

Complaints Handling Policy

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 us with the details.

What will happen next?

- We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within 7 days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
- We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to our designated complaints person, Peter Docherty, who is a Solicitor and Director/Partner with the firm. He will review your file and speak to the member of staff who acted for you. [In the event that the complaint relates to a matter involving Peter Docherty the complaint will be investigated by another Director/Partner and member of the management team at the firm who will write to you accordingly].
- Where necessary, Peter Docherty will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. He will do this within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
- Within five days of the meeting, Peter Docherty will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he has agreed with you.
- If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, Peter Docherty will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including his suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
- At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will, if possible, arrange for someone unconnected with the matter at the firm or, if we both agree, another local solicitor or someone trained in mediation to review the decision.
- 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.
- If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.
- We have eight weeks to consider your complaint. If we have not resolved it within this time, you may complain to the Legal Ombudsman.

[NB. The term days refers to working days].

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman (LeO)

Who can make a complaint to LeO?

Members of the public who have a problem with their legal service provider can complain to LeO. The Legal Ombudsman prefers that you approach them directly, but you can ask a friend, relative or anyone else to get in touch for you. If you use another service provider to complain to LeO, the service provider may charge you a fee. If you want another person to act on your behalf, you will need to advise LeO that the person has your permission to speak to the Legal Ombudsman directly.

You can also complain if you are, or represent, any of the following:

- (a) A business or enterprise that was a micro-enterprise when you made a complaint to the service provider;
- (b) a charity with an annual income net of tax of less than £1 million when you made a complaint to the service provider;
- (c) a club, association or organisation, the affairs of which are managed by its members or a committee or committees of its members, that had an annual income net of tax of less than £1 million when you made a complaint to the service provider;
- (d) a trustee of a trust that had an asset value of less than £1 million when you made a complaint to the service provider;
- (e) a personal representative or a beneficiary of an estate of a person who, before he/she died, had not made the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.

For (e) above the condition is that the services to which the complaint relates were provided by the service provider to a person who has subsequently died; AND had not, by his or her death, already referred the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.

The Legal Ombudsman cannot help if you have a disagreement with another beneficiary or executor.

Timescale for complaining to LeO:

The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within one year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within one year of you realising there was a concern. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final decision to you.

If your complaint does not meet all of these time limits LeO may not be able to investigate it.

Contact details for the Legal Ombudsman:

P O Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

Telephone: 0300 555 0333 (from 8.30am to 5.30pm)
By minicom on: 0300 555 1777
From overseas: +44 121 245 3050

E-mail: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Alternative dispute resolution:

Alternative complaints bodies, such as ProMediate UK Ltd (www.promediate.co.uk) exist and are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and this firm wish to use such a scheme. We do not usually agree to use schemes such as those operated by ProMediate UK Ltd as we believe the Legal Ombudsman is better equipped to resolve complaints against legal firms.

Note: If we entered into a contract for the provision of services with you online you may also be entitled to use the EU Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Platform at: <http://ec.europa.eu/odr> to assist in resolving matters. The Platform will direct you to various Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) specialists who are competent to deal with complaints about legal service [e.g. www.small-claims-mediation.co.uk] however we should point out that this firm does not ordinarily use such schemes and relies upon the services of the Legal Ombudsman to resolve such matters.

Complaints about our professional conduct or behaviour:

Our regulatory body, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour. This could be for concerns that you may have including dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

We are bound by various professional rules of conduct which can be viewed at www.sra.org.uk. You can also see more information about the help the SRA can give to you here:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/reportsolicitor.page>

Contact Details for Solicitors Regulation Authority:

Address: The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN
Telephone: 0370 606 2555
Email: report@sra.org.uk
Website: www.sra.org.uk