



LANCERS SOLICITORS

# Complaints Handling Policy

## Complaints policy

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

If you are unhappy with the level of service provided or any bill, please contact the person dealing with your matter or the supervising Partner responsible for your work (their name should be identified in the initial client care information sent to you). We take complaints very seriously and will aim to deal with these as soon as possible.

## Our complaints procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the service received or if you are dissatisfied with regard to a charge on a bill received, please first contact the member of staff who is dealing with your matter and they will try to resolve your concerns. Our aim will always be to deal with your concerns as quickly as possible and without recourse to any formal complaints procedure, if that is possible.

If it is clear that you remain dissatisfied, the member of staff will inform you of the existence of our formal complaints procedure by sending you a copy of this procedure.

### Stage 1

You should write to our Director; and clearly mark your letter "formal complaint".

Alternatively, you may wish to use the below 'Client Complaint Form'. Please outline the cause of your dissatisfaction and if possible, the action you would like us to take in order to remedy that dissatisfaction.

### Stage 2

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days and inform you of the name of the person who is dealing with your complaint. In order to obtain an independent and objective view, we may outsource stage 2 to an independent complaints handler. Your complaint will be acknowledged by them within 5 working days of receipt and a thorough investigation undertaken within 4 weeks of identifying and agreeing your heads of complaints

with you. We will record your complaint in our central register which is reviewed regularly by the firm.

### **Stage 3**

The person investigating the complaint will have full access to all the information and personnel that they require to investigate your complaint properly. They may contact you directly to discuss and confirm your heads of complaints and request any further information from you to assist the investigation.

We will ask the person investigating the complaint to recommend the action which they believe would be recommended by the Legal Ombudsman if the complaint was referred to their office.

### **Stage 4**

The person investigating your complaint will provide you with a detailed assessment report together with their recommendations to resolve the complaint, if any, a copy of which will be first forwarded to our Director for review. If the complaint is outsourced, we will generally follow their recommendations made but if we think they are not appropriate we will explain our reasons to you.

We have 8 weeks from the date we receive your complaint to fully investigate and provide our final response to you.

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will contact you to explain why.

You will not be charged for our time spent dealing with a complaint internally.

### **Stage 5**

If you are still not satisfied, the next step is for you to contact the Legal Ombudsman by one of the following methods:

Telephone : 0300 555 0333

Overseas: +44 12 245 3050

Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

In writing : PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

[www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

The Ombudsman service is only available to members of the public, very small businesses, charities, clubs and trusts. If you are unclear about your position, then you should contact the Legal Ombudsman direct to clarify whether or not they can deal with your complaint.

Alternatively, please refer to the Legal Ombudsman's scheme rules which are available by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/downloads/documents/publications/Scheme-Rules.pdf>

You have the right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman at the conclusion of our complaints process providing you do so within **6 months** of the date of our **final** written response.

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.

### **Complaints About Fees**

If you are dissatisfied with our bill, you have the right to apply to the High Court for an assessment of our charges by an Officer of the Court under ss. 70, 71 and 72 of the Solicitors Act 1974. We hope that before making such an application you would first use our complaints procedure explained above.

### **Complaints about misconduct**

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour. 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. You can raise your concerns with the SRA.