

Our Service 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.

Our Service Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint, please contact Colleen Saunders or an alternative Partner if the complaint involves her. You can write to them at our address, which is:

42-44 Albion Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. GL52 2RQ

If we have to change any of the responsibilities or the timescales set out below we will let you know and explain why.

Data Protection Complaints Procedure

We have a separate Complaints Procedure for complaints about how we have handled or are handling your personal data. Please ask us for a copy of this if your complaint is about your personal data.

What will happen next?

1. Within 7 days we will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain any details. If it seems appropriate we will suggest a meeting at this stage. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint.
2. We will then record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint. We will also investigate your complaint by examining the relevant file.
3. If appropriate we will then invite you to meet at the firm to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. We would hope to be in a position to meet with you in this way no longer than 21 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 fully to you setting out our views on the situation and any redress that we would feel to be appropriate.

4. Within 14 days of any meeting we will write to you to confirm what took place and any suggestions that we have agreed with you. In appropriate cases we could offer an apology, a reduction of any bill or a repayment in relation to any payment received.
5. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, please let us know. We will then arrange to review our decision. We would generally aim to do this within 21 days. This will happen in one of the following ways.
 - The firm will review our decision.
 - We will arrange for someone in the firm who has not been involved in your complaint to review it.
 - An alternative Director in the firm will review your complaint within 21 days.
 - We will ask our local law society or another local firm of solicitors to review your complaint. We will let you know how long this process will take.
 - We will invite you to agree to independent mediation. We will let you know how long this process will take.
6. We will let you know the result of the review within 21 days of the end of the review. At this time we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
7. If a complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction within 8 weeks of it being made, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman about your complaint. The question of which, complaints are covered by the Legal Ombudsman is governed by the Scheme Rules published by the Ombudsman

<https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/media/nvmhdgsv/scheme-rules-april-2023-final.pdf>

The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them **within a year of the date of the act or omission** about which you are concerned, **or within a year of your realising there was a concern.**

The address and contact details for the legal ombudsman are set out below

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH

Website www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Telephone 0300 555 0333

Email enquiries enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

Alternative complaints bodies such as ProMediate exist which are ADR certified and competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme.

We do not agree to use ProMediate as the legal ombudsman already works in a similar way even though not ADR certified.

Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA)

You can also complain to the SRA if you are concerned about the behaviour of this firm.

Further details of when and how you can do so can be found by clicking on the SRA Digital Badge on our website at <https://ds-legal.co.uk/>