

# Complaints Procedure

## Introduction

We are committed to providing services of the highest quality to all our clients. However, we recognise that in order to maintain the quality of our services we must address client dissatisfaction as and when it arises.

It is important that if you are in any way dissatisfied with any aspect of our service that you let us know. Not only can we then take all reasonable steps to address and, where possible, resolve your concern, but your comments can help us improve our services as a whole.

We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). SRA Number 551414.

## What is a complaint?

This Practice defines a complaint as:

**“An expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided by us that requires a response.”**

A complaint may relate to a problem that has not been resolved, dissatisfaction with present or proposed services, delays or non-delivery of a service or disagreement over a decision, dissatisfaction with a bill rendered to you by the firm, etc.

We are keen to resolve any concerns as soon as possible and in order to do this, will follow our complaints handling procedure. We will endeavour to handle your complaint promptly and fairly.

## How do I make a complaint?

**Step 1.** Speak to the fee earner who is providing the service. Often we are able to resolve your problems on the spot. Complaints resolved at this stage will be recorded on a complaints form and the information used to improve the quality of the service we provide.

**Step 2.** If the fee earner with whom you have been dealing is unable to satisfy your concerns, then you should contact one of the Directors (Helen Scott or Rebecca Humphreys as set out in the Client Care Policy), either in writing or phone.

- The complaint will be recorded in the central client complaint file.
- You may be contacted in order to gather further information.
- Within 28 days you will receive a detailed reply (or you will be invited to a meeting to further clarify the issues), and then receive a detailed reply.

The practice will do its best to identify the cause of any problems which you have complained about and will offer appropriate redress where necessary and correct any unsatisfactory procedures.

### **If we cannot resolve your complaint**

**Step 3.** We are permitted a period of 8 weeks to consider your complaint. If for any reason it proves impossible for the Practice to resolve a complaint to your satisfaction then the matter can be referred to the Legal Ombudsman.

They will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your case. Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first.

You can contact the Legal Ombudsman via email to [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk) or via post to Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH. They can also be contacted via telephone between 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday on 0300 555 0333 or you can visit their website [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

Clients are free to refer any complaint about our work, fees or level of service but there are some conditions and time limits. Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within 6 months of the date of our final written response on your complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made no more than one year of the act or omission about which the client is complaining occurring or no more than one year from when the client should have known about or become aware that there were grounds for complaint.

**It is very much hoped that resolution can be achieved using step 1 or 2 of this procedure.**

### **What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour**

#### **Solicitors Regulation Authority**

If someone thinks a Solicitor might be dishonest or you have concerns about their ethics or integrity, they have the right to notify our regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). There are no time limits for making a report but there are limits on what the SRA will consider. Please note that the SRA is not able to deal with issues of poor service (complaints of this nature should instead be referred to the Legal Ombudsman). For further information about the SRA's role, please contact the SRA on 0370 606 2555 or visit: <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page#report>

#### **Review**

This procedure will be reviewed annually to verify it is up to date and in effective operation across the practice.