

Complaints procedure

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| Owner | Head of Risk and Compliance | Authoriser | Head of Best Practice Group |

Our aim in dealing with your complaint

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, as we take all complaints very seriously. It is important to us to learn if the level of our service does not meet your reasonable expectations so that we can deal with your complaint and this will help us to improve and maintain our standards.

The firm's Risk Partner (Nigel Puddicombe) has overall responsibility for complaints. He is assisted by the firm's Head of Risk and Compliance (Claire Ainley).

Our complaints handling procedure

If you have a complaint, please contact us with the details. As set out below, we have a maximum of eight weeks to consider and respond to your complaint. If we have not resolved it within this time, you may complain to the Legal Ombudsman or the Solicitors Regulation Authority (**SRA**), depending on the nature of your complaint. Refer to paragraph 8 below for information about how and when to make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman or the SRA.

What will happen next?

- 1 We will send you a letter or an email acknowledging receipt of your complaint within five working days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
- 2 Nigel Puddicombe or Claire Ainley will then start the investigation of your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to the supervising partner who will review your file and speak to the person who acts or acted for you. If your complaint is about the supervising partner, the Risk Partner (or if absent, the Head of Risk and Compliance) will review your file and speak to the person who acts or acted for you.
- 3 In either case, the partner dealing with your complaint will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. S/he will do this within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
- 4 If you attend a meeting, then within seven days of the meeting, the partner dealing with your complaint will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions s/he has agreed with you.
- 5 If you do not want a meeting or it does not take place for some other reason, the partner dealing with your complaint will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including his / her suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.

6 If on receipt of this letter you believe that your complaint is still not fully resolved, you should contact the Risk Partner again. We will arrange for the Risk Partner or the Head of Risk and Compliance to review the earlier decision. You can, of course, ask to meet that person to explain your concern(s).

7 S/he will write to you within 14 days of receiving your request for a review or any further meeting with you (if later), confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

8 If you are still not satisfied, you may complain to either the Legal Ombudsman or the SRA.

If your complaint is about the service we have provided, you may contact the Legal Ombudsman. The address to contact is PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ.

The Legal Ombudsman will consider complaints, if they are referred within six years of the date a problem occurs which gives rise to a complaint, or within three years of the date you become aware of the problem (if this is later).

Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman (www.legalombudsman.org.uk) within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint. For further information, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

If your complaint is about the way in which we have provided our services to you, or if you have a concern about our professional conduct, you can raise your concerns at any time with the SRA (<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page>). The telephone number to contact is 0370 606 2555.

Review of this policy

This policy is subject to the Firm's *Quality documents standard* and is reviewed annually.