

NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICE

SOLICITORS

Complaints Handling Policy & Procedure

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 the Complaints Manager, Maria Puglisi at Juxon House, 100 St Paul's Churchyard, London EC4M 8BU maria.puglisi@nationallegalservice.co.uk Tel: 0203 601 5051.

Our Procedure

1. The Complaints Manager will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint. You can expect to receive the letter within five working days of us receiving your complaint.
2. The Complaints Manager will record your complaint in our central register and will then start to investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps:
 - The Complaints Manager will be passed your complaint within five working days.
 - She will then reply to your complaint within fifteen working days.
 - In case of complex or exceptional circumstances in your complaint we will aim to reply within twenty working days and you will be notified in writing of the additional investigation time required.
3. If you are still dissatisfied, the Complaints Manager will then, if necessary, invite you to meet her in person or over the phone to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. She will do this within five 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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

 www.legalombudsman.org.uk

7. Normally, 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. However, the Legal Ombudsman will not accept complaints where the act or date of awareness was before 6th October 2010.
8. If we have to change any of the above timescales, we will let you know and explain why.
9. Alternative complaints bodies (such as ProMediate and Small Claims Mediation) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm consent to use such a scheme. In the event that you wish to use an alternative complaint body you should advise us and we will then state if we agree.
10. The complaints procedure also includes complaints arising concerning our bill. There may also be a right to object to the bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974; and that if all, or part, of a bill remains unpaid, the firm may be entitled to charge interest.