



## 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 our clients to tell us about it. This will help improve our standards. Whenever possible, please raise any initial client care problems with the person acting on your case to give them the opportunity of resolving matters with you. Often, matters can be quickly resolved in this way.

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the service you have received, or about the bill, please contact us by post to our office at 26 Front Street, Moor chambers, Framwellgate Moor, Durham, DH1 5EJ. We have a procedure in place which details how we handle complaints as follows:

### Our Procedures

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within three days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
2. We will investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to Michelle Coulson, who will review your matter file and speak to the member of staff who acted for you.
3. Michelle Coulson will then invite you in to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. She will do this within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
4. Within three days of that meeting, she will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions she has agreed with you.
5. If you do not want a meeting, or it is not possible, you will be sent a detailed written reply to you complaint, including the 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 for another senior solicitor within the firm to review the decision.
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 you are still not satisfied with our handling of your complaint you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint. Contact details are as follows:

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Address:   | PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ   |
| Telephone: | 0300 555 0333  |
| Email:     | <a href="mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk">enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk</a> |
| Website:   | <a href="http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk">www.legalombudsman.org.uk</a>             |

If you are not satisfied with our handling of your complaint you can ask the Legal Ombudsman at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ telephone number 0300 555 0333 website [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk) to consider the complaint. Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint or within six years of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring (or if outside of this period, within three years of when you should reasonably have been aware of it).

### **Raising concerns with our regulator**

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) can help 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 find information about raising your concerns with the SRA at [www.sra.org.uk](http://www.sra.org.uk) in the 'For the public' section.

Alternative complaints bodies (such as ProMediate [www.promediate.co.uk](http://www.promediate.co.uk)) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal service should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme.

We would hope that this does not become necessary and that we can resolve matters between ourselves. If this is not the case however, we would be happy to provide you with the necessary information to make such a complaint.

If we have to change any of the above timescales we will let you know and explain why.

The complaints procedure also includes complaints arising concerning our billing. There may also be a right to object to the bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974; and that if all, or part, of a bill remains unpaid, the firm may be entitled to charge interest.