



bowcock cuerden LLP

Commercial Lawyers and Private Client Team

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Our objective

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. If anything goes wrong, please tell us about it, as this will help us to improve our standards.

Our complaints procedure

If you have a complaint, please contact us with the details. Write to the person dealing with your matter, or alternatively (if you prefer) either to their supervisor named in the “client care” letter initially sent to you or, if there is no named supervisor, to our Managing Director, Lesley Smith.

What will happen next?

1. Within three days of our receiving the complaint, we will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of it and enclosing a copy of this procedure.
 2. We will then investigate your complaint. All solicitors' firms are required to appoint a Complaints Director. Our Complaints Director is Carina Pennant-Williams. Unless she has in any way already been involved in the matter she will carry out the investigation, which will involve her reviewing the file and discussing the matter with the person who has been dealing with it. If Carina Pennant-Williams is unable for any reason to deal with the matter then it will be dealt with by Lesley Smith.
 3. Carina Pennant-Williams (or alternatively Lesley Smith) will then either:-
 - 3.1 within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter, send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including any relevant suggestions for resolving the matter; or
 - 3.2 invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint, within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter (unless this is not possible in which case she or he will write to you to explain why and to set an alternative timescale). Within three days of the meeting, she or he will write to you to confirm what took place, and any solutions which were agreed with you.
- If you have any preference between these two alternatives than please let us know.
4. If you are still not satisfied you should contact us again and we will arrange for the Managing Director, Lesley Smith (or, if he has already been involved in the matter, David Thorp, another Director), to review the decision.

We will then 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.



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5. If your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction within eight weeks, you will be informed, in writing:
 - of your right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman about a service complaint (if the complaint is from an individual, small business, charity, club, society, association or trust with a turnover of less than £1 million), the time frame for doing so and full details of how to contact the Legal Ombudsman
 - of your right to request an assessment of costs (if relevant) regardless of turnover
 - whether there is an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) body that you could choose to use.

Legal Ombudsman

6. The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted at P.O. Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ. Email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk or telephone 0300 555 0333 between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm

The Legal Ombudsman will check that you have first tried to resolve your complaint with us, and will not deal with the matter if you have not.

There are time limits for bringing a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, linked to the date of the act or omission giving rise to a complaint or the date on which you should reasonably have known there were grounds for a complaint. The relevant time limits are set out in the version of the Legal Ombudsman's Scheme Rules in force from time to time and may only be extended by the Legal Ombudsman in exceptional circumstances. If you wish to bring a complaint to him, you should refer to the version which is in force at the time of your complaint. The Rules can be accessed at:

<https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/information-centre/corporate-publications/scheme-rules>

You must make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- (i) Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint, and
- (ii) No more than one year from the date of act/omission: or
- (iii) No more than one year from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

Solicitors Regulation Authority

7. The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help if you are concerned about a solicitor's behaviour, for example if there are allegations of dishonesty, taking your money or discrimination.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can be contacted at Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN (telephone 0370 606 2555).