

Complaints Handling Procedure

We are committed to providing a high quality legal service and to dealing with all our clients fairly. We acknowledge that we may not always get it right so if something has gone wrong, including in relation to the bill, we need you to tell us. This will help us improve our standards.

How do I make a complaint?

You can contact us in writing (by letter or email) or by speaking with our Client Care Partner, Jo Cullen, telephone: 0208 439 7480 or email: jo.cullen@howell-jones.com, or her Client Care Manager, Vishalee Amin, telephone: 020 3167 1963 or email: vishalee.amin@howell-jones.com.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate for another Partner or Manager in the firm to investigate and respond to your complaint.

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) what you hope to achieve as a result of your complaint, and
- (4) your file reference number (if you have it)

If you require any assistance in making your complaint we will try to help you.

How will you deal with my complaint?

We will write to you within 3 working days acknowledging your complaint, enclosing a copy of this policy.

We will investigate your complaint. This will usually involve:

- (1) reviewing your complaint
- (2) reviewing your file(s) and other relevant documents, and
- (3) speaking with the person who dealt with your matter

We may also need to ask you for further information or documents. If so, we will ask you to provide the information within a specific period of time.

We will update you on the progress of your complaint at appropriate times.

We may also, if appropriate, invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. You do not have to attend if you do not wish to or if you are unable to. We will be happy to discuss the matter with you on the telephone.

We will write to you at the end of our investigation to tell you what we have done and what we propose to do to resolve your complaint. Where possible, we will aim to do this within 15 working days of the date of our letter of acknowledgement.

We will record your complaint centrally in our Complaints Register and update it at the end of the review with any outcome and remedy as applicable.

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our complaints handling procedure please first let us know and we will review the matter.

If you are still unhappy you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to look into your complaint. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman:

- by post at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ
- by telephone: 0300 555 0333, or
- by email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

You must usually refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final written response to your complaint and within six years of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring (or within three years of you becoming aware of it). Further details are available on the website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk.

Alternative complaints bodies (such as ProMediate - www.promediate.co.uk) 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.

What will it cost?

We will not charge you for handling your complaint.