

Complaints Handling Policy

We aim to deal with any complaints promptly, fairly, openly and effectively. Our definition of a complaint is: “any written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction referred to any person in our organisation by a client, approved supplier or other third party.” In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues. If you would like to make a formal complaint, then you can read our full complaints procedure which is set out below. Making a complaint will not affect how we handle your case.

A complaint can be identified through a letter, telephone call, e-mail, and fax or in the course of a face to face conversation. A complaint may involve:

- Dissatisfaction with the handling of a case;
- Disappointment with an alleged lack of communication;
- Frustration with an alleged lack of case progress;
- An allegation of discrimination; or
- Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the case.

It is the policy of the firm that:

- Every complaint made by a client is reported and recorded centrally;
- Every complaint received is responded to appropriately;
- The cause of the problem is identified, appropriate redress is offered, and unsatisfactory procedures are corrected.

We inform clients in writing at the outset of their matter of their right to complain and how complaints can be made. We also inform clients in writing, both at the outset of their matter and at the conclusion of their right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, the time frame for doing so and full details of how to contact the Legal Ombudsman. When a client, approved supplier or other third party makes a complaint, we send them our standard letter which sets out our complaints handling procedure, outlining the relevant stages and timescales.

We report and record every complaint made centrally. All complaints are referred to our complaints handling officer, Andrea Spyrou in the first instance, who:

- Reviews the matter with any staff member involved;
- Identifies the cause of any problems of which the client, approved supplier or third party has complained;
- Determines what degree of validity the complaint has; and
- Decides how the complaint should be resolved.

Where our complaints handling officer identifies a potential negligence claim or where a client, approved supplier or other third party claims financial loss, compensation or threatens legal action, the case must be referred immediately to our professional indemnity insurers who will decide, in conjunction with us, whether we should continue with this complaints procedure or adopt some other course of action. Our complaints handling officer will offer the client, approved supplier or other third party appropriate redress and recommend amendments to unsatisfactory procedures where appropriate, and will ensure that any unsatisfactory procedures are corrected.

Our complaints handling officer has overall responsibility for handling complaints and carries out an analysis of the central record of complaints annually. Following this review she decides whether any action can be taken to improve our services. The results of the review (i.e. any trends identified and action proposed) are documented.

We want to give you the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service, we have provided then you should inform us immediately, so that we can do our best to resolve the problem.

What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint:

The Legal Ombudsman can help you if we are unable to resolve your complaint ourselves. 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.

If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint and no more than **one year** from the date of act/omission; or no more than **one year** from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, please contact them.

Contact details Visit: <http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk>

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 9.00 to 17.00.

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help 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.

Visit their website to see how you can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

Further help If you require further assistance, please contact the Professional Ethics helpline.