

Complaints Handling Policy

The Client Care & Complaints Director has responsibility for this policy. This policy is reviewed yearly as part of the Annual Review. We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards. If you have a complaint, please raise the matter with the person handling your case, or with the Client Care Director, Eileen Sutton.

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within three days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
2. We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to our Client Care Director, Eileen Sutton, who will review your matter file and speak to the member of staff who acted for you.
3. Eileen Sutton will then contact you to attempt to resolve the complaint. This may take the form of a telephone call or a personal meeting. She will do this within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter. Within three days of the conversation or meeting, we will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions she has agreed with you.
4. If you do not want a meeting or telephone conversation, or it is not possible, we will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including our suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
5. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange for a director to review the decision.
6. We will write to you within 14 days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
7. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact either the Legal Ombudsman or the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

Solicitors Regulation Authority or Legal Ombudsman?

The Solicitors Regulation Authority could help you if you think a solicitor has breached the SRA Principles, might be dishonest or you have concerns about their behaviour.

Examples include:

- Shutting down their law firm without telling you.
- Dishonesty or deliberately overcharging you.
- Taking or losing your money.
- Treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

You can contact the SRA and obtain further information via their web page at www.sra.org.uk

The Legal Ombudsman could help you if you are not happy with your solicitor's work or service and need to put things right.

Examples include:

- Not replying to your emails, letters or calls.
- Losing your documents or giving you unclear advice.
- Charging you an amount you are not happy with.
- Not explaining issues properly so you do not understand.

You can contact the Legal Ombudsman at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

Please note that the Legal Ombudsman Service cannot usually be used by businesses or most other organisations unless they are below certain size limits. Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of the date of our final written response on your complaint and within either six years of the date of the act giving rise to the complaint, or within three years of the date when you should have become aware of the act or omission. For further information, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk. If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.