

## **Complaints Policy**

### **1. What our complaints procedure aims at achieving**

1.1 It is a matter of serious concern to us if you are dissatisfied with the service you receive. We seek to offer high levels of personalised client care and service. If you are not satisfied with the service we provide we will investigate and by doing so hope to address your concerns and if there have been shortcomings, to put them right to your satisfaction.

### **2. How your complaint will be dealt with**

2.1 You may make your complaint at the outset:

1. To the fee earner with conduct of the matter. In this case, if the matter is not serious and can be put right very simply the fee earner with conduct or his/her immediate head of department will speak to you within 24 hours to confirm that the problem has been remedied. If appropriate, this may also be confirmed to you in writing. We treat these as informal complaints which do not proceed to full investigation by our Complaints Partner.
2. In the case of a serious complaint or where the remedy for an informal complaint has left you dissatisfied then your complaint will be treated as a formal complaint.
3. Helen Fitzsimons will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 48 hours and will then proceed to investigate fully. In doing so she may speak to you or arrange a meeting with you in order to obtain more details. She will also review your file in depth and will usually ask for a report from the conducting fee earner and any other members of staff concerned.
4. Within 10 days Helen Fitzsimons will report her findings to you.
5. Where your complaint is considered justified you will be advised of that fact and as a minimum, offered a frank apology and steps to remedy the deficiency. If you have suffered prejudice in some way, the remedy offered will seek to be appropriate and proportionate. We will also make clear the steps which are to be taken to put right what may have gone wrong. We will ask for your specific approval of the remedy and steps proposed to ensure that we meet your reasonable expectations. In some cases, it may be appropriate or necessary to refer you to another solicitor.
6. If we think your complaint is not justified, we will tell you what steps have been taken to investigate and explain why we think it is unjustified.

7. If you remain dissatisfied and after further discussion we cannot resolve your concerns, you may take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 15870, Tamworth, B77 9LE. Telephone 0300 555 0333. [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk) This is the independent body which investigates complaints about legal services. You are free to speak to them at any time concerning your complaint.
8. Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:
  - Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint and
  - No more than six years from the date of the act/omission; or
  - No more than three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.”

### 3. Related Documents

- Office Manual
- File Management
- Training and Appraisal Policy

### 4. Document Management and Control

Publication/Review Update Date	Version Number	Title	Applicable to	Procedure Owner
April 2017	V1	Complaints Policy	All staff groups	HJF
December 2018	V2			