



Complaints Procedure

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We are sorry to hear that you wish to make a complaint or raise a concern about an aspect of our services or about our fees.
- 1.2 Please contact your client partner, as named in the letter of engagement. A prospective client should contact the partner with whom they corresponded. Please feel free to raise your concerns either over the telephone or in writing.

2 How we will respond – first stage

- 2.1 We will write to you to acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
- 2.2 The client partner will investigate and endeavour to resolve the complaint informally to your satisfaction.
- 2.3 If your complaint cannot be resolved informally, it will be investigated by a partner who was not concerned with your matter. (S)he is responsible for ensuring that complaints are handled effectively and in accordance with this procedure.

3 How we will respond – second stage

- 3.1 We will inform you of the identity of the independent partner appointed to investigate the complaint within seven days.
- 3.2 The independent partner will conduct a full investigation of the matter.
- 3.3 We aim to respond in full within 3 weeks. However, in some circumstances, particularly if the complaint is of a complex nature, we may require more time. If this is the case, we will let you know when you will receive a full response.
- 3.4 We will reply to you, usually in writing, to explain the steps taken to investigate your complaint and any remedial action taken or proposed to be taken. We will also ask you to reply to our response to your complaint to let us know if you are satisfied with it.

4 How we will respond – final stage

- 4.1 If you remain dissatisfied after both the client partner and independent partner have reviewed your concerns, you may refer the matter to our Senior Partner, David Saunders, who will give your complaint his full consideration and make such further investigations as are necessary. He can be contacted either in writing or by telephone on 020 7329 6699. He will inform you of the conclusions and any alternative proposals to resolve the complaint, usually within 28 days of the complaint being referred to him.

5 Legal Ombudsman

- 5.1 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 in a fair and independent way.
- 5.2 Before it will consider a complaint, the Legal Ombudsman generally requires that the firm's internal Complaints Procedure has been exhausted. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman's guidance on resolving complaints suggests that you should usually allow us at least 8 weeks to resolve your complaint. If still unresolved at this stage, you may be able to take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.
- 5.3 However, certain parties do not have the right to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, for example:
- most businesses (unless they are defined as micro enterprises);
 - charities or clubs with an annual income of more than £1 million; or
 - trustees of trusts with an asset value of more than £1 million.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 The Legal Ombudsman will accept a complaint provided it is made within one year from the date of the act/omission or from the date you should reasonably have known there were grounds for complaint. You should contact the Ombudsman as soon as possible and, at the latest, within 6 months of your last contact with us regarding your complaint. In some cases, they may (at their discretion) extend any of these time limits.

5.6 If the Legal Ombudsman is satisfied that the firm's proposals for resolving a complaint are reasonable, it may decline to investigate further.

5.7 The Legal Ombudsman's contact details are set out below

Address: PO Box 6167, Slough SL1 0EH

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk