

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Our Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service for all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards.

Definition – What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of client dissatisfaction however it is expressed. This is a wide definition and will encompass many types of behaviour and communication. Our overriding objective is to address client dissatisfaction at the soonest possible opportunity, since it is much more likely that we can satisfactorily resolve any issue earlier rather than later.

Our Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint, in the first instance it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns, and we will do our best to resolve any issues. If you do not feel able to discuss your concerns with them, please contact the person responsible for the overall supervision of your matter, who will be named in the Client Care Letter we sent to you at the beginning of your matter.

If you do not feel able to raise your concerns with either of these people, or you are dissatisfied with their response, please write to **Mark Hawkridge, Senior Partner** or email complaints@hawklaw.co.uk.

If we have to change any of the responsibilities or the timescales set out below, we will let you know and explain why. Following receipt of any complaint we have up to **8 weeks** to resolve your complaint.

If we fail to deal with the complaint to your satisfaction within that time, you can involve the Legal Ombudsman.

What will happen next?

1. Within **5 working days** we will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain any details. If it seems appropriate, we will suggest a meeting at this stage. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint.
2. We will then record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint. We will also investigate your complaint by examining the relevant file.



3. If appropriate, we will then invite you to meet with **Mark Hawkrige** to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. We would hope to be in a position to meet with you in this way no longer than **14 working days** after first receiving your complaint. If you would prefer not to meet, or if we cannot arrange this within an agreeable timescale, we will write fully to you setting out our views on the situation and details of an appropriate level of redress.
4. Within **5 working days** of any meeting we will write to you to confirm what took place and any suggestions that we have agreed with you. We will outline an acceptable solution or any form of recourse which meets your satisfaction.
5. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, please let us know. We will then arrange to review our decision. **Mark Hawkrige** would generally aim to review your complaint within **10 working days**.
6. We will let you know the result of the review within **5 working days** of the end of the review. At this time, we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
7. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman about your complaint by writing to Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167 Slough SL1 0EH. Telephone Number 0300 555 0333 or by email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

This option is available to all individuals and certain other types of clients such as small businesses, charities and beneficiaries. Full details of the eligibility criteria can be found on the Legal Ombudsman's website www.legalombudsman.org.uk.

You have up to **6 months** to bring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman following the conclusion of our complaints process. Please note that there are exceptions to the 8 week period and the 6 month period, full details of which can be found on the Legal Ombudsman's website.

The Legal Ombudsman cannot accept a complaint if:

- more than one year has passed since the act or omission complained of, or
- more than one year has passed from when you should reasonably have known that there were grounds for complaint.

8. If you are unhappy with our behaviour as opposed to our service, for instance you believe we have been dishonest, taken or lost your money, or have treated you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic, then you may contact our regulatory body, the Solicitors Regulation Authority, by writing to the SRA at: Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN.

For more information visit: www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.

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