

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Our complaints policy

We are committed to providing a personal and effective legal service to all our clients. However, we do appreciate that things can go wrong and when it does, we need you to tell us about it in order that we may deal with your complaint promptly and thoroughly in order to create a satisfactory outcome.

Our complaints procedure

If you have a complaint about any aspect of the service which has been provided:

- You may firstly contact the fee-earner dealing with the matter. The fee-earner will at all times ensure that the matter is dealt with expeditiously and that your concerns are being taken seriously.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved with him/her please contact the partner who is the supervisor of the fee-earner that you are complaining about.

However, if you feel that the fee-earner dealing with your matter may not be the best person to talk to, we will make arrangements for your complaint to be dealt with by an independent person within the firm, i.e. another fee-earner or partner. This is not only to ensure consistency in our procedure, but also to ensure that the complaints procedure is fair and to prevent the problem being compounded.

What will happen next?

1. We will initially send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and detailing who will be dealing with the matter. We may also ask for further details concerning the reasons for your complaint and at this stage, it may be beneficial to have a meeting and discuss the issues which you have raised.
2. Within five days of meeting you or considering your further information, we will let you know in writing what steps we propose to take and provide you with an explanation of any investigations we may feel appropriate.
3. Once we have written to you detailing what we propose to do, we will respond fully to the complaint within 14 days. If it is not possible to give you a full response within this time – usually because a detailed investigation is required or being undertaken by our staff – we will write to you with an interim response setting out what is being done, who is dealing with the matter and who you can expect to hear from in the near future. We will also include details of the person you may contact if you believe that your complaint has not been dealt with properly.

4. Once we have concluded our investigations, we will contact you to inform you of our findings, the reasons for it and to discuss a suitable outcome to the complaint. We will attempt to settle the matter as amicably as possible, either by a reduction of a bill or by way of a repayment in order to minimise any stress.

If you are not satisfied with our response, we will ensure that either:

- (a) A partner review the decision;
- (b) Arrange for someone in the firm who has not been involved in your complaint to review it; or
- (c) We will provide you details of the Legal Ombudsman to take the matter further if at the conclusion of our complaints procedure, you are not satisfied with the outcome.

Taking matters further

We hope to do everything possible to ensure that your complaint is settled satisfactorily. However, if you are still unsatisfied or feel that we were unable to deal with your complaint effectively, you may wish to contact the Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ about your complaint.

Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman about our service must usually be made within six months of the end of the work we did for you or of you finding out that there was a problem. If your complaint is about our conduct, you should then contact the Legal Ombudsman within six months of the conduct taking place. For further information, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or refer to the website <http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/>

Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If we have not, only then you may take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. A summary of their rules for accepting a complaint are:

- Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint. and
- No more than six years from the date of act/omission; or
- No more than three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, please contact them on the website address above or by telephone on 0300 555 0333 between 9am to 5pm or alternatively by email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

The Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can also help you if you are concerned about our conduct. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic. You can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

Their contact details can be found at: www.sra.org.uk or by telephone on 0370 606 2555