

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Excellent client care is an integral part of the standard of service we aim to provide.

However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service we have provided, please do tell us as soon as possible. This will enable us to try to resolve the problem and help us to improve our standards.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, then you can read our full complaints procedure below. We aim to treat each complaint in a prompt, fair manner and reach a resolution amicably. Making a complaint will not affect how we handle your case.

### **Raising a complaint**

#### **Step 1**

The first step is to either talk to, or write to, the person who is dealing with your matter. We will try to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction within seven (7) working days.

#### **Step 2**

If that person is not available, or if you would prefer to approach someone else, or if you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved under Step 1, please write to Elizabeth Sherborne, the Firm's Client Relationship Partner who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with complaints. Please specify as fully as possible the nature of your complaint. You may contact Elizabeth Sherborne by post at the Firm's office at 4 Royal Crescent, Cheltenham, GL50 3DA.

### **What happens next**

We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint within seven (7) working days. We may at that stage ask you to confirm or explain any details.

We will record your complaint on our central register and open a file for your complaint. The Client Relationship Partner will review the matter file and decide whether to deal with any service issues or whether it requires review by an independent third party.

We will aim to be in a position to write to you in detail with our findings within twenty-one (21) days of our acknowledgment of your complaint. However, where that is not possible because, for example, further enquiries need to be made, we will write to you to explain the stage the investigation has reached and how soon we expect to be able to provide a full reply. Under the procedures set out by the Legal Ombudsman, there is an overriding time of eight weeks for the full conclusion of any complaint.

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### **Conclusion of complaint process**

At the conclusion of the complaint and if you are not satisfied with our handling of the complaint, you have the right to ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman deals with service complaints from members of the public and very small businesses, charities, clubs and trusts. Please contact the Legal Ombudsman direct or refer to its website for more information on whether you can use its service. Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be:

- 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.

Please contact the Legal Ombudsman for more information on the time scales for making a complaint on the contact details below:

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 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

### **Complaints about our fees**

If you have a complaint about our fees, as well as the procedure set out above, you may also have the right to apply to the court for an assessment of the bill (under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974), although if all or part of a bill remains unpaid you may have to pay interest. The Legal Ombudsman may not deal with a complaint about a bill if the client has applied to the court for assessment of that bill.

### **The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA)**

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you 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.

You can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority by contacting them on:

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

Call: 0370 606 2555 between 8.00am to 6.00pm (inside the UK) and 0044 0121 329 6800 (international callers)

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