'