

CLIENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards. We deal with all complaints fairly, promptly and at no extra cost to you.

If at any point you become unhappy with the service we provide to you, then please inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve the problem for you.

1) What is a complaint?

A report by a client that their expectations of what they consider to be a good service have not been met.

2) Making a complaint

You can register a complaint with the person dealing with your matter or their supervisor, details of which are given in your initial Client Care Letter.

In the first instance, we would prefer if you write to us with full details of your complaint so that we have a good understanding of the issues being highlighted.

3) Investigating the complaint

- a. We will acknowledge the complaint within seven days which allows for any postal delays and notify you who will be handling your complaint.
- b. We will record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint. We will conduct a full investigation and an independent review of the matter.
- c. We aim to respond in full within 28 days. However, if the complaint is of a more complex nature, we will require more time, but we will let you know when you will receive a full response. We may also invite you to meet with the Supervisor to gather more information and resolve the matter.
- d. We will reply to you, usually in writing following the outcome of the review of the complaints investigated.

If still unresolved at this stage, you may take the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman or, in accordance with the Alternative Dispute Resolution Regulations to an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Scheme Provider. We will issue a final letter advising you of this. If we are unable to resolve your complaint, then you can have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman investigates complaints about service issues with lawyers.

4) LEGAL OMBUDSMAN

The Legal Ombudsman is the independent body established by the Office for Legal Complaints under the Legal Services Act 2007 to deal with complaints against Solicitors.

The Legal Ombudsman may:

- Investigate the quality of professional service supplied by a solicitor to a client.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has breached rules of professional conduct.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has unreasonably refused to supply a professional service to a prospective client.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has persistently or unreasonably offered a professional service that the client does not want.

Before it will consider a complaint the Legal Ombudsman generally requires that the firm's internal Complaints Procedure (outlined above) has been exhausted. If the Legal Ombudsman is satisfied that the firm's proposals for resolving a complaint are reasonable, it may decline to investigate further. From 1st April 2023 the Legal Ombudsman requires complaints to be made to them within one year of the date of the problem about which you are complaining about, or, if the problem

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occurred more than one year ago, you will need to bring your complaint to the Ombudsman within one year of you becoming aware of the problem. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final response to your complaint following our internal complaint procedure.

The Legal Ombudsman’s address and contact details are:

PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ; telephone, 0300 555 0333; website, www.legalombudsman.org.uk; or email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

5) ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SCHEMES

Alternative complaints bodies such as Ombudsman Services, exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme.

However, we don’t currently agree to use this Alternative Dispute Resolution service in view of the availability of the independent Legal Ombudsman Service established under the Legal Services Act 2007. We are bound by our Regulatory Code to comply with the Legal Ombudsman.

6) CONTRACTS ENTERED INTO ONLINE

If we are unable to resolve your complaint which relates to a contract entered into online, you may contact the Online Dispute Resolution providers by accessing the following link <http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/odr>

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