

Complaints procedure

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need our clients to tell us about it. This will help improve our standards. Whenever possible, please raise any initial client care problems with the person acting on your case to give them the opportunity of resolving matters with you. Often, matters can be quickly resolved in this way.

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the service you have received, or about the bill, please contact the Supervisor with overall responsibility for your case on 0330 1337777 or by post to our offices at Vanguard Suite, Broadcasting House, Newport Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 5JA. The relevant Supervisor is named in the client care letter sent at the start of your case.

What will happen next?

1. Our Complaints Manager, who has overall responsibility for the investigation of your complaint, will make initial contact with you to acknowledge your complaint and confirm that an investigation has commenced. They will record the complaint in our central register and open a separate file for the complaint. We will do this within seven days of receiving the complaint.
2. Our Complaints Manager will assess whether they feel they have sufficient information to begin the complaints investigation and if not seek to speak to you to ascertain further information at this stage.
3. They will offer you the opportunity to speak to them in person, where practicable, to discuss the matter in the first instance.
4. We will acknowledge any reply to our acknowledgement letter and confirm what will happen next. You can expect to hear from us within seven days of your reply to us.
5. We will then start to investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps:
6. The Supervisor will review your case.
7. The Complaints Manager will ask the member of staff who acted for you in the matter to reply to the complaint within seven days of the complaint being received.
8. They will then examine their reply and the information in the complaint file. If necessary, they may also speak to them. This will take up to fourteen days from receiving their reply so within 21 days of receiving our original complaint.
9. You will then be invited to speak with the Complaints Manager to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint. They will do this within seven days.
10. Within seven days of the meeting, the Complaints Manager will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions they have agreed with you.
11. If you do not want a meeting, or it is not possible, we will send you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include our suggestions for resolving the matter. We will do this within seven days of completing the investigation.
12. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied you can contact us again. We will then arrange to review our decision. This will involve another Solicitor member of the Management Team reviewing the initial decision within 14 days.
13. We will let you know the result of the review within seven days of the end of the review. At this time we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
14. If you are still not satisfied with our handling of your complaint you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint. Contact details are as follows:

PO Box 6806

Wolverhampton

WV1 9WJ

☎ 0300 555 0333

✉ enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

🌐 www.legalombudsman.org.uk

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 **and** within the following timescales:

- a) Six years from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring, **or**
- b) Three years from the date you should reasonably have known there were grounds for complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman will not accept complaints where the act or date of awareness was before 6th October 2010.

If we have to change any of the above timescales we will let you know and explain why. Please note that in certain circumstances e.g. where the case is complex or where the fee earner is absent from work, the timescales outlined above may have to be reviewed. If this is the case then we will propose a revised timetable to you.

Raising concerns with our regulator

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) 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 find information about raising your concerns with the SRA at www.sra.org.uk in the 'For the public' section.

Complaints in relation to bills

The complaints procedure also includes complaints arising concerning our bill. There may also be a right to object to the bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974; and that if all, or part, of a bill remains unpaid, the firm may be entitled to charge interest. The Legal Ombudsman may not consider a complaint about a bill if you have applied to the Court for assessment of that bill.