

Complaints Handling Procedure

Our complaints policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards as well as do our utmost to put right for you whatever has gone wrong.

Our complaints procedure

1. We hope that if you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our services you will in the first instance raise the matter, formally or informally, with your client partner, who will investigate and try to resolve the problem.
2. Should this not be possible or not work, and as a result you have a formal complaint, please contact us in writing about it, providing full details. Please send your complaint to the Managing Partner, Stephen Carter, who is our Client Care Partner. He will review your matter file and speak to the member of staff who acted for you. (If your complaint is about him then please address it to Bernadette Bailey, who will fulfil Stephen's role.)

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within one week of receiving the complaint, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
2. We will then investigate your complaint by reviewing the file and (wherever possible) discussing it with the fee earner concerned.
3. Stephen will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and, we hope, to resolve your complaint. He will aim to do this within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgment letter.
4. Within one week of the meeting, Stephen will aim to write to you to confirm what took place and any solution(s) he has agreed with you. If no solution proved possible, he will send you a detailed reply to your complaint, an explanation of why no agreement was possible and, if appropriate, set out any action we propose to take.
5. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, Stephen will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including any suggestions for resolving your complaint, which he will aim to do within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgment letter.



6. If you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange for Bernadette Bailey (or if the complaint is about her, another partner chosen by and from partners not involved), to review our response in the light of your comments.
7. (S)he will aim to write to you within 21 days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
8. If we have to change any of the timescales above significantly, we will let you know within them and explain why this is so.

Referring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman

9. If we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction within eight weeks of receiving full details of your complaint, you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider your complaint. The Legal Ombudsman is an independent complaints body which was established under the Legal Services Act 2007 and deals with legal services complaints. You may wish to submit your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman via their online form at: <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/helping-the-public/make-a-complaint/>. Alternatively, you can submit your concerns via: cat@legalombudsman.org.uk or PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ. Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint, (or, if we do not deal with your complaint within eight weeks, six months after the expiry of the eight week period for dealing with your complaint) or 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. For further information you should contact the Legal Ombudsman via enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk, 0300 555 0333 (or +44 121 245 3050 for international callers), or go to www.legalombudsman.org.uk.

Complaints about bills

10. Please also use this procedure if you have a concern or complaint about a bill. In addition, you have the right to object to a bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. If you apply to the court, the Legal Ombudsman (see above for details) may decide not to deal with a complaint about the bill.

Referring a complaint to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (“SRA”)

11. Subject to paragraph 10 above, complaints about poor service should be directed to the Legal Ombudsman. If you are concerned about matters such as conduct or ethics, you should report these concerns to the SRA. Details of how to do this can be found at: <http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/>. The SRA can be contacted via their website (<http://www.sra.org.uk/contactus/>) or by the following means: Phone: 0370 606 2555 (or +44(0)121 329 6800 for international callers: Fax: +44 (0)121 616 1999: Post: Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharf Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN