

## **4.2.1. CLIENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **Our Complaints Policy**

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong or we fall short of your expectations, we would like you to tell us so that we can put things right for you. This will also help us to improve our service standards in the future.

### **Our Complaints Procedure**

If you have a complaint, contact us with the details.

### **Who should you contact?**

In the first instance, you should contact the person who has been dealing with your matter. S/he will try hard to address your concerns and agree with you a solution and the best way forward.

If you are not happy after this stage or you would rather not contact the person dealing with your matter about your concerns or complaint, you should contact Clive Roberts, the Managing Director and the person nominated to deal with all matters concerned with service quality and client complaints. If your complaint is about Clive Roberts, you should contact his Co-Director Leslie Hirst.

### **What will happen next?**

1. Within 3 working days of the receipt of your complaint, we will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint, possibly asking you to confirm or explain the details set out in our letter.

There may be certain circumstances that do not allow us to acknowledge receipt of your complaints within 3 working days. We will explain those circumstances when we do acknowledge. It is likely that you will receive this copy of our complaints handling procedure at the time we acknowledge your complaint.

2. Complaints received by us are dealt with by someone other than the person with the day-to-day responsibility for your work are treated as formal and are therefore, subject to central control by Clive Roberts.
3. The acknowledgement letter we send to you will provide information about how your complaint will be resolved including:
  - The name of the person dealing with your complaint
  - The process the person named above will go through to investigate your complaint including as appropriate, one or more of the following options:
    - A request for you to provide confirmation of the circumstances of your complaint.

- Invitation to a meeting to discuss your complaint – you may refuse this invitation but it may be helpful in establishing facts and finding an acceptable resolution for you.
- Meeting with the lawyer concerned to discuss your complaints
- Inspection of the file of papers relating to your matter
- Timetable of events leading to resolution of your complaint
- We will carry out these investigations with a view to responding, with our findings and suggestions for a resolution of the issues arising, within 21 working days.
- There may be circumstances where it is not possible to respond fully to you within 21 working days. We will provide you with the reasons for this together with a revised time frame for our response.
- All matters connected with your complaint will be recorded centrally for future review to ensure that it was been handled effectively and efficiently.
- If at any point during this process you are not happy with how your complaint is being handled or the time frame we have set out for you, please contact us immediately.
- When we have agreed the resolution to your complaint we will confirm this in writing and then carry out the agreed actions within the agreed timeframe.

### **What if you are still not satisfied?**

We will try very hard to deal with any complaints or dissatisfaction about our service. If you remain unhappy after we have tried to resolve your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Legal Ombudsman. This is the independent body that reports direct to the Legal Services Board about all complaints about legal services. They can be contacted via the internet: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk), by phone on 0300 555 0333 or you can write to: PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ.

You should note that you must give the solicitor who dealt with your work a chance to resolve your complaint before the Legal Ombudsman can get involved. Please make your complaint to us as soon as you are aware that there is a problem. You should allow the solicitor 8 weeks to deal with your complaint. The 8 week period runs from the date you first complained and not from the date of the last contact from your solicitor about the complaint. After the 8 weeks have elapsed you should refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman such referral being within 12 months of the final response from your solicitor about the complaint.

However the Legal Ombudsman will not accept a complaint where the act or date of awareness was before 6 October 2010.