

Complaints Procedure

We take client concerns very seriously and endeavour to ensure that clients feel comfortable raising concerns about the service they have received.

We aim to ensure complaints are managed effectively and reasonably.

Making a complaint

You can register your complaint with the person dealing with your matter or the Client Care Director, Sally Reeve. She is responsible for ensuring that complaints are handled effectively and in accordance with this procedure. This procedure will also apply to prospective clients who we have refused to provide a service to or persistently or unreasonably offered an unwanted service to but only if the complainant has evidence to show that we did not have reasonable grounds to do so.

The Client Care Director keeps a file / register of all complaints.

Investigating the complaint

- We will acknowledge your complaint within seven days.
- We will conduct a full investigation and an independent review of the matter.
- 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 will reply to you, usually in writing, to explain our views on the complaint and how we propose to resolve it, hopefully to your satisfaction. Our response will include a proposal for appropriate redress, this could be a reduction in fees or compensation as a gesture of goodwill. You will also be advised of the timescale in which you will be given an initial/substantive response.
- If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, or the way the complaint has been handled, you may write to the Client Care Director who will make such further investigations as are necessary.
- The Client Care Director will inform you of the conclusions and any alternative proposals to resolve the complaint, usually within 28 days of this being referred to her.

- If, after a period of eight weeks, the complaint is still unresolved, you may take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. The complaint will be unresolved if we have failed to respond within eight weeks, or you are not satisfied with our final written response.
- You will have to bring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final response from us about your complaint and no later than one year from the date of the act or omission being complained about; or one year from the date on which you should have realised that there was cause for complaint. However, the Legal Ombudsman can choose to extend this time limit where it is fair and reasonable to do so.
- We will record and report centrally all complaints received from complainants.
- We will identify the cause of any problems of which the client has complained offering appropriate redress and correcting any unsatisfactory procedures.

Legal Ombudsman

The Legal Ombudsman is an 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 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.

However, the Legal Ombudsman also has the discretion to consider complaints which have not been directed to the firm within the first instance – in instances where there is a clear breakdown between the complainant and the firm, e.g. the lawyer/firm has refused to consider the complaint.



The Legal Ombudsman's address is:

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

The Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

You can also raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority.