

CHAPTER 34A(a)

PURSUERS' OFFERS

Interpretation of this Chapter

34A.1. In this Chapter—

“appropriate date” means the date by which a pursuer’s offer could reasonably have been accepted;

“charges” means charges for work carried out by the pursuer’s solicitor, and includes any additional charge;

“pursuer’s offer” means an offer by a pursuer to settle a claim against a defender made in accordance with this Chapter;

“relevant period” means the period from the appropriate date to the date of acceptance of the pursuer’s offer or, as the case may be, to the date on which judgment was given, or on which the verdict was applied.

Pursuers’ offers

34A.2.—(1) A pursuer’s offer may be made in any cause where the summons includes a conclusion for an order for payment of a sum or sums of money, other than an order—

- (a) which the court may not make without evidence; or
- (b) the making of which is dependent on the making of another order which the court may not make without evidence.

(2) This Chapter has no effect as regards any other form of offer to settle.

Making of offer

34A.3.—(1) A pursuer’s offer is made by lodging in process an offer in the terms specified in rule 34A.4.

(2) A pursuer’s offer may be made at any time before—

- (a) the court makes avizandum or, if it does not make avizandum, gives judgment; or
- (b) in a jury trial, the jury retires to consider the verdict.

(3) A pursuer’s offer may be withdrawn at any time before it is accepted by lodging in process a minute of withdrawal.

Form of offer

34A.4. A pursuer’s offer must—

- (a) state that it is made under this Chapter;
- (b) offer to accept—
 - (i) a sum or sums of money, inclusive of interest to the date of the offer; and
 - (ii) the taxed expenses of process; and
- (c) specify the conclusion or conclusions of the summons in satisfaction of which the sum or sums and expenses referred to in paragraph (b) would be accepted.

Disclosure of offers

34A.5.—(1) No averment of the fact that a pursuer’s offer has been made may be included in any pleadings.

(a) The rules previously comprising Chapter 34A were revoked by S.I. 1996/2769.

- (2) Where a pursuer's offer has not been accepted—
 - (a) the court must not be informed that an offer has been made until—
 - (i) the court has pronounced judgment; or
 - (ii) in the case of a jury trial, the jury has returned its verdict; and
 - (b) a jury must not be informed that an offer has been made until it has returned its verdict.

Acceptance of offers

34A.6.—(1) A pursuer's offer may be accepted any time before—

- (a) the offer is withdrawn;
- (b) the court makes avizandum or, if it does not make avizandum, gives judgment; or
- (c) in the case of a jury trial, the jury retires to consider its verdict.

(2) It is accepted by lodging in process an acceptance of the offer in the form of a minute of acceptance.

(3) A minute of acceptance must be unqualified other than as respects any question of contribution, indemnity or relief.

(4) On acceptance of a pursuer's offer either the pursuer or the defender may apply by motion for decree in terms of the offer and minute of acceptance.

(5) Where a pursuer's offer includes an offer to accept a sum of money in satisfaction of a conclusion for decree jointly and severally against two or more defenders, the offer is accepted only when accepted by all such defenders.

(6) However, the court may, on the motion of the pursuer, and with the consent of any defender who has lodged a minute of acceptance, grant decree in terms of the offer and minute of acceptance.

Late acceptance of offers

34A.7.—(1) This rule applies to the determination of a motion under rule 34A.6(4) where the court is satisfied that a defender lodged a minute of acceptance after the appropriate date.

(2) On the pursuer's motion the court must, except on cause shown—

- (a) allow interest on any sum decerned for from the date on which the pursuer's offer was made; and
- (b) find the defender liable for payment to the pursuer of a sum calculated in accordance with rule 34A.9.

(3) Where the court is satisfied that more than one defender lodged a minute of acceptance after the appropriate date the court may find those defenders liable to contribute to payment of the sum referred to in paragraph (2)(b) in such proportions as the court thinks fit.

(4) Where the court makes a finding under paragraph (2)(b), the pursuer may apply for decerniture for payment of the sum as so calculated no later than 21 days after the later of—

- (a) the date of the Auditor's report of the taxation of the pursuer's account of expenses; and
- (b) the date of the interlocutor disposing of a note of objection.

Non-acceptance of offers

34A.8.—(1) This rule applies where—

- (a) a pursuer's offer has been made, and has not been withdrawn;
- (b) the offer has not been accepted;
- (c) either—

- (i) the court has pronounced judgment; or
- (ii) in the case of a jury trial, the verdict of the jury has been applied;
- (d) the judgment or verdict, in so far as relating to the conclusions of the summons specified in the pursuer's offer, is at least as favourable in money terms to the pursuer as the terms offered; and
- (e) the court is satisfied that the pursuer's offer was a genuine attempt to settle the proceedings.

(2) For the purpose of determining if the condition specified in paragraph (1)(d) is satisfied, interest awarded in respect of the period after the lodging of the pursuer's offer is to be disregarded.

(3) On the pursuer's motion the court must, except on cause shown, decern against the defender for payment to the pursuer of a sum calculated in accordance with rule 34A.9.

(4) No such motion may be enrolled after the expiry of 21 days after the later of—

- (a) the date of the Auditor's report of the taxation of the pursuer's account of expenses; and
- (b) the date of the interlocutor disposing of a note of objection.

(5) Where more than one defender is found liable to the pursuer in respect of a conclusion specified in the offer, the court may find those defenders liable to contribute to payment of the sum referred to in paragraph (3) in such proportions as it thinks fit.

Extent of defender's liability

34A.9. The sum that may be decerned for under rule 34A.7(2)(b) or rule 34A.8(3) is a sum corresponding to half the charges allowed on taxation of the pursuer's account of expenses, in so far as those charges are attributable to the relevant period, or in so far as they can reasonably be attributed to that period.