

# NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICE

SOLICITORS

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need our clients to tell us about it. This will help improve our standards. Whenever possible, please raise any initial client care problems with the person acting on your case to give them the opportunity of resolving matters with you. Often, matters can be quickly resolved in this way.

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the service you have received, or about the bill, please write or email us with the details to the office dealing with your matter. Contact details can be found on our website.

## Our Procedure

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint within 8 weeks from receiving your initial letter. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. You can expect to receive our letter within five working days of us receiving your complaint.
2. We will record your complaint in our central register.
3. We will then start to investigate your complaint.
4. This will normally involve the following steps:
  - We will pass your complaint to our Complaints Manager within five working days.
  - The Complaints Manager will then reply to your complaint within ten working days. In case of complex or exceptional circumstances in your complaint we will aim to reply within fourteen working days and you will be notified in writing of the additional investigation time required.
5. If you are still dissatisfied, the Complaints Manager will then, if necessary, invite you to meet him/her in person or over the phone to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. He/she will do this within three working days and will then write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions agreed with you within five working days of the meeting.
6. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied you should contact us again in writing within five working days from our initial response to your complaint and we will arrange for a Director within the firm to review the decision. Should we not hear back from you within this time we will consider the complaint resolved.
7. If your complaint is escalated to a Director of the firm to review the decision, we will write to you within 14 days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
8. If you feel that we were unable to satisfactorily resolve the problem you have the right to take the matter to the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint. The Legal Ombudsman will usually ask if you have already made a formal complaint to us. The Legal Ombudsman contact details are as follows:

The Legal Ombudsman  
PO Box 6806  
Wolverhampton  
WV1 9WJ  
☎ 0300 555 0333  
✉ [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)  
🌐 [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

You will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint **and** within the following timescales:

- Six years from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring, **or**
  - Three years from the date you should reasonably have known there were grounds for complaint.
9. If we have to change any of the above timescales, we will let you know and explain why.
  10. The complaints procedure also includes complaints arising concerning our invoices.

We hope that you find the charges on your invoice fair and reasonable. If you have any concerns about our charges please raise your concerns with us in first instance and we will review the charges and contact you again to try and resolve the matter.

If your concern remains unresolved, you can refer to the Legal Ombudsman for free independent review. You must do so within six months of our final determination.

You might also have a right to have our charges reviewed by applying to the Court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. The Court will charge you a fee for the application. If you apply within 28 days from the delivery of our invoice, your right to a review is unconditional. After 28 days, the Court can impose conditions. After one year from delivery of our invoice, you will lose the right to apply. You must obtain independent legal advice in these proceedings, as we cannot represent you.

Similarly, if all, or part, of an invoice remains unpaid, the firm may be entitled to charge interest. We can charge interest on unpaid invoices, currently at 8% annually, starting from 7 days after delivery of the invoice until the invoice is paid in full. This applies both before and after judgment and we are allowed to do this under Article 5 of the Remuneration Order 2009.