

Complaints Handling Procedure

We very much regret any circumstances which may lead to a client having reason to complain about the services provided on their behalf by the firm. However, we do recognise that from time to time complaints are necessary and we are committed to attempting to resolve such complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible.

This procedure sets out the steps that we would like you to take to bring the complaint to our attention and the action that we will take to respond to the complaint.

The Procedure

How do I make a complaint?

Although not essential in making your complaint, it would be helpful if you could provide details of your concerns in writing (if you have not already done so).

To help us to understand your complaint, and in order that we do not miss anything, please tell us:

- your full name and contact details
- what you think we have got wrong
- what you hope to achieve as a result of your complaint, and
- your file reference number (if you have it)

If you require any help in making your complaint we will try to help you.

Your complaint should be addressed to Mrs Natalie Thomas who is the Firm's Risk and Compliance Partner. Mrs Thomas and her colleague, Miss Claire Hill, Partner are responsible for the handling of client complaints and will retain overall responsibility. Mrs Thomas and Miss Hill work at the Firm's Lincoln office at Sibthorp House, 351-355 High Street, Lincoln, LN5 7BN.

If you would prefer to make your complaint in person or by telephone, please arrange to see the Partner in charge of the department/branch office concerned, who will be pleased to take details from you. Alternatively, please contact Mrs Thomas.

The steps set out below will usually be undertaken by Mrs Thomas or Miss Hill however, may be undertaken by another person in the Firm as appointed by Mrs Thomas, if appropriate.

How will you deal with my complaint?

We will record your complaint centrally.

We will write to you within three working days acknowledging your complaint and enclosing a copy of this Policy.

We will investigate your complaint. This will usually involve:

- reviewing your complaint

- reviewing your file(s) and other relevant documents, and
- speaking with the person who dealt with your matter

We may also need to ask you for further information or documents. If so, we will ask you to provide the information within a specific period of time.

We will update you on the progress of your complaint at appropriate times.

We may also, if appropriate, invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. You do not have to attend if you do not wish to or if you are unable to. We will be happy to discuss the matter with you on the telephone.

We will write to you at the end of our investigation to tell you what we have done and what we propose to do to resolve your complaint. We have a period of 8 weeks in which to provide a formal response to your complaint.

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our complaints handling procedure, please first let us know and we will review the matter.

If you are still unhappy you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to look into your complaint. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman:

- by post at PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH
- by telephone: 0300 555 0333, or
- by email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

You must refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final written response to you. 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. Further details are available on the website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk.

What will it cost?

We will not charge you for handling your complaint.

Please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on the matter, and all or some of the bill is not paid, we may be entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding.

The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority

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.

Further information is available at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/>