

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

It is important to us that we provide services of the highest quality to all of our clients. We aim to ensure that any complaints that clients may have are identified and dealt with in accordance with this procedure.

Making a complaint

If you feel dissatisfied with any part of the service, you should discuss this directly with the person dealing with your matter. If the issues cannot be resolved at this stage, you should put your complaint into writing to Andrew Waddell (andrews@winslows.co.uk) who is the Director of the firm.

Investigating the complaint

1. Having received any written complaint, we will acknowledge receipt within seven days.
2. We will conduct a full investigation and an independent review of the matter.
3. We aim to respond in full within 28 days. However, if the complaint is of a more complex nature we will require more time, but we will let you know when you will receive a full response.
4. Our response will be in writing and hopefully any issues can be resolved at this stage.
5. If still unresolved at this stage, you may take the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, you will have to bring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of receiving a final response from us about your complaint and 6 years from the date of the act or omission giving rise to the complaint or alternatively 3 years from the date you should reasonably have known there are grounds for complaint (if the act/omission took place before 6 October 2010 or was more than 6 years ago).

Legal Ombudsman

The Legal Ombudsman is an independent body established by Legal Services Act 2007 to deal with complaints against Solicitors.

The Legal Ombudsman may:

- Investigate the quality of professional service supplied by a solicitor to a client.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has breached rules of professional conduct.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has unreasonably refused to supply a professional service to a prospective client.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has persistently or unreasonably offered a professional service that the client does not want.

Before it will consider a complaint the Legal Ombudsman generally requires that the firm's internal Complaints Procedure has been exhausted. Therefore, you must follow the procedure set out above before contacting The Legal Ombudsman.

The Legal Ombudsman's address is:

PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ; telephone, 0300 555 0333; website, www.legalombudsman.org.uk; or email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

You can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority .

Who can Complain?

A **complainant** to the Legal Ombudsman must be one of the following:

- (a) An individual;
- (b) A micro-enterprise as defined in European Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 (broadly, an enterprise with fewer than 10 staff and a turnover or balance sheet value not exceeding €2 million);
- (c) A charity with an annual income less than £1 million;
- (d) A club, association or society with an annual income less than £1 million;

- (e) A trustee of a trust with a net asset value less than £1 million; or a personal representative or the residuary beneficiaries of an estate where a person with a complaint died before referring it to the Legal Ombudsman.

If you do not fall into any of these categories, you should be aware that you can only obtain redress by using our Complaints Handling Procedure or by mediation or arbitration, or by taking action through the Courts.

Prospective Clients

A complaint can also be made by a prospective client if we have:

- Unreasonably refused a service to a complainant
- Persistently or unreasonably offered a service that the complainant does not want.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative complaints bodies (such as Ombudsman Services - www.ombudsman-services.org) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme.

Please note that we do not agree to use Ombudsman Services.

Continual improvement

We always seek to give our clients the best possible service. Your service issue or complaint will be recorded on our central register and will be used to improve our service to our clients by identifying the cause of any problems and correcting unsatisfactory procedures.

If you have any questions about this procedure, please do not hesitate to contact Andrew Waddell.