

## **Complaints Policy**

We are committed to providing a high quality legal service to all our clients and we welcome any feedback that they may have.

If a client considers that our service has fallen short of acceptable standards they can contact us regarding this either via email, letter or a telephone call. However please be aware that it does not have to be done in writing although that will help us to identify any key areas of concern that they may have. Any complaints must be made to us either within 6 years from the act/omission or within 3 years of knowing that there was reasonable cause for complaint.

### **Our Complaints Procedure**

#### **The Initial Steps – Fee Earner review**

In the first instance any client should contact the fee earner who has day to day conduct of their case to discuss their complaint with a view to resolving the situation informally. If the complaint cannot be resolved within 7 days then the client can discuss this with your Team Head or Supervisor.

#### **Team Head/Supervisor Complaint Investigation**

This person will be a Director or other Supervisor who is responsible for the overall supervision of your work. Their name and contact details should have been given to the client in the Client Care Letter.

They will send the client a letter acknowledging their complaint and enclosing the Complaints Policy and ask them to confirm or explain details where any clarification is needed.

The letter must be sent to them within 4 working days of them receiving their complaint.

If we have enough information and nothing is required from the client, they will start the investigation. This will normally involve the following steps:-

- The Supervisor will ask the fee earner who acted for the client to provide information together with the relevant file of papers;
- This can take up to 7 days;
- The Supervisor will examine the papers together with any letter that has been sent to the client regarding the complaint and if necessary they may ask further questions to ensure that all aspects of the complaint have been examined;
- This will take up to 7 working days;

- Throughout this process, the Supervisor will keep the client advised of what is being done to progress the investigation of their complaint;
- As part of the investigation process, the client may still communicate with the Supervisor to discuss their complaint or a meeting maybe arranged;
- If a meeting is held, the Supervisor will write to the client to confirm what took place and any solutions that may be agreed. Any letter will be sent within 7 working days of the meeting;

Once the investigation has been completed, the Supervisor will write to the client with the final findings.

### **Complaints Director Review**

In the event that the client remains dissatisfied with the conclusions of your Supervisor, they should set out the reasons why in writing to our Complaints Director, Antonio Fletcher at Whitehead Monckton, 5 Eclipse Park Sittingbourne Road Maidstone Kent ME14 3EN. He will review the complaint and the findings of your Supervisor. Upon doing this he may request a meeting with you and your Supervisor to investigate further. Upon the completion of his review he will write to the client with his findings. This will be concluded within 2-3 weeks of the complaint being referred to him and this is the last step in our internal complaints process.

### **Further Steps**

If the client remains unhappy with the outcome of our internal complaints procedure, they are entitled to contact the Legal Ombudsman at PO Box 6167 Slough SL1 0EH, telephone number 0300 555 0333 or email at [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk), and ask them to carry out their own investigations. The website is [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

Please be aware that the Legal Ombudsman has a time limit upon which they can become involved. This time limit is 12 months following the act or omission being complained about or (if later) 12 months from the date when the client should have realised there was cause for complaint. The Legal Ombudsman has the discretion to extend the 1 year time limit in certain circumstances. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of our final response to you.

You also have the right to complain to the Solicitors Regulation Authority if your complaint refers to our conduct rather than our service. They can be contacted at The Cube 199 Wharfside Street Birmingham B1 1RN, telephone number 0370 606 2555 or email at [contactcentre@sra.org.uk](mailto:contactcentre@sra.org.uk).