

Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure

Our complaints policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we would like you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards.

If you become unhappy or concerned about our service in the first instance it may be helpful to contact the fee earner handling your matter to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues.

Our complaints procedure

If you would prefer not to discuss your concerns with the fee earner handling your matter or if your concerns have not been resolved, please then contact the Complaints Partner in the office which is dealing with/dealt with your matter, or our Practice Manager. The relevant contact details are as follows:

Oxford – James Hulme - telephone 01865 311133 or email jhulme@bowerbailey.co.uk

Banbury – Phil Cooksey - telephone 01295 265566 or email pcooksey@bowerbailey.co.uk

Witney – Stuart Palmer – telephone 01993 705095 or email spalmer@bowerbailey.co.uk

Swindon – James Hulme – telephone 01865 311133 or email jhulme@bowerbailey.co.uk

Practice Manager – Mark Haigh – telephone 01993 705095 mhaigh@bowerbailey.co.uk

If your concerns are about the Complaints Partner in the office which is dealing with/dealt with your matter, we will refer it to one of the other Complaints Partners.

We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within 7 days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.

We will then investigate your complaint. The Complaints Partner will review your matter file and speak to the fee earner handling your matter. The Complaints Partner will send you a detailed written response to your complaint, including our suggestions for resolving the matter within 28 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.

At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will then review our suggested resolution. We ask that you do this within 7 days of receipt of our written response.

We will write to you within 14 days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

If you are still not satisfied with our final response to your complaint, we will then let you know if we agree to using Alternative Dispute Resolution, or whether you may then be able to ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint. This service is available to individuals, small businesses, charities, clubs, associations and clubs (the Legal Ombudsman will confirm if you need clarification).

You will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint or within one year of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring, or, if outside of this period, within one year of when you should reasonably have been aware of it.

The Legal Ombudsman's contact details are:

Address: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Minicom: 0300 555 1777

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.legalombudsman.co.uk

We will endeavour to meet the above timescales for handling your complaint and will contact you if we need further time at any stage, subject always to letting you have our final written response within 8 weeks of receiving your complaint. For the sake of clarity, we confirm that we do not charge for handling complaints and if we are still acting for you making a complaint will not affect how we handle your matter.

Complaints in relation to bills

If your complaint is about a bill you have received, in addition to the right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, you may also have the right to apply to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. However, if you have already applied to the Court for an assessment of your bill the Legal Ombudsman may not deal with your complaint.

Complaints in relation to Data Protection

If you wish to make a complaint relating to how we have handled your personal data or concerns regarding your data protection and privacy rights, we will deal with it in accordance with our Data Protection Complaints Procedure. This does not affect your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the UK supervisory authority for data protection issues. The ICO's contact details are:

Address: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Solicitors Regulation Authority

We are regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (the SRA). If you have a complaint about our conduct visit the SRA website to see how you can raise your concerns:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/>