

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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. This will help us improve our standards. We deal with all complaints fairly, promptly and at no extra costs to you.

What is a complaint?

A report by a client that their expectations of what they consider to be a good service have not been met.

Making a complaint

You can register a complaint with the person dealing with your matter or their Supervisor, details of which are given in your Client Care Letter.

In the first instance, we'd prefer if you write to us with full details of your complaint so that we have a good understanding of the issues being highlighted.

Investigating the complaint

- (1) We will acknowledge the complaint within seven days which allows for any postal delays and notify you who will be handling your complaint.
- (2) We will record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint. We will conduct a full investigation and an independent review of the matter.
- (3) We aim to respond in full within 28 days. However, if the complaint is of a more complex nature, we will require more time, but we will let the complainant know when they will receive a full response. We may also invite you to meet with the Supervisor to gather more information and resolve the matter.
- (4) We will reply to you usually in writing following the outcome of the review of the complaints investigated.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, or the way the complaint has been handled, you may write to the Client Care Director, Phil May insert pmay@apexlaw.co.uk who will make such further investigations as are necessary.

We would generally aim to do this within 14 days. This will happen in one of the following ways-

- The Supervisor will review his own decision.
- Client Care Director will review your complaint within 14 days.

The Client Care Director will inform you of the conclusions and any alternative proposals to resolve the complaint, usually within 28 days.

If still unresolved at this stage, you may take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman or, in accordance with the Alternative Dispute Resolution Regulations to an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Scheme Provider. We will issue a final letter advising you of this.

Legal Ombudsman

The Legal Ombudsman is the independent body established by the Office for Legal Complaints under the Legal Services Act 2007 to deal with complaints against Solicitors.

The Legal Ombudsman may:

- Investigate the quality of professional service supplied by a solicitor to a client.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has breached rules of professional conduct.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has unreasonably refused to supply a professional service to a prospective client.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has persistently or unreasonably offered a professional service that the client does not want.

Before it will consider a complaint the Legal Ombudsman generally requires that the firm's internal Complaints Procedure (outlined above) has been exhausted. If the Legal Ombudsman is satisfied that the firm's proposals for resolving a complaint are reasonable, it may decline to investigate further. You will have to bring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of receiving a final response from us about your complaint. The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within a year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within a year of your realising there was a concern.

The Legal Ombudsman's address and contact details are:

PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH; telephone, 0300 555 0333; website, www.legalombudsman.org.uk; or email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

The Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

You can raise your concerns with the <https://www.sra.org.uk/>

Alternative Dispute Resolution Schemes

Alternative complaints bodies such as ProMediate exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme. However, we don't currently agree to use this Alternative Dispute Resolution service in view of the availability of the independent Legal Ombudsman Service established under the Legal Services Act 2007. We are bound by our Regulatory Code to comply with the Legal Ombudsman.

CONTRACTS ENTERED INTO ONLINE

If we are unable to resolve your complaint which relates to a contract entered into online, you may contact the Online Dispute Resolution providers by accessing the following link <http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/odr>