

B6.1 CLIENT COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY



We strive to provide all our clients with the highest quality legal service possible but appreciate that there may be occasions when you feel this service level has not been achieved and that you have cause for complaint. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to address your dissatisfaction and to improve our service to all our clients.

We will always aim to resolve any problem quickly and to your satisfaction. There will be no charge for dealing with your complaint and we will advise if the Complaints Handling Procedure will have any effect on any ongoing matters that you have with us.

Our Complaints Handling Procedure.

If you have a complaint about Chattertons Legal Services Limited, we will initially suggest that you speak directly to the person dealing with your case to see if they can resolve the problem. If you have tried to do this and have not received a response or are not happy with the explanation given, or if you do not wish to contact the person concerned, then please contact our Risk and Compliance Team

- ❑ In writing: The Risk and Compliance Team, Chattertons Legal Services Ltd, 1 Trentside Business Village, Farndon Road, Newark, Notts NG24 4XB.
- ❑ By email: complaints@Chattertons.com.
- ❑ By telephone: 01636 593507.

We would prefer to receive your complaint in writing or by email in order that we can review the issues in full.

To help to understand your complaint, and in order that we do not miss anything, please tell us:-

- ❑ Your full name and contact details.
- ❑ What you think we have got wrong.
- ❑ What you hope to achieve as a result of your complaint.
- ❑ Your file reference number (if you have it)

If you require any help in making your complaint, please let us know. Our Risk and Compliance Team will be responsible for investigating and handling your complaint and they may involve other senior members of staff in their investigations.

What Will Happen Next?

- ❑ We will write to you to acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 days of receiving it and we will send you a copy of this procedure.
- ❑ We may ask you to confirm or explain the issues of your complaint in more detail.
- ❑ We will confirm the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint.
- ❑ We will record your complaint in our central register to include your name, your file number, and the issues you are complaining about and what (if anything) we are going to do to resolve them.

The investigation

Our investigation into your complaint will involve one or more of the following steps.

- ❑ Reviewing your file.
- ❑ Asking the member of staff who acted for you for further information.
- ❑ Asking you for further information.
- ❑ Reviewing all the details of your complaint and providing you with a final response on the outcome of each issue and how we intend to resolve your complaint.

We will do all of these things as quickly as possible and we aim to complete our investigation and send you a detailed reply to your complaint, including our suggestions for resolving any issue, within 8 weeks. If this is not possible, we will explain why.

If you are not satisfied with our final response, you can ask The Legal Ombudsman to consider your complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman

We hope that we will have been able to resolve your complaint satisfactorily. However, if you remain unhappy with our response then you can refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, an independent complaints body established under the Legal Services Act, who can investigate complaints about the legal service you have received from us.

If it takes more than 8 weeks to resolve your complaint, you may refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman without waiting for a final response, although you may choose to wait for a final response in any event as this may be helpful. If we have to make a significant change to any of our timescales mentioned above, you will be informed with an explanation.

Your complaint should normally have to meet all the criteria below for the Legal Ombudsman to accept it:

- ❑ The problem or when you became aware of it happened after 5 October 2010.
- ❑ You are referring your complaint within one year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within one year of you realising there was a concern.
- ❑ You are referring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final response to you.

The Legal Ombudsman's contact details are: -

- ❑ By post at Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH.
- ❑ By telephone 0300 555 0333
- ❑ By email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
- ❑ Website is www.legalombudsman.org.uk

As already advised, we will not charge you for the handling of your complaint. The Legal Ombudsman service is also free of charge. However please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on the matter, and all or some of the bill is not paid, we may be entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding. Please also note that we have a lien over your file until the bill is paid in full. This means that we will not give you a copy of your file until the bill has been settled.

Solicitors Regulation Authority

We are regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), and they can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic. You can raise your concerns with them by visiting their website at www.sra.org.uk.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative complaints bodies such as ProMediate (UK) Limited <http://www.promediate.co.uk> are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme. Please note, we do not agree to use such a firm, but we are required to inform you that Alternative Dispute Resolution is available.