

## Complaints Handling Procedure

### Our 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 Complaints Procedure

We would ask that you attempt to resolve your matter with the person dealing with your matter however if you would prefer not to deal this person then the person with overall responsibility for complaints handling is **Mr. Shahid Khan**, a Director for the Firm. You can contact Mr. Khan by either writing to Advice Wise Solicitors, 24 Cameron Road, Seven Kings, Essex, IG3 8LB. The telephone number is 0208 551 1777. The email address is [shahid@advicewisesolicitors.com](mailto:shahid@advicewisesolicitors.com).

### What Will Happen Next

#### **Step One: Acknowledging your Complaint.**

Within seven working days of receiving your complaint, we will acknowledge your complaint and record it in our Complaints Register, a separate file will be opened in which we will store any correspondence and other documents relating to your complaint.

#### **Step Two: Investigating your Complaint.**

We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to our client care director, Mr. Khan, will either herself, or appoint an appropriate individual to review your matter file and speak to the member of staff who acted for you.

Examples of how we may deal with your complaint 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.

Whichever form our investigation takes, we will aim to give you our final decision within eight 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 Fourteen days of receiving your appeal.

#### **Step Four: The Legal Ombudsman**

If you remain dissatisfied with our final response to your complaint you may be eligible to refer your complaint to the legal ombudsman provided you do so within 6 months of our final response to you in respect of your complaint.

Any complaint made to the Legal Ombudsman must be made within 1 year from the date of the problem which brought about your complaint or within 1 year from the date that you should have reasonably known that there was cause for complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman will not normally accept a complaint unless we have been given the opportunity to respond first. However, you will be able to escalate matters to the Legal Ombudsman if:

- a. The complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction within 8 weeks from the date that it was made;
- b. The Legal Ombudsman considers that there are exceptional reasons to consider the complaint sooner, or, without it having been made to the firm first;
- c. Where the Legal Ombudsman considers the resolution through our internal complaint's procedure is not possible due to a breakdown in the relationship between you and the firm.

Anyone making a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must be:

- An individual;
- An enterprise with less than ten staff or with a balance sheet of less than 2 million Euros as defined by the European Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003;
- A club, association, or society with an annual income of less than £1 million;
- A charity with an annual income less than £1 million;
- A trustee of a trust with a net asset value of less than £1 million;
- A personal representative or the residuary beneficiaries of an estate where a person with a complaint died before referring their complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.
- If you do not fall into the list of above complainants then the only option open to you is to seek redress through the firm's Complaints Handling Procedure or by mediation, arbitration or by action through the Courts.

Contact details for the Legal Ombudsman are:

Address: PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ.

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

Website: [www.legalombudsman.co.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.co.uk)

#### **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has confirmed that the following Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) entities are currently available to deal with disputes in the legal services sector: Ombudsman Services, ProMediate and Small Claims Mediation in the event you wish to engage in mediation concerning your complaint. However, we are not agreeable to enter into ADR mediation until the Legal Ombudsman have been approved as an ADR provider.

### **Complaints about your bill**

The above complaints procedure also applies to complaints arising concerning our bill. 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; and that if all, or part, of a bill remains unpaid, the firm may be entitled to charge interest.

### **Raising concerns with our Regulator**

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) 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 find information about raising your concerns with the SRA at [www.sra.org.uk](http://www.sra.org.uk) in the 'For the public' section.

### **NB:**

If you need information in another language, large print, Braille or on audio CD please call our team on [0 330 053 6767](tel:03300536767) or email [publications@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:publications@legalombudsman.org.uk).