

# Complaints Handling Policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal 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.

In the first instance, it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case, or their supervisor, to discuss your concerns and they will do their best to resolve any issues.

If you do not feel able to raise your concerns with either of these people, or you are unsatisfied with their response, please contact James Austin who has overall responsibility for complaints and whose contact details are:

James Austin

Birketts LLP

Providence House

141-145 Princes Street

Ipswich

IP1 1QJ

To help us to understand your complaint, and in order that we do not miss anything, please tell us:

1. your full name and contact details.
2. what you think we have got wrong.
3. how you would like your complaint to be resolved; and
4. your file reference number (if you have it).

## What will happen next?

- We will send you a letter or email acknowledging receipt of your complaint within three days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
- We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to our Director of Client Care, James Austin, who will review your matter file and speak to the member of staff who acted for you.
- James Austin will then write to you with his initial view on the complaint and, if appropriate, make suggestions as to how it is resolved.
- If it proves impossible to resolve by correspondence, then James Austin will invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint.

- If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, James Austin will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including his suggestions for resolving the matter to the extent that this has not been covered in previous correspondence.
- We have eight weeks to consider your complaint. If we have not resolved it within this time, you may be able to complain to the Legal Ombudsman. This applies if you are an individual, a business with fewer than 10 employees and turnover or assets not exceeding a certain threshold, a charity or trust with a net income of less than £1m, or if you fall within certain other categories, (you can find out more from the Legal Ombudsman). The Legal Ombudsman will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your matter.

Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.

The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within one year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within one year of you realising there was a concern. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final response to you.

The Legal Ombudsman's contact details are:

Legal Ombudsman

PO Box 6167

Slough

SL1 0EH

For further information, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or at [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk) or via the website at [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk).

- Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) bodies exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme. We have, however, chosen not to adopt an ADR process. If, therefore, you wish to complain further, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman.
- If you are unhappy with our behaviour, the Solicitors Regulation Authority can help. 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. Visit its website to see how you can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority at [www.sra.org.uk](http://www.sra.org.uk).
- We will not charge you for handling your complaint. Please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on the matter, and all or some of the bill is not paid, we can require this to be settled in full pending a determination by the Legal Ombudsman. We are also

entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding, as explained in our Terms of Business. The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.