

Complaints policy

Our complaints policy

We are committed to providing a high quality legal service to all our clients. We welcome any feedback or suggestions that you may have and if you have a complaint please tell us. This will enable us to improve our standards and level of service.

If however you consider our service has fallen short from acceptable standards, you can contact us about this by email, phone and letter. It does not have to be made in writing, although this can help us to identify your key areas of concern. You should also be aware that any complaint must be made to us either within 6 years of the action/omission or within 3 years of the cause of the complaint.

Our complaints procedure

The initial steps - lawyer review

In the first instance we ask that you contact the person with day-to-day conduct of your case to discuss your complaint, with a view to resolving the situation informally. If the complaint has not been resolved within 7 days, or you are unhappy with our response you can make a complaint to our Complaints Coordinator who will direct your complaint to the relevant department Supervisor and monitor until resolved.

Supervisor Complaint Investigation

The Supervisor will be a Director or other senior manager who is responsible for the overall supervision of your work. Their name and contact details will have been given to you in our engagement letter.

The Supervisor will complete the following procedure:

Step 1

- The Supervisor will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and ask you to confirm or explain details where we need clarification. A copy of this policy will be enclosed.
- The letter will be sent you within 4 working days of us receiving your complaint.

Step 2

- The Supervisor will record your complaint in our central register and open a separate file for your complaint.
- This will be done within 4 working days of receiving your complaint.

Step 3

If we have enough information and no response is needed from you under Step 1 above, we will then start to investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps:

- The Supervisor will ask the person who acted for you to provide information together with the relevant file of papers.
- This will take up to 7 working days.
- The Supervisor will then examine that reply alongside your complaint. If necessary, further questions might be asked of the person who acted for you to ensure that all aspects of your complaint are examined.

- This will take up to 7 working days from receiving those answers.
- Throughout this process, the Supervisor will contact you to advise you of what is being done to progress the investigation of your complaint.
- As part of the investigation process you may communicate with the Supervisor over the telephone, in writing or either you or the Supervisor may request that a meeting be held.
- If a meeting is held, the Supervisor will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions that have been agreed with you. The letter will be sent to you within 7 working days of the meeting.
- If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.

Step 4

- The Supervisor will write to you to provide you with final findings in relation to your complaint.
- This will be within 7 days of us receiving all the answers to the questions asked in step 3.

Complaints Director Review

In the event that you remain dissatisfied with the conclusions of the Supervisor, you should explain why, in writing, to the Complaints Director Garry Warman at Whitehead Monckton, 32-33 Watling Street, Canterbury Kent CT1 2AN, or by emailing him at garrywarman@whitehead-monckton.co.uk. He will review your complaint and the findings of the Supervisor. He may request a meeting to investigate further. On completion of the review he will write to you with his findings. This will be concluded within 2 - 3 weeks of you referring the Supervisor decision to him for review. This is the last step to our internal complaints procedure.

Further steps

If you remain unhappy with the outcome of our internal complaints procedure, you are entitled to contact the Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806 Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ and ask them to become involved. Telephone number: 0300 555 0333 or if you are calling from overseas, +44 121 245 3050. Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk. Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk. You should be aware that the Legal Ombudsman has a time limit under which they can become involved. At the moment that time limit is 6 months following your receipt of our formal written response. With effect from the 9th July 2015, this time limit will become 12 months following your receipt of our Complaints Director's written response.

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