

# General Terms – Complaints Policy

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We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards and hopefully resolve any problem that you have. In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues at this stage.

## Our complaints procedure

All complaints are investigated by the firm's Partner designated as complaints manager, Tanya Bloomfield. Miss Bloomfield may delegate the investigative process to another Partner or senior member of the firm, if they have a particular specialist knowledge which might assist in the investigation, she is unavailable or there is a conflict of interest preventing her from so doing. Her contact details are Clark Willis, 105 Bondgate, Darlington, Co. Durham DL3 7LB. 01325 281 111, or email [t.bloomfield@clarkwillis.co.uk](mailto:t.bloomfield@clarkwillis.co.uk). Please quote any reference number stated at the top of any letters you have previously received from us.

## Stages of the procedure

1. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 7 days. It will be recorded in our central register and we shall open a separate file to deal with it.
2. Where appropriate you will be invited to meet Miss Bloomfield to discuss your complaint. The choice of meeting with Miss Bloomfield is entirely yours, and if you feel you have adequately detailed your complaint in writing and do not feel it is necessary to explain matters further we shall deal with the matter on the basis of your written complaint.
3. We will then investigate the complaint, which may involve one or more of the following steps:
  - (a) We will ask the member(s) of staff concerned with the complaint to respond to those complaints relating to them. They will be required to do so within 21 days of any meeting, or your confirmation that you do not want a meeting. If the personnel are absent on leave or sick, they will be asked to respond within 14 days of their return;
  - (b) Miss Bloomfield will then consider all the information she has collated and if necessary ask you or the member of staff concerned for more information. This may take an additional 14 days from receiving their reply.

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4. Once Miss Bloomfield has received all the information necessary, she will, within 14 days thereof send to you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include our suggestions for resolving the matter. If you feel our suggestions are not satisfactory you can ask us to review our decision. This will happen in one of the following ways.

(a) Miss Bloomfield will review her own decision within 14 days of hearing from you, or

(b) We will arrange for another partner in the firm who has not been involved in your complaint to review it. They will carry out the review within 14 days of hearing from you.

(c) The result of the review will be sent to you within 7 days of the decision. We will confirm in the review decision our final position on your complaint.

### Legal Ombudsman

If for any reason we are unable to resolve the problem between us, then our clients are advised that they may ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint.

Clients are free to refer any complaint about our work, fees or level of service but there are some conditions and time limits. Please be aware that any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six months of the client having received a final written response from us about their complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six years of the act or omission about which the client is complaining occurring; or within three years from when the client should have known about or become aware that there were grounds for complaint. The Legal Ombudsman will not accept complaints where the act or date of awareness was before 6 October 2010.

For further information, please contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or visit [Home | Legal Ombudsman](#). The Legal Ombudsman may be contacted at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ.

### Solicitors Regulation Authority

If someone thinks a solicitor might be dishonest or you have concerns about their ethics or integrity, they have the right to notify our regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). There are no time limits for making a report but there are limits on what the SRA will consider. Please note that the SRA is not able to deal with issues of poor service (complaints of this nature should instead be referred to the Legal Ombudsman). For further information about the SRA's role, please contact the SRA or visit:

[SRA | Reporting an individual or firm | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)

Alternative complaints bodies ProMediate and Small claims mediation exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme. We would agree to use Promediate.