

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS

Our complaints policy

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 and you have a right to complain. This will help us to improve our standards.

If you are a private client, you have the right to object to your bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. If all or part of the bill remains unpaid then we are entitled to charge interest at the applicable judgment rate.

Our complaints procedure

If you have a complaint, please contact us with the details in writing if possible so we are clear about the nature of and content of the complaint. You can contact the fee earner with conduct of your case, or Nicola Mackintosh who is the Sole Principal of the firm.

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain further any aspect which may be unclear. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. We will write to you within 7 days of us receiving your complaint confirming that we will respond to your complaint within a further 14 days.
2. We will record your complaint in our central register and open a separate file for your complaint. We will do this within 7 days of receiving your complaint.
3. We will then start to investigate your complaint. This would normally involve the following steps:
 - We will pass your complaint to Nicola Mackintosh our client care partner who will ask the member of staff who acted for you to respond to your complaint to her within 14 days thereafter.
 - She will then examine the complaint, their reply and the information in your file and, if necessary she may also speak to them.
 - She will write to you with the outcome of the investigation. This will usually be within 21 days of receipt of your complaint but may be longer in more complex cases (if so we will write to you informing you of any change to the timescale).
4. If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome, you may write to us within 7 days of receipt of our response to request a meeting with Nicola Mackintosh to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. She will arrange a meeting within 7 days of receiving your request, or if this is not possible such further period as is practicable.

5. Within 7 days of any meeting Nicola Mackintosh will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions she has agreed with you and proposals for resolving the dispute.
6. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied please write to us within 7 days setting out details of the outstanding matter and why our proposals are not satisfactory. We will then arrange to review our decision and write to you within 7 days.
7. If you are still dissatisfied:-
 - Another solicitor in the firm or the firm's manager will review the file decision within 14 days and write to you with the outcome within the time period set out below.
 - If the complaint is about work undertaken by Nicola Mackintosh we will ask our local Law Society or another firm of solicitors to review your complaint within 28 days if possible and if a longer period we will write to inform you.
 - We may invite you to agree to independent mediation. We will let you know how long this process will take. This will involve a cost so we will need your agreement to this course of action and payment for the mediator's fees in advance. However, for very serious cases this may be advisable and may be a constructive way of seeking to resolve your complaint.
8. We will let you know the result of the review within 14 days of end of the review. At this time we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons. We will also give you the name and address of our consumer complaints service. If you are still not satisfied you can contact them about your complaint.
9. If we have to change any of the time scales above we will let you know and explain why.
10. If you remain dissatisfied you have a right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman. You also have a right to complain to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the outcome of our complaints procedure and investigations within 8 weeks of completion of our internal complaints process. The Ombudsman has indicated that he will usually be willing to investigate any complaint made within 6 months of the final outcome of our internal complaints process. For further information, The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted as follows:

Legal Ombudsman,
PO Box 6806,
Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ
Telephone 0300 555 0333
www.legalombudsman.org.uk
enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.