

Complaints Handling Policy

Our Policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality 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 ensure that we provide you with the service to which you are entitled.

Who to contact

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the service which you have received or the costs which you have been charged it is often best to raise your concerns immediately with the Solicitor responsible for the work. You were supplied with their contact details when you first instructed us.

However, we understand that you may wish your concerns to be more formally investigated or you are unhappy with any response you have already received.

If you want your complaint to be formally investigated, please write to **Giles Bark-Jones**. There will be no charge for this, and your complaint will be handled promptly, fairly and without charge in accordance with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) Standards and Regulations.

What will happen next?

We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint letter within seven days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.

Responsibility for investigating your complaint will be assigned to the member of the firm best placed to carry out the investigation. He/she will normally review the file and speak to those who carried out the work.

If appropriate you may be invited to a meeting to discuss, and hopefully resolve, your complaint. If we propose a meeting you will be contacted within 14 days of the sending of the acknowledgement letter.

If a meeting takes place we will write to you within 3 days after it takes place confirming what took place and setting out any solutions which were agreed with you.

If a meeting is not possible, or you do not want to meet, we will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint setting out any suggestions for resolving the matter. We would normally expect to send this reply within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter. If we are not able to send you a full reply within that period, we will update you and tell you when we expect to be able to write to you again.

At this stage, if you are still not satisfied you should contact us again and we will arrange for someone unconnected with this matter to carry out a further review. This further review will normally be conducted by another senior member of the firm.

We will write to you within 21 days of receiving your request for a review confirming our final decision on your complaint and explaining our reasons. We will also confirm your right of complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.

If the complaints procedure has been exhausted, you have a right to refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. You cannot normally refer a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman unless 8 weeks have passed since your complaint to us, but you may do so earlier if we have notified you of our final decision and you remain

dissatisfied. The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted via their website www.legalombudsman.org.uk, or by telephone 0300 555 0333 or write to:

Legal Ombudsman,
PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint or within six years of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring (or if outside of this period, within three years of when you should reasonably have been aware of it).

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour and that it may be in breach of the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) Standards and Regulations. You can find information on how and when to raise a concern with the SRA on the SRA website.

We are required to inform you about alternative dispute resolution (ADR). This is a form of complaint resolution which is separate to the Legal Ombudsman. Complaints bodies known as alternative dispute resolution providers, such as the Small Claims Mediation Service (details can be found at the following website <https://www.smallclaimscourtgenie.co.uk/small-claims-mediation-service/>), are competent to deal with complaints about legal services. However, you need to obtain express prior permission before ADR can begin. Bark & Co do not agree to use companies within the ADR scheme. This does not alter your rights to complain to the Legal Ombudsman and Bark & Co shall co-operate fully with any complaints made to the Legal Ombudsman.