

Complaints Handling Procedure

A client shall be provided with a Client Complaint Form if they request one or if they suggest that they have a grievance. All complaints must be referred to the Complaints Manager who is in overall charge of the complaints process.

If you have a complaint concerning our service or our bill, or you feel that you have been treated unfairly, please contact James Manchester who is the Managing Partner and has overall responsibility for client care. It is preferable to put your complaint in writing to him at 21 Limpsfield Road, Sanderstead, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 9LA or by e-mail to law@manchesterdurman.com Alternatively, you can contact him by telephone on 020 8651 3118.

If you have a complaint concerning our service the Solicitors Regulation Authority can also help, for example, concerns about probity, application of money or poor treatment due to special circumstance such as mobility, age or some other special need. You can raise concerns with the SRA by following the link <http://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/glossary/#SRA> for more information.

Our complaints policy

At the outset of any matter the client is informed in writing of their right to complain and how complaints can be made. Clients are also informed in writing, both at the time of engagement and at the conclusion of your complaints procedure, of their right to complain to the LeO, the time frame for doing so and full details of how to contact the LeO

We are committed to providing a high quality service to all our clients. Our aim is to give you no cause for complaint but when something does go wrong, we need you to tell us about it.

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong we want our clients to tell us about it. Every complaint will improve our standards and our aim is to reduce the risk of potential complaints in the future.

Our complaints procedure

What will happen next

1. All Client Complaint Forms are forwarded to the Complaints Manager.
2. The Complaints Manager will open a separate file for the complaint and record the details in the Firm's Complaint Management Form. This form will be kept at the front of the file. This must be done by the end of the day following receipt of the Client Complaint Form.
3. The Complaints Manager will then investigate the complaint, by asking the relevant members of staff to reply to the complaint or provide further details.
4. If necessary, the Complaints Manager will meet with the relevant members of staff to discuss the situation.

5. The Complaints Manager will acknowledge the complaint within five working days from the date of receipt of the Client Complaint Form and will invite the complainant to a meeting to discuss the complaint and attempt to resolve it. In any case the Firm will send a response to the complainant within eight weeks from the date of the complaint.
6. If the complainant is not able or does not want to attend a meeting, the Complaints Manager will explain in writing, and if possible also by telephone, the outcome of their investigations and a suggestion for resolving the complaint.
7. If a meeting is held, the Complaints Manager will write to the complainant within two working days of the meeting, confirming the discussions that took place and any solutions that have been agreed.
8. A letter sent to the complainant at this stage will contain details of what to do if the complainant is still unhappy. The complainant will be asked to write a 'secondary complaint letter' to the firm explaining why they are unhappy with the conclusion.
9. The firm will then arrange for a review of the Complaints Manager's decision. This will happen in one of the following ways: a. Another Partner or senior member of staff will review the complaint, and if necessary, re-investigate the details of the complaint. b. The local Law Society or another firm of solicitors will be asked to review the complaint. c. The Complaints Manager will ask the complainant to agree to independent mediation.
10. The Complaints Manager will write to the complainant within five working days of the conclusion of the review, detailing the outcome of the review, and what the firm's final position is with regards to the complaint. This letter will contain details of the Legal Ombudsman, who should be contacted if the complainant is still not satisfied. These details are: Phone 0300 555 0333 (Calls to the Legal Ombudsman cost the same as a normal 01 or 02 landline number, even from a mobile phone, and are recorded for training and monitoring purposes). Email at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk Address is PO BOX 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ. If you are calling from overseas, please telephone +44 121 245 3050.
11. The legal ombudsman will check to see if you have tried to resolve any complaints using the above procedure but failing that you have six months from receiving our final response to your complaint to take your complaints to the Legal Ombudsman. The legal ombudsman will also have regard to whether any wider time limits apply before accepting a complaint for investigation.
12. Complaints to the LeO : The Legal Ombudsman has given a maximum of eight weeks for the complaint to be resolved. In some cases it may be expected to be dealt with sooner if it is more desirable. Once the eight week period has elapsed, the Legal Ombudsman will normally accept the complaint for investigation even if it has not yet been fully dealt with by the lawyer or the firm involved. As a result of this it is preferable for us to deal with complaints quickly and try to resolve them before they are referred to LeO.

Further information is available on their website at www.legalombudsman.org.uk. and information on how and when a complaint can be made can be found by following the link to <http://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/glossary/#Legal-Ombudsman>

If your complaint relates to our bill you may have the right to apply to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. Please also note that if part or all of a bill remains outstanding we may be entitled to charge you interest.

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.

Manchesters Solicitors