

Birds Solicitors

Complaints – Information to Client

We are obliged by the Solicitors Regulation Authority to publish our complaints handling procedure on our website. This firm is committed to high quality legal advice and client care. If you are unhappy about any aspect of the service you have received, please contact Steven Bird, who is the complaints handler at this firm on 0203 657 7260 or s.bird@birds.eu.com or by post to our office address. We have a procedure in place which details how we handle complaints which is set out below.

COMPLAINTS HANDLING

As required by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, we have a procedure for dealing with complaints from clients, so that we can resolve matters if possible within the firm.

You should have been informed in writing that you should address any formal complaint to the complaints handler and that the complaints handler in the firm is Steven Bird. If the complaint is about Mr Bird, it will be handled by Chris Coss. It is to be hoped that you have tried to resolve matters with the fee earner concerned and that the matter is to be proceeded with as a formal complaint only where no agreement can be reached with that fee earner.

Once you have made that complaint we write to you setting out how the complaint will be handled. This is the stage that you are now at and why you are receiving this document.

HOW THE COMPLAINT WILL BE DEALT WITH

The person responsible for handling the complaint will:-

1. ask for full details from you either in writing or by interview

2. call for and look at the file,
3. see the fee earner concerned to discuss the matter and seek an explanation for the conduct or matters complained of
4. report to the client the outcome of the investigation within a reasonable time, which we aim to be 14 to 21 days.

The whole object is to ensure that the client:

- a. is satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with seriously;
- b. gets a prompt response;
- c. has an assurance that the matter is being reviewed;
- d. is notified as soon as possible of the outcome.

POSSIBLE REMEDIES IF THE COMPLAINT IS UPHELD

The following remedies may be applicable if the complaint is upheld:

- a. An apology from the company and an assurance that it will not happen again, and that we will try to do better;
- b. A reduction in the bill (in private matters);
- c. Abatement of the bill in total (in private matters);
- d. Notification to the client of their right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of our concluding determination;
- e. Notification to the client of their right to see another solicitor and obtain advice as to whether we have been negligent.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A COMPLAINT?

If the client is satisfied with the outcome, the fee earner will continue with the file. In some circumstances, if the solicitor/client relationship has broken down completely, it may be better for another fee earner to take the file over or the matter sent to another solicitors firm.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

We seek to learn from any complaints made (whether upheld or not) and to take internal corrective action with the fee earner concerned where appropriate. This is an internal matter for the company.

PURSUING A COMPLAINT AFTER OUR INTERNAL PROCESS

If we have not resolved your complaint using our internal process, you may complain to the Legal Ombudsman. If you are not satisfied with our handling of your complaint you can ask the Legal Ombudsman (Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ) to consider the complaint.

Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint or 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).

You should also be aware that, when your complaint relates to a bill, the Legal Ombudsman will not consider your complaint while your bill is being assessed by a court.

A complainant to the Legal Ombudsman must be one of the following:

- a) An individual

- b) 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);
- c) A charity with an annual income less than £1 million;
- d) A club, association or society with an annual income less than £1 million;
- e) 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.

Legal Ombudsman Contact Details:

Address: PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

The firm is committed to ensuring that all Partners, Directors, Members, Consultants and Employees give their full co-operation to the Legal Ombudsman in the event of any dispute or complaint against the firm.

In addition to the Legal Ombudsman, 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; however, the SRA are not able to deal with issues of poor service.

Solicitors Regulation Authority Contact Details:

Address: The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN

Telephone: 0370 606 2555

Email: report@sra.org.uk

Website: www.sra.org.uk