

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Our complaints procedure

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service 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 have not been able to resolve your complaint with your solicitor or caseworker and you are still unhappy, the two main contacts for dealing with concerns are:

1. If the matter relates to the **Family department** (legal aid or private), please contact **Mr. Martin Real**, Partner and Head of the Family Law department. You can contact him via email at: martin.real@bowlinglaw.co.uk or telephone: 020 8221 8066.
2. For **all others of law (non-Family)** please contact: **David Downham**, Practice Director. You can contact him via email at: david.downham@bowlinglaw.co.uk or telephone: 020 8221 8006.

What will happen next?

- We will send you a letter or email acknowledging receipt of your complaint within a maximum of three days of us receiving the complaint, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
- We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve reviewing your file and speaking to the member of staff who acted for you. If your complaint relates to a matter where the file has been closed we may need to obtain your file from our archive storage facility, which may take 1-5 days.
- Depending on who is managing your complaint, either Martin Real or David Downham, will send you a detailed reply to your complaint, including suggestions for resolving the matter, usually within 28 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter. (If we need longer we will let you know).

- At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange for our Senior Partner, Mr. Huseyin, to review the initial decision.
- We will write to you within 14 days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

Timescales

- We are allowed up to a maximum of **eight weeks** from the date of receipt of your complaint, to send you our final response and resolution, using our internal procedures as set out in this document. If we have not been able to settle your complaint using our internal complaints process as above, within that eight week period, you have a right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, an independent complaints body, established under the Legal Services Act 2007, which deals with legal services complaints. The Legal Ombudsman's contact details are:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Minicom text phone user: 0300 555 1777

Email address: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Time Limits

The Legal Ombudsman's timescales for accepting complaints stipulates that you must refer your complaint within six months of our final written response to your complaint and within one year of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring (or one year of you becoming aware of it).

Objecting to our bill(s)

You may have the right to object to our bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974.

Non-payment of our bill(s)

You should be aware that the firm may be entitled to charge interest if all or part of our bill(s) remains unpaid.

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

Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), can help you if 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 at this link: <http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems.page>

Remedies

We always try to do our best to resolve any complaint or concerns you may have under the Complaints Procedure. The remedies we are able to offer fall into four main categories:

1. Compensation for financial loss
2. Reduction or refund of costs
3. Non-financial remedies
4. Compensation for the emotional effects