

# Complaints Handling Policy

# Our Complaints Policy

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 a complaint, please contact us with the details.

## What will happen next?

We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within three days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.

- We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to the Matter Partner or General Counsel (as appropriate), who will review your matter file and speak to the member(s) of staff who acted for you.
- The Matter Partner or General Counsel will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. S/he will do this within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
- Within three days of the meeting, the Matter Partner or General Counsel will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions s/he has agreed with you.
- If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, the Matter Partner or General Counsel will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including his/her suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
- At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange for the Partnership's Senior Partner to review the 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.

## England and Wales

If you are still not satisfied, and you are a consumer or small business, you may also be entitled to refer your complaint to the complaints and redress system operated by the independent Legal Ombudsman whose contact details can be obtained by using the link: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk).

As of 1 April 2023, if you are entitled to do so, 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 and no later than:

- one year from the date of the act or omission being complained about; or
- one year from the date when the complainant should have realised that there was cause for complaint.

If your complaint is in relation to our bill then there may also be a right to object to the bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. The Legal Ombudsman may not consider a complaint about our bill if you have applied to the court for assessment of the bill.

## Scotland

If the advice relates to Scottish law or involves Scottish qualified practitioners and you are unhappy with our response to your complaint, you can refer your complaint to the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission (SLCC). The SLCC operates strict time limits, which can be viewed here: <https://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk/your-complaint/further-information/time-limits/>.

In general, you must submit a complaint to the SLCC within three years of the service ending or the conduct occurring.

If your complaint is in relation to our bill then you may also apply to have our bill independently assessed by the auditor of court. Please see more information here: <https://auditorcos.org.uk/home/taxation/disputed-accounts>. Please note that if all or part of our bill remains unpaid we reserve the right to charge interest.

We do not participate in any alternative dispute resolution procedure operated by an ADR entity as defined by the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015.

## Data Protection

You have a statutory right to make a complaint to us as a Data Controller if you believe there has been a breach of UK GDPR. Should you wish to make such a complaint, please contact the Data Protection Lead, Helen Gordon by post, email or by phone, using the details below.

**Helen Gordon, Data Protection Lead**

## Office

Cannon Place, 78 Cannon Street, London EC4N 6AF

## Direct Dial

+44 20 7367 3000

## Email

[helen.gordon@cms-cmno.com](mailto:helen.gordon@cms-cmno.com)

We hope that we can resolve any query or concern you may raise about our use of your information. If you are not satisfied with our response you have the right to lodge a complaint in relation to our processing of your Personal Data with a local supervisory authority.