

# 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.

## 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 our Complaints Handling Partner who is Ian Johnson.

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.
- 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 our Complaints Handling Partner 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 you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, or the way the complaint has been handled, you may write to the Senior Partner who is Tim Gladdle, who will make such further investigations as are necessary.

We would generally aim to do this within 28 days. This will happen in one of the following ways:

- The Complaints Handling Partner will review his/her own decision.
- Senior Partner will review your complaint within 14 days.

The Complaints Handling Partner will inform you of the conclusions and any alternative proposals to resolve the complaint.

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.

## 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. You will have to bring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of receiving a final response from us about your complaint and 6 years

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from the date of the act or omission, giving rise to the complaint. Alternatively, 3 years from the date you should reasonably have known there are grounds for complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman's address and contact details are:

PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ; telephone, 0300 555 0333; website, [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk); or email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto: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.

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>