

Client Feedback and Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a quality service to our clients. We value feedback because it helps us to continually improve our service. If you do not feel that you are receiving excellent client service, or you think something could be improved, please tell us. If we have fallen short of the high standards, we set for ourselves, we would like the opportunity to put things right.

What do I do if I have feedback or a complaint?

In the first instance, it may be helpful to discuss any feedback or concerns about our service with the lawyer dealing with your matter. If they cannot resolve your concern informally, or if the issue is of such a serious nature that you do not feel comfortable raising it with them, you may raise it with our Complaints Handling Director, David Wilde, as a complaint under this policy. If your complaint concerns David Wilde, it will be handled by Donna Taylor.

You may raise a complaint by email, telephone, in writing or by any other reasonable means. You do not have to use any particular wording or channel, and making a complaint will not affect how we handle your matter.

How do I raise a complaint under this policy?

It would help us if you could provide the following information, where possible:

- why you feel dissatisfied with the service you have received.
- how you would prefer to be contacted about your complaint.
- whether there is anything in particular you would like us to do to resolve your complaint; and
- whether your complaint includes concerns about how your personal data has been used or handled.

If you would prefer not to provide the details by email, please telephone or write to us so that we can agree the best way to understand and deal with your concerns.

What happens after I have made a complaint?

For general complaints, we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 7 days of receiving it.
- log your complaint on our central complaints register.
- investigate your concerns and, where appropriate, arrange a discussion with you to try to agree how the issues can be resolved within 21 days of receiving your complaint; and
- write to you within 28 days of receiving your complaint to confirm the outcome.

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to extend these timescales. If so, we will explain why and keep you informed. If your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction within 8 weeks of being made, we will write to you with information about your right, where applicable, to complain to the Legal Ombudsman and the relevant time limits and contact details.

Data protection complaints

If your complaint concerns how your personal data has been used or handled, we will:

- acknowledge your complaint within 30 days of receipt at the latest.
- where necessary, request reasonable proof of your identity and/or authority to complain on behalf of someone else.
- provide you with, or direct you to, our Privacy Policy if you have not already seen it;
- log your complaint on our central complaints register.
- take appropriate steps to investigate and respond to your complaint without undue delay.
- keep you informed of progress, particularly if the investigation takes longer than initially expected.

- confirm the outcome of our investigation without unjustifiable or excessive delay; and
- explain what we have done to resolve your complaint and, where appropriate, any action we have taken as a result.

The 30-day period for acknowledgement starts on the day after we receive the complaint. If the final day falls on a weekend or public holiday, the acknowledgement may be provided on the next working day.

What might the outcome of my complaint be?

We regret any dissatisfaction experienced by our clients and will apologise where our service has fallen below the standards we expect. Depending on the circumstances, we may also agree steps to put matters right, improve the service provided, reduce or refund charges where appropriate, or take action to reduce the risk of the issue happening again.

What if I remain dissatisfied?

If we are unable to resolve your complaint, you may be entitled to complain to the Legal Ombudsman about our service, including our charges. The Legal Ombudsman is independent, and the service is not available to every type of client. It will normally expect you to have given us the opportunity to resolve your complaint first.

Normally, you must refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- within six months of receiving our final written response to your complaint; and
- no more than one year from the date of the act or omission being complained about, or no more than one year from the date when you should reasonably have known that there was cause for complaint.

Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH | Telephone: 0300 555 0333 | Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk | Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Alternative dispute resolution

If our complaints procedure has been exhausted and we cannot settle your complaint, we will also provide you with the name and website address of an appropriate alternative dispute resolution (ADR) approved body which would be competent to deal with the complaint and tell you whether we agree to use that scheme.

Concerns about professional conduct

The Legal Ombudsman deals with concerns about the level of service received. The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) can help if you are concerned about our professional conduct. This could include matters such as dishonesty, taking or losing your money, or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or another characteristic.

Further information about reporting concerns to the SRA is available at: www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/

Complaints about the use of personal data

If your complaint concerns how your personal data has been used or handled and we have not been able to address it to your satisfaction, you may be able to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Further information is available at www.ico.org.uk. The ICO recommends raising a complaint with it within three months of your last meaningful contact with the organisation concerned.

Charges

We do not charge for handling complaints under this policy.