

Complaints handling procedure

Principle:

We aim to do our work in such a way that there is no cause for complaint. We appreciate that this ideal is not always achievable. We will ensure that complaints are handled promptly, fairly and effectively. This document sets out how we will achieve this.

How to complain:

If you want to make a complaint, please contact the person handling your work. If you would prefer not to, please contact their supervising partner or the Head of their Department. You can contact them in any way you wish. The contact details were provided in the client care letter sent to you at the beginning of the matter.

If you would prefer us to deal with your representative, please give us their name and contact details. If your complaint is about a particular individual, it will not be dealt with by that individual.

We ask that you provide us with full details of your complaint and say what you think we should do to put things right. Please also tell us the best way for us to contact you about the complaint.

How we deal with complaints:

When we receive a complaint, we will always try to deal with the matter right away by speaking with you. If you do not wish us to do so or if it is clear that a more detailed review of your case is needed, the rest of this procedure will apply.

When a formal complaint is made by you, we will confirm this in writing and also:

- a send you a copy of this complaints handling procedure;
- b tell you who will investigate the complaint;
- c set out details of the complaint that has been made.

We anticipate that this will take us up to five working days.

We will also give you a timescale for completing the investigation. However, if it will help to progress the investigation, the person dealing with your complaint will contact you for additional information or invite you to a meeting. We aim to give you a firm timescale for completing the investigation within five working days of receiving that additional information.

If the timescale for responding is to be exceeded the person dealing with the complaint will advise you, confirm the new timescale and explain the reason for the delay.

The person dealing with your complaint will investigate your complaint thoroughly and fairly. Having completed their investigation, they will write to you to set out this firm's response.

We will not charge you for investigating your complaint.

The result of the investigation:

If you do not accept the result of the investigation you are entitled to refer a complaint about the service you have received to the Legal Ombudsman (LeO).

Alternatively, you can put forward any further points you wish to make to us. The person dealing with your complaint will then consider them and reply to you. They will, if further consideration is necessary, provide you with a timescale for completing this.

You must usually refer your complaint to LeO within six months of our final written response to your complaint and within one year of the act or omission about which you are complaining (or no later than one year of you becoming aware of it).

Further details can be found on their website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Please note the LeO operates within certain rules that are available on their website at www.legalombudsman.org.uk. For example, the LeO will only consider complaints from individuals, small businesses, charities, clubs, societies, associations and trusts. In addition, LeO will only process certain types of complaint. You should also be aware the LeO may not deal with a complaint about a bill if you apply to the court for assessment of the bill.

The contact details for LeO are:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH
T: 0300 555 0333
E: enquires@legalombudsman.org.uk

NGT Lite: 18001 0300 555 0333
Minicom text phone: 18002 0300 555 0333

LeO's service is free to use.

If your complaint cannot be dealt with by LeO, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) may be able to assist you. The SRA website provides information on non-judicial resolution services available to you when you wish to complain about a solicitor. You can access this information by following this link: www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems.page.

The contact details for the SRA are:

Solicitors Regulation Authority
The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham
B1 1RN