

Brabners

Client Complaints Procedure

January 2025

Client Complaints Procedure

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When you think something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards. We would always want our clients to raise any concerns as soon as practicable with the member of staff who is undertaking their work.

However, we accept that there may be occasions when the member of staff is unable to resolve your complaint or you may feel it is sufficiently serious that you want a more senior member of the firm to investigate this matter on your behalf.

If you have a complaint which you feel has not been dealt with satisfactorily by the member of staff concerned, please contact the Head of Department for the member of staff concerned with the details.

If you are uncertain who the Head of Department is, please ask the member of staff to identify them for you.

What will happen next?

- 1 We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint normally within three working days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure, and giving a target date for a substantive response.
- 2 The Head of Department will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve a review your matter file and a discussion with the member of staff who acted for you and may involve asking you to give further information regarding your complaint.
- 3 The Head of Department will consider whether the matter can be dealt with more informally, for example, by correspondence or telephone, or whether a meeting with you is required. If so, we will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. We usually aim to give a response to your complaint within 15 working days of sending you the acknowledgement letter. However, complaints come in all shapes and sizes and dealing with it may take longer in which case we will let you know and give you our anticipated response date.
- 4 If we have not completed our internal investigations within 8 weeks of receiving your complaint - or you have rejected our final, substantive response - we will write to you at that point and outline the options available to you.
- 5 Before finalising and sending their substantive response and final decision to your complaint the Department Head will ask the colleague who has oversight for complaints to review and approve their proposed response. The relevant colleagues with oversight are David Maples, Partner and Caroline Litchfield, Partner.
- 6 If you are not satisfied with the response, you may be able to complain to the Legal Ombudsman or to the Solicitors Regulation Authority. Further details of the Legal Ombudsman and the Solicitors Regulation Authority are set out below in paragraphs 9 and 10.
- 7 If your concern relates to a bill, then you have the right to apply to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974.
- 8 We will not charge you for handling a complaint. The Legal Ombudsman service and the Solicitors Regulation Authority service are also free of charge.

The Legal Ombudsman

The Legal Ombudsman is an independent complaints body established under the Legal Services Act who can investigate complaints about the legal services you have received from us. The Legal Ombudsman will normally only deal with complaints from members of the public, some small businesses, charities, clubs and trusts. Please contact the Legal Ombudsman service to clarify whether they will consider your complaint.

A complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must be made:

- Within six months of receiving our final response to your complaint;

And

- No more than one year from the date of the act or omission being complained about; or
- No more than one year from the date when you should reasonably have known that there was a cause for complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman will not normally accept a complaint for investigation unless eight weeks have passed since you first raised your complaint with us, or we have issued our final response. This is to allow us the opportunity to deal with your concerns.

Further details, including time limits can be found at www.legalombudsman.org.uk.

You can contact The Legal Ombudsman:

- by telephone: 0300 555 0333;
- by post at PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH;
- by email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority

If your concern relates to our conduct you may wish to make a complaint to The Solicitors Regulation Authority. For more information see: <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/>

Please note, however, that the Solicitors Regulation Authority do not usually deal with complaints about:

- Delays or communication
- Disagreements about your bill
- Isolated mistakes by us.

You can contact the Solicitors Regulation Authority:

- by post: SRA Report, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN;
- by telephone: 0370 606 2555;
- by email: reports@sra.org.uk.

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