

Our Complaints Handling Procedure

We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). We are committed to high quality legal advice and client care and aim to offer all our clients an efficient and effective service. However, if our clients would like to discuss how the service to them could be improved, the level of their bill, or should there be any aspect of our service with which they are not satisfied, we ask them to please contact the person in our firm responsible for complaints Handling: Ruth Hawkins our client care partner on rhawkins@bholegal.co.uk, 01235 425502 or by post to 1-3 Ock Street, Abingdon, OX14 5AL.

We are committed to high quality legal advice and client care and are keen to resolve any concerns as soon as possible and in order to do this, will follow our complaints handling procedure.

We will endeavour to handle your complaint promptly, fairly and free of charge.

Our complaints procedure is as follows:

Step One:

If they have not already done so, we ask our clients to let us know the full nature of the problem.

Step Two:

Our Complaints Handling Representative will write to the client acknowledging their complaint within five working days. In this letter, we shall confirm what happens next.

Step Three:

Our complaints Handling Representative shall then investigate the matter by reviewing the matter file and speaking to the member of staff concerned within ten working days of acknowledging receipt of the complaint. If, for some reason, the matter cannot be investigated in this timeframe, then we will write to the client notifying them of this together with the reason why and giving a revised timescale. Once the investigation has been completed, our Complaints Handling Representative will send the client a detailed, written response, including the proposed solution, within fifteen working days of our concluding the investigation of the matter.

Step Four:

If the client is satisfied with our response following the above steps, that will be the end of the matter. However, if the client is not satisfied, they will be invited to contact our Complaints Handling Representative again and they will arrange for another Partner or senior member of staff who is unconnected with the matter to review the decision. They will write to the client within ten working days of receiving the request with confirmation of the firm's final position in relation to the complaint, outlining the reasons and any final redress that is offered.

Step Five: Other avenues

Clients must always try complaining to us first. In most cases they will not be able to take their complaint further without allowing us the opportunity to put things right.

Legal Ombudsman

We are permitted a period of eight weeks to consider the complaint. If for any reason we are unable to resolve the problem between us within that timeframe, 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 one year of the act or omission about which the client is complaining occurring; or within one year from when the client should have known about or become aware that there were grounds for complaint.

For further information, please contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or visit www.legalombudsman.org.uk. 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: <http://www.sra.org.uk/report>

Further Information

For further information about our complaints handling procedures, please do not hesitate to contact Ruth Hawkins on rhawkins@bholegal.co.uk, 01235 425500 or by post to 1-3 Ock Street, Abingdon, ox14 5AL.