

Complaints Handling Procedure

This Complaints Handling Procedure tells you how we will deal with your complaint and how long it is likely to take. It also provides important information about what you can do if you are not happy with the way in which we are dealing with your complaint, or about our final decision. Our Complaints Policy contains further information about what you can expect from us when you make a complaint.

Designated Complaints Handler

If you have any concerns about our service, our work, or our charges, you should discuss these first with the individual who has day-to-day control of your matter.

If this person cannot satisfactorily address your concerns and you wish to make a complaint, please contact our Designated Complaints Manager, Andrew McBirnie.

You can write to Andrew at St Mary's Court, Lowgate, Hull HU1 1YG or send an Email to Andrew.mcbirnie@lockings.co.uk. Andrew may investigate your complaint himself or may delegate this to another senior manager.

Step One: Acknowledging your Complaint

Within two working days of receiving your complaint, your complaint will be recorded in our Complaints Register and a separate file will be opened in which we will store any correspondence and other documents relating to your complaint. Within two working days we will also send you a letter acknowledging your complaint.

Step Two: Investigating your Complaint

Within five working days of receiving your complaint, we will review your file(s) and any other relevant documentation and send you a letter telling you how we propose to deal with your complaint.

Examples of what we might say in this letter are as follows:

- If we think it appropriate, we may ask to meet with you to discuss things face-to-face but there is no obligation for you to do so
- If your complaint is straightforward we might make suggestions as to how we can put things right or we may offer you some form of redress;
- If your complaint is more complicated we might ask you to confirm, explain or clarify any issues or to indicate the timescale we will need to fully investigate and respond;

In all cases we will issue a final written response to your complaint fully setting out our views on the situation and if appropriate making suggestions as to how we can put things right and to confirm any offer of redress that we believe to be appropriate.

Whichever form our investigation takes, we will aim to give you our final decision within six weeks of receiving your complaint (or sooner if possible).

Step Three: Appealing against our Final Decision

If you are not satisfied with our final decision, please let us know and let us have any further information or comments you wish to make and we will review our decision in light of that information.

We will aim to let you know the result of any review within five working days of receiving your request or will let you know within that period when we expect to be able to respond.

Step Four: The Legal Ombudsman

If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman who investigate complaints about service issues with lawyers.

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 response to you under our internal complaints handling procedure.

Ordinarily, you cannot use the Legal Ombudsman unless you have first attempted to resolve your complaint using our internal Complaints Handling procedure, but you will be able to contact the Legal Ombudsman if:

- we haven't resolved the complaint to your satisfaction within eight weeks of you first making the complaint to us.
- The Legal Ombudsman decides that there are exceptional reasons why the Legal Ombudsman should consider your complaint sooner, or without you having to use our internal Complaints Handling Procedure first; or
- The Legal Ombudsman considers that your complaint cannot be resolved using our internal Complaints Handling Procedure because the relationship between you and us has broken down irretrievably.

If you wish to make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman you must be one of the following:

- An individual;
- A micro-enterprise as defined in European Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 (broadly, an enterprise with fewer than 10 staff and a turnover or balance sheet value not exceeding €2 million);
- A charity with an annual income less than £1 million;
- A club, association or society with an annual income less than £1 million;
- A trustee of a trust with a net asset value less than £1 million; or
- A personal representative or the beneficiary of an estate of a person who before they died, had not referred the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.

If you are not, you should be aware that you can only obtain redress by using our Complaints Handling Procedure or by mediation or arbitration, or by taking action through the Courts.

Legal Ombudsman Contact Details

Address: PO Box 6167, Slough SL1 0EH
Telephone: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative complaints bodies such as mediation services exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme.

We will not automatically agree to use mediation to seek to resolve your complaint.

Solicitors Regulatory Authority

If your complaint does not relate to poor service but you believe the firm has breached one of the Solicitors Regulatory Authority Principles or if the firm has closed and you believe the firm owes you money, then you may complain to the Solicitors Regulatory Authority.

Solicitors Regulatory Authority Contact Details

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