

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We are committed to providing a quality legal service to all our clients. Consequently, it is essential, when something goes wrong or any client believes they have reason to complain, that we have effective procedures to assist, complete and come to an early resolution of the problem. Only by doing so can we hope to maintain the quality standards we have set, and improve them by learning from what may have gone wrong and what our clients tell us.

The Procedure

Although not essential, in making your complaint it would be helpful to us if you could provide details of your concerns in writing (if you have not already done so). If you would prefer not to have to do this, please arrange to see us and we will be pleased to take details from you.

What will happen next

1. We will register your complaint on our Register (for monitoring and management information purposes).

Timescale: Within 2 working days of receipt of complaint.

2. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, set out our understanding of it and request your confirmation or seek any necessary clarification. We will also confirm who will deal with your complaint.

Timescale: Within 3 working days of receipt of complaint.

3. We will then commence investigation of your complaint. This may involve one or more of the following steps:

- a) We will ask the case worker who acted for you to provide us with a response to your complaint within 5 days.

Timescale: Within 1 working day

- b) We will then examine the response and the file as against your complaint and, if necessary, speak to the case worker.

Timescale: Within 3 working days of receipt of the response and file

- c) The firm's client care partner will consider your complaint in the light of what the file reveals and the case worker's response.

Timescale: Within 7 working days

4. The firm's client care partner will then write to you with a detailed response and inviting you to meet with us to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint.

Timescale: Within a further 3 working days

5. If a meeting between us takes place we will write to you to confirm what took place and detailing any agreed solution that was reached.

Timescale: Within 2 working days of the meeting

6. If a meeting is declined or is for some reason impractical we will write to you again and endeavour to resolve the complaint to our mutual satisfaction.

Timescale: Within 5 working days of the meeting being declined

7. If, at a meeting or from your written reply to our detailed written response, you remain dissatisfied with what we have said and how we propose resolving your complaint, we will arrange for our decision to be reviewed. This may happen in one of the following ways: -

- a) Our own review of our handling of your complaint and why you are dissatisfied with our decision

Timescale: Within 5 working days

- b) By arranging for some one else in the firm who is entirely unconnected with the complaint to review how it was handled and the decision taken.

Timescale: Within 10 working days

- c) By asking our local law society or another local firm of solicitors to review our handling of, and the decision on, your complaint (if they are willing to do this).

Timescale: Within 10 working days

8. After the review has taken place you will be informed of the outcome. This will review our initial handling of the complaint and our decision on it

Timescale: Within 5 working days of the conclusion of the review.

9. If you still remain dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled and the decision on it, we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining why we consider our handling of it, and our decision (and of any review), were reasonable. We will also supply you with the address of the Legal Ombudsman, the solicitors' regulatory body to whom you may refer your complaint, once we have concluded our professional obligation to try to resolve it.

Timescale: Within 5 working days