**COMPLAINTS POLICY**

We are committed to providing a high quality service to all of our clients. We take complaints very seriously and will aim to deal with them as soon as possible. Where possible we will try to resolve concerns informally. If you are unhappy with our services provided or any bill at first instance please contact the person dealing with your matter or the Supervising Director responsible for your work (detailed in our client care correspondence). Other than in certain limited circumstances our complaints handling procedure is reserved for clients of the firm. Unless we have provided legal services to you, you will not be able to complain through this procedure.

**The Formal Complaints Procedure**:

Where there is a formal complaint the following will take place:-

1. Acknowledgement: You will be sent a letter acknowledging your complaint (normally within 5 working days of receipt) and asking you to confirm or explain the details of your complaint in full. The letter will set out the next steps and the time in which we request you to provide the full details. The firm will let you know the name of the person dealing with complaint, and the expected time it will take to investigate the matter which is normally within 8 weeks.
2. The firm will record the complaint in our central register and open a separate file for the complaint. This will be done within 3 working days of receiving the complaint.
3. Investigation: We will review the file, discuss the concerns with the lawyer who acted for you and may invite you to meet the Director/Manager in charge of the investigation into your Complaint in order to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint.
4. Within 2 working days of any meeting with you we will write to confirm what took place, and any suggestions we have agreed with you.
5. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, the Director will send a detailed reply to the complaint. This will include his suggestions for resolving the matter and he will do this within 5 days of completing his/her investigation.
6. If you are not happy with the report you can appeal against the findings and the complaint will be transferred to another Director to review. We will set out in a letter the time frame that we will need to carry out the review. It will normally be within 4 weeks from the date the review is requested by you.
7. We will let you know the results of the review within 5 working days of the end of the review. At this time, the firm will write to you confirming the final position on the complaint and explaining the reasons. If you are still not satisfied with the review please write to us again and the firm will provide the name and address of the Legal Ombudsman within 7 days of receipt of your letter.
8. The time scales are best practice time scales and the firm will endeavour to maintain all of the time scales. However, there will be occasions where the time scales will have to be altered particularly where there are complex issues or more than one member of staff involved. You will be notified of the revised time scales.

Once you have received a final response you may have the right to take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. You should raise your complaint with them within 6 months of our final response to you.

The Legal Ombudsman can accept a complaint within:-

1. 6 years from the date of act/omission or
2. 3 years from when you should reasonably have known there were grounds for Complaint - although :
3. They will not accept complaints where the act/omission or date of awareness was before the 6th October, 2010.

The contact details of the Legal Ombudsman are:

The Legal Ombudsman P. O. Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ. Email – enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk Telephone: 0300 555 0333 (calls are charged at local rate and will be recorded). If you are calling from overseas, please call +44 121-245-3050.

Please note the Legal Ombudsman may not deal with a complaint about a bill if you have applied to the Court for assessment of that bill. Further information can be obtained from their website at: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

There are alternative complaints bodies that exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services. In our experience, the Legal Ombudsman’s scheme is the most suitable to deal with any complaints about legal services, but please let us know if you would like us to consider using an alternative scheme.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour. You can raise your concerns with the SRA and further information can be obtained from their website.

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