



## Quality Standard

### 1.12.2 Complaints Policy General



Regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority

Portland Chambers, 66 West Street, Fareham, Hants PO16 0JR

Telephone: 01329 288121 Fax: 01329 822714

#### **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

If you are in any way dissatisfied with our level of service please would you follow the procedures outlined in this Policy. It is our aim to provide the very best service to our clients. If something goes wrong we would like to know as we would hope to be able to restore goodwill.

#### **First stage**

If you are dissatisfied with the level of service provided by the Lawyer having conduct of your matter please would you initially advise the Lawyer concerned as to the reasons for your dissatisfaction. He or she will seek to address these.

#### **Second stage**

If you remain dissatisfied please would you contact our Client Services Manager Mrs Jacqui Smart. She is based at our Portsmouth Office and her direct line number is 02392 776567. She may also be contacted by email on [jacquismart@warnergoodman.co.uk](mailto:jacquismart@warnergoodman.co.uk), by letter to the above address or by arrangement, in person.

Our Client Services Manager will:

1. Ask you to provide details of your complaint.
2. Investigate the complaint on your behalf.
3. Report back to you within 2 working days with:

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- i. Her findings and her proposals to seek to resolve your complaint or
- ii. (If for any reason she is unable to conclude her investigation within two working days) her explanation as to why she has not been able to conclude her investigation and her proposed alternative timescale or
- iii. Her advice that your complaint has been passed to the firm's Client Services Partner (see below).

### Client Services Partner

Our Client Services Partner is Mr Edward Voller. He is based at our Fareham Office. He is also the Firm's Managing Partner and Quality Partner and has also been appointed as the Firm's Compliance Officer for Legal Practice. Edward Voller has overall responsibility for the handling of any complaints.

Our Client Services Manager will refer your complaint to our Client Services Partner if :

- i. She concludes it is appropriate to do so or if
- ii. You are dissatisfied with her proposals or recommendations and you invite her to do so.

### What will happen next?

If and when a complaint is received by the Client Services Partner he will:-

1. Send you a letter acknowledging your complaint within two working days of receipt enclosing a copy of the Firm's Complaints Policy.
2. Advise you either that he will investigate the complaint personally or he will provide you with the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint.
3. Advise you as to the likely timescale before enquiries are complete. (If for any reason this original time estimate cannot be complied with he will explain the reason for the delay and inform you of any revised time estimate).
4. Record your complaint in our Central Register and open a file for your complaint.

Once enquiries have been finalised the Client Services Partner will :

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- i. Invite you to discuss matters further with him or
- ii. Write to advise you as to the extent to which (if at all) he acknowledges the validity of your complaint to include (where appropriate) his proposals to seek to restore goodwill. We will, wherever possible, seek to do this no later than 8 weeks from receipt of your complaint.

If the Client Services Partner was involved in the matter which gave rise to the complaint an independent Partner will handle it.

As and when we conclude that the complaints process has been concluded the Client Services Partner will advise you to this effect by way of a final written response.

If you remain dissatisfied you may have the right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman at the conclusion of our complaints process. Written correspondence should be sent to the Legal Ombudsman at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ. Such a complaint should, ordinarily be made within 6 months of you receiving from us a final written response to your complaint. However, in certain circumstances the Legal Ombudsman will accept complaints up to 6 years from the date of act/omission or within 3 years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint. If in doubt please refer to their website at [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk) or call 0300 555 0333. Alternatively you can email to [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk).

Please also note that whilst all individual clients will ordinarily have a right of recourse to the Legal Ombudsman certain other types of client may not – e.g businesses, enterprises or charities above a certain size. Again please refer to the Legal Ombudsman’s website for full details.

If you have a complaint about a bill please note that:

- i) You may also have the right to object to the bill by making a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. 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.
- ii) If all or any part of a bill remains unpaid the firm may be entitled to charge interest.

Please note, however, the Legal Ombudsman may not deal with a complaint about a bill if you have applied to the Court for assessment of that bill.