

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We are committed to providing a quality legal service to all our clients. Consequently, it is essential, when something goes wrong or any client believes they have reason to complain, that we have an effective procedure to assist complete and early resolution of the problem. Only by doing so can we hope to maintain the quality standards we have set, and improve them by learning from what may have gone wrong and what our clients tell us.

The Procedure

Although not essential, in making your complaint it would be helpful to us if you could provide details of your concerns in writing (if you have not already done so). If you would prefer not to have to do this, please arrange to see us and we will be pleased to take details from you.

What will happen next

1. We will register your complaint on our Register (for monitoring and management information purposes).

Timescale: Within 2 days of receipt of complaint.

2. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, set out our understanding of it and request your confirmation or seek any necessary clarification. We will also confirm who will deal with your complaint.

Timescale: Within 3 days of receipt of complaint.

3. We will then commence investigation of your complaint. This may involve one or more of the following steps:

- a) We will ask the case worker who acted for you to provide us with a response to your complaint within 5 days.

Timescale: Within 1 day

- b) We will then examine the response and the file as against your complaint and, if necessary, speak to the case worker.

Timescale: Within 3 days of receipt of the response and file

- c) The firm's client care Director will consider your complaint in the light of what the file reveals and the case worker's response.

Timescale: Within 7 days

4. The firm's client care Director will then write to you with a detailed response and inviting you to meet with us to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint.

Timescale: Within a further 3 days

5. If a meeting between us takes place we will write to you to confirm what took place and

detailing any agreed solution that was reached.

Timescale: Within 2 days of the meeting

6. If a meeting is declined or is for some reason impractical we will write to you again in an endeavour to resolve the complaint to our mutual satisfaction.

Timescale: Within 5 days of the meeting being declined

7. If, at a meeting or from your written reply to our detailed written response, you remain dissatisfied with what we have said and how we propose resolving your complaint, we will arrange for our decision to be reviewed. This may happen in one of the following ways: -

- a) Our own review of our handling of your complaint and why you are dissatisfied with our decision

Timescale: Within 5 days

- b) By arranging for someone else in the firm who is entirely unconnected with the complaint to review how it was handled and the decision taken.

Timescale: Within 10 days

- c) By asking our local law society or another local firm of solicitors to review our handling of, and the decision on, your complaint (if they are willing to do this).

Timescale: Within 10 days

8. After the review has taken place you will be informed of the outcome.

Timescale: Within 5 days of the conclusion of the review.

9. If you still remain dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled and the decision on it, we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining why we consider our handling of it, and our decision (and the result of any review), were reasonable. We have eight weeks to consider your complaint. If you remain dissatisfied at the end of our complaints process, you would then be at liberty to contact the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within one year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within one year of you realising there was a concern. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six weeks of our final response to you. If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, their contact details are as follows:-

- Website - www.legalombudsman.org.uk
- Telephone - 0300 555 0333 between 9.00am to 5.00pm.
- E-mail - enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
- Postal address - Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH.

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