

## **Complaints Procedure**

We want to give you the best possible service. However, if you are unhappy about any aspect of the service we provide or our fees, then you should inform us immediately, so that we can do our best to resolve the problem.

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 at this stage. If you would like to make a formal complaint, then you can read our full complaints procedure detailed below under the heading 'Our Complaints Policy'. Making a complaint will not affect how we handle your case and all complaints will be handled promptly, fairly and free of charge.

### **Our Complaints Policy**

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.

### **Our Complaints Procedure**

If you have a complaint, please contact Peter Sanders, our Client Care Partner on 01708 522223.

#### **What Will Happen Next?**

1. We will record your complaint and within five working days of receiving it, we will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain the details if necessary.
2. We will then start to investigate your complaint. This may involve one or more of the following steps:-
  - 2.1 We may ask the person who acted for you to reply to your complaint within ten working days after acknowledgement.
  - 2.2 We may examine their reply and the information in your file. We may then ask them for more information. This will take up to a further 10 working days from receiving their reply and the file.
  - 2.3 We may then invite you to meet Peter Sanders and/or Daniel Gearing to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. We will do this within ten working days of receiving all the details we need from the member of staff who acted for you.
  - 2.4 Within five working days of the meeting, we will write to you to confirm the outcome and any solutions we have agreed with you. If a meeting is not necessary, we will send you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include our suggestions for resolving the matter. You should receive this within five days of us completing our investigations and in any event no more than 40 days from receiving your initial letter of complaint.
3. If you are still not satisfied you can contact us again in writing within 10 days of receiving our last communication explaining what you are not happy with. We will then arrange to review our decision. On receiving your letter we will do one or more of following:-
  - 3.1 Peter Sanders will review his decision and write to you with his final views; or
  - 3.2 We will arrange for someone in the firm who has not been involved in your complaint to review it; or
  - 3.3 We will invite you to agree to independent mediation and explain the process to you.
  - 3.4 We will let you know the result of the review. This will be no more than 8 weeks from the date your complaint was received. At this time we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons. We will also provide you with further details of who to take your complaint to if you still remain unsatisfied.

If we have to change any of the timescales above (due to the complexity of your matter or absence of staff for example) we will let you know and explain why.

### **What do to 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 six years from the date of act/omission; or
- No more than three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

From 1 April 2023, the time limits for referring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman will be not later than:

- **one year** from the date of the act or omission being complained about; or
- **one year** from the date when the complainant should have realised that there was cause for complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman will retain the ability to apply Rule 4.7, which allows an Ombudsman to exercise discretion to extend the 1 year time limit for specific customers if, on the evidence, it was fair and reasonable to do so.

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

Contact details

Visit: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 9am to 5pm.

Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

### **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 [www.sra.org.uk](http://www.sra.org.uk)