

Complaints policy

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.

How do I make a complaint?

You can contact us in writing (by letter, fax or email) or by speaking with the appropriate Departmental Risk Director (details below) or our Complaints Director, Nicky Calthrop-Owen.

The Departmental Risk Directors are as follows:

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|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Property | Amanda Gordon |
| • Corporate & Commercial | Simon Dakin |
| • Probate, Trusts and Tax | Mandy Kelly |
| • Dispute Resolution/Insolvency | Victoria Dunstall |
| • Personal Injury | Gary Chadwick |
| • Family | Mandy Kelly |

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

- your full name and contact details
- what you think we have got wrong
- what you hope to achieve as a result of your complaint, and
- your file reference number (if you have it)

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

How will you deal with my complaint?

We will record your complaint centrally.

We will write to you within 5 working days acknowledging your complaint, enclosing a copy of this policy.

We will investigate your complaint. This will usually involve:

- reviewing your complaint
- reviewing your file(s) and other relevant documents, and
- 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. We will aim to do this within 28 days of the date of our letter of acknowledgement.

If you are dissatisfied with our initial response the matter will be referred to the Complaints Director to consider whether any alternative response is appropriate. We will then aim to write to you with written confirmation of our final response to the complaint within a further 14 days.

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, provided that you come within one of the categories of client which the Ombudsman is able to deal with.

The Legal Ombudsman can only consider complaints from the following categories of complainant:

- An individual;
- A micro-enterprise as defined in European Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 (broadly, an enterprise with fewer than 10 staff and a turnover or balance sheet value not exceeding €2 million);
- A charity with an annual income less than £1 million;
- A club, association or society with an annual income less than £1 million;
- A trustee of a trust with a net asset value less than £1 million; or
- A personal representative or the residuary beneficiaries of an estate where a person with a complaint died before referring it to the Legal Ombudsman

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 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, if outside of this period, within three years of when you should reasonably have been aware of it). Generally, the Legal Ombudsman deals with complaints relating to acts or omissions that happened after 5 October 2010. Further details are available on the website www.legalombudsman.org.uk .

What will it cost?

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 may be entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding.

The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.