Complaints Handling Policy

We aim to deal with any complaints promptly, fairly, openly and effectively. Our definition of a complaint is:

> "any written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction referred to any person in our organisation by a client".

A complaint can be identified through a letter, telephone call, and e-mail, or in the course of a face-to-face conversation.

A complaint may involve:

- dissatisfaction with the handling of a case
- disappointment with an alleged lack of communication
- frustration with an alleged lack of case progress
- an allegation of discrimination or
- dissatisfaction with the outcome of the case

However, issues of a very minor nature, for example, not returning a non-urgent telephone call until the following day will not be recorded as a complaint.

It is the policy of the firm that:

- every complaint made by a client is reported and recorded centrally
- every complaint received is responded to appropriately and
- the cause of the problem is identified, appropriate redress is offered, and
- unsatisfactory procedures are corrected

Our complaints procedure is as follows:

Step One:

We would prefer that your complaint be confirmed in writing in order that any scope for misunderstanding can be avoided. However, this is not obligatory, and you are welcome to provide the details to me over the telephone or face to face. If you are setting out your concerns in writing then you can do this by emailing Ruth Goward, at ruth@agrlaw.co.uk or writing to us at 20 Millstone Lane, Leicester LE1 5JN. If your solicitor is Ruth Goward, please contact Gina Samuel-Richards at gina@agrlaw.co.uk instead.

Step Two:

We will write to you acknowledging your complaint within five working days. In this letter, we shall confirm what happens next.

Step Three:

We shall then investigate the matter by reviewing the matter file and speaking to the member of staff concerned within five working days of acknowledging receipt of your complaint. If, for some reason, the matter cannot be investigated in this timeframe, then we will write to you notifying you of this together with the reason why and giving a revised timescale.

Once the investigation has been completed, if appropriate and necessary, we shall invite you

to discuss the issue(s) you have raised and hopefully resolve the complaint. This could be a meeting, video conference call or telephone call and we can discuss your preference and what may be suitable at that time. This process of engagement will take place within ten working days of our concluding the investigation of the matter.

We shall write to you within five working days of any meeting or call to confirm our discussion and the solution agreed upon and/or any final redress that is offered.

Alternatively, if you do not want to or are unable to attend such a meeting or you would prefer to continue to correspond by letter or email (or if a meeting is not required), we will send you a detailed, written response, including our proposed solution, within fifteen working days of our concluding the investigation.

Step Four:

If you are satisfied with our response following the above steps, that will be the end of the matter. However, if you are not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will review the decision or, depending on the circumstances, will arrange for another Director to review the decision. We will write to you within ten working days of receiving your request with confirmation of the firm's final position in relation to your complaint, outlining the reasons and any final redress that is offered.

Step Five (other avenues):

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

Legal Ombudsman

We are permitted a period of eight weeks to consider your complaint. If for any reason we are unable to resolve the problem between us within that timeframe, you may then ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint.

You 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 you having received a final written response from us about your complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within one year of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring; or from when you 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 6167, Slough SL1 0EH.

Solicitors Regulation Authority

If you think a solicitor might be dishonest or you have concerns about their ethics or integrity, you also 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: https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page#report