

NORTON CONNOR LIMITED

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

We know that from time to time mistakes will happen, things will go wrong – and where they do we want to sort it out and put things right as quickly and effectively as possible. We want to use any concerns or complaints as a way of improving our service. When we are dealing with complaints, we will always aim to be reasonable, fair and proportionate, and accessible and responsive to your needs. Our Complaints Handling Procedure tells you how to make a complaint and this Complaints Policy tells you what you can expect from us when you do.

Accessibility

- We will always make you aware of how to complain, both when you first instruct us, and at the time you raise any concerns.
- If you tell us about any special needs or disabilities you may have, we will try our best to make arrangements to accommodate you.

Good Client Care

- We will ensure that the staff handling your complaint are properly trained and equipped and that they understand what they should do to provide a good complaints handling process.
- We will handle your complaint in accordance with the law, any relevant policies and guidance, and with all published service standards.

Client Focus

- Our Complaints Handling Procedure will be clear and simple and will contain as few stages as possible.
- Your complaint will be acknowledged and dealt with promptly and you will be given clear timescales at each stage of the process.
- We will deal with your complaint more quickly than the rules require us to if there is a reason why this is desirable.
- We will communicate with you, whether in writing or on the phone, in a clear and understandable way.

Accountability and Transparency

- We will properly investigate your complaint and objectively consider the issues and evidence involved.

- We will give you a clear and honest explanation for the decision provided based on the evidence.
- We will advise you of your right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman if you remain unhappy with our final decision.
- We will keep an ordered and full record of the way in which your complaint was handled, and will not store this information on your matter file.

Acting Fairly and Proportionately

- We will treat you impartially without any discrimination or prejudice.
- Where reasonably possible, we will make sure that your complaint is reviewed by someone who was not involved in the matter leading up to your complaint.

Putting things Right

- If we admit that we have made a mistake or omitted to do something that we should have done, we will offer you our full apologies at the earliest opportunity, as well as an explanation offered about what went wrong.
- Any offer of redress we make you will be prompt and proportionate; we will always try to consider the impact of our mistake on you, and recognise any upset and inconvenience we may have caused.

Learning from Complaints

- We will try to identify ways to improve the service we provide.
- Whenever possible we will tell you of any changes to our procedures and systems which were introduced as a result of your complaint.

NORTON CONNOR LIMITED

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

This Complaints Handling Procedure tells you how we deal with your complaint and how long it is likely to take. It also provides important information about what you can do if you are not happy with the way in which we are dealing with your complaint, or about our final decision. Our Complaints Policy contains further information about what you can expect from us when you make a complaint.

Designated Complaints Handler

If you have any concerns about our service, our work, or our charges, you should discuss these first with the solicitor or fee earner who has day-to-day control of your matter.

If this person cannot satisfactorily address your concerns and you wish to make a complaint, please contact our Designated Complaints Handler Chris Connor. Chris is a Regulated Principal at this practice and a Director of Norton Connor Limited.

You can write to at 145-147 Town Street, Horsforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS18 5BL or send an Email to 'chris@nortonconnor.co.uk'.

Step One: Acknowledging your Complaint

Within two working days of receiving your complaint, your complaint will be recorded in our Complaints Register and a separate file will be opened in which we will store any correspondence and other documents relating to your complaint. Within two working days we will also send you a letter acknowledging your complaint.

Step Two: Investigating your Complaint

Within five working days of receiving your complaint, we will review your file(s) and any other relevant documentation and send you a letter telling you how we propose to deal with your complaint. Examples of what we might say in this letter are as follows:

- If your complaint is straightforward we might make suggestions as to how we can put things right or we may offer you some form of redress;
- If your complaint is more complicated we might ask you to confirm, explain or clarify any issues;
- We may ask to meet with you to discuss things face-to-face and we would hope to be in a position to meet with you no longer than fourteen working days after first receiving your complaint. If you would prefer not to meet, or if we cannot arrange this within an agreeable timescale, we will write to you fully setting out our views on the situation and making suggestions as to how

we can put things right, or asking you to confirm, explain or clarify any issues. Within three working days of any meeting, we will write to you again to confirm what took place and to confirm any offer of redress that we have made.

Whichever form our investigation takes, we will aim to give you our final decision within six weeks of receiving your complaint (or sooner if possible)

Step Three: Appealing against our Final Decision

If you are not satisfied with our final decision, please let us know and we will review our decision again. We will let you know the result of any appeal within five working days of receiving your appeal.

Step Four: The Legal Ombudsman

If you are still not satisfied, you can then contact the Legal Ombudsman about your complaint.

Ordinarily, you cannot use the Legal Ombudsman unless you have first attempted to resolve your complaint using our internal Complaints Handling Procedure, but you will be able to contact the Legal Ombudsman if:

- The complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction within eight weeks of first making the complaint to us; or
- The Legal Ombudsman decides that there are exceptional reasons why the Legal Ombudsman should consider your complaint sooner, or without you having to use our internal Complaints Handling Procedure first; or
- The Legal Ombudsman considers that your complaint cannot be resolved using our internal Complaints Handling Procedure because the relationship between you and us has broken down irretrievably.

If you wish to make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman you must be one of the following:

- 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.

If you are not, you should be aware that you can only obtain redress by using our Complaints Handling Procedure or by mediation or arbitration, or by taking action through the Courts.

Legal Ombudsman Contact Details

Address: PO Box 15870, Birmingham, B30 9EB Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk