

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

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 improve our standards.

Our Complaints Procedure

If at any point you become unhappy with the service we provide to you, then please inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve the problem for you

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within seven 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 Complaint Handling Director, David Wilde, who will review your matter and speak to the member of staff/fee earner who acted for you. If your complaint is against David Wilde, Adam Jewels will investigate your complaint.
3. Depending on the nature of the complaint you may be invited to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint, if it is considered that such a meeting is in the best interests of both parties and will facilitate a resolution. If appropriate you will be invited to attend a meeting within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
4. Should a meeting take place, then within seven days of the meeting, we will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions that have been agreed with you.
5. If a meeting is not considered appropriate then we will explain why we do not believe a meeting is necessary. In these circumstances we will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
6. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange to review the decision. Someone unconnected with the matter at the Firm will review.
7. 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.
8. If we are unable to resolve your complaint then you can have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman. As set out above if the you are not satisfied with how the complaint is dealt with then you can refer it to the Legal Ombudsman, which is the independent consumer focused ombudsman scheme that has been set up to deal with complaints by consumers about legal services. A consumer must complain to their lawyer first before referring the matter to the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman will allow lawyers 8 weeks to deal with the complaint. The client has up to six months from the time of the final response from the Firm to bring the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman

Changes to Complaints procedure from 1 April 2023

The Legal Ombudsman may be able to help you if we are unable to resolve your complaint ourselves. They will look at complaints independently and accessing the Ombudsman will not affect how we handle your case. Most 'consumer' clients (as opposed to large businesses) will be able to make use of the Ombudsman scheme however there are restrictions for some larger clients. Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will normally check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. You must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint from us. From 1 April 2023, the Legal Ombudsman also expects complaints to be made to them within 1 year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned (prior to 1 April 2023: 6 years) or within 1 year of you realising there was a concern (prior to 1 April 2023: 3 years). The requirement to refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final response to you remains the same

Visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

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

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

9. Where any complaint relates to our bill then you may also have a right to object to the bill by making a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman or by applying to the Court for an assessment of the bill under the Solicitors Act 1974 however, the Legal Ombudsman may not consider a complaint about our bill if you have applied to the Court for an assessment.
10. The EU Directive on Consumer Alternative Dispute Resolution (the ADR Directive) allows for certain Approved Bodies to mediate between you and our firm in an attempt to resolve the issues of your complaint if our own internal process has been unsuccessful.
We agree to use the services of ProMediate (www.promediate.co.uk) if both you and the Firm agree that this is an appropriate course of action to take.

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why. You will not incur any fees for any time spent in dealing with your complaint.

11. If we are unable to resolve the complaint and it relates to a contract that the firm has entered into with you online, or by other electronic means, for example client care letter and terms of business were emailed to you, you may also be able to submit your complaint to a certified Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provider in the UK via the EU Online 'ODR platform'. The ODR platform, is an interactive website offering a single point of entry for disputes between consumers and traders relating on online contracts. The ODR platform is available to consumer clients only. The website address for the ODR platform is <http://ec.europa.eu/odr>.
12. The firm will not charge for handling the complaint. The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge to the complainant. The ODR platform itself is free to use, but the ADR entity to which the complaint is transmitted may charge for its services. The ADR entity is responsible for informing all parties of the loss of its dispute resolution procedure.

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