

## Complaints Procedure

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. We constantly monitor our service and seek to improve it. It is very important to us to know whether or not you are satisfied with our service. Any complaint about the quality of our service or our fees or charges will be considered in accordance with this procedure.

We will ensure that your complaint is dealt with promptly, fairly and free of charge.

### Our complaints procedure

If you have a complaint, you should contact the fee earner handling your matter or their supervisor. If you prefer not to contact them directly, please contact our **Complaints team** at [Complaints@clarkewillmott.com](mailto:Complaints@clarkewillmott.com) or contact our Client Care Partner by writing to our Southampton office: **F.A.O Client Care Partner at Clarke Willmott LLP, Burlington House, Botleigh Grange Business Park, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 2AF.**

To help us to understand your complaint and address all concerns, please tell us:

- \* Your full name and contact details
- \* What you think we got wrong
- \* How you would like us to resolve it
- \* Your file reference number (if you have one)

### What will happen next?

- 1 We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and if necessary, we may ask you to clarify some details. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. You can expect to receive our letter within **2 working days** of us receiving your complaint.
- 2 We will record your complaint in our central register (for monitoring and management information purposes) and open a separate file for your complaint.
- 3 We will investigate your complaint by reviewing your file and speaking with those who represented you. **Within 4 weeks** of receiving your complaint, we will respond in writing to the concerns you have raised. If for any reason it is not possible to provide our response in that time period, we will write to you explaining why and when you can expect to hear from us.
- 4 If, having received our written response, you remain dissatisfied with our service or the manner in which your complaint has been addressed, you can ask that your matter be reviewed by our Client Care Partner. They will review your complaint and within **2 weeks** confirm to you the firm's final position.
- 5 If you are still not satisfied, you may be able to ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider your complaint. The Legal Ombudsman is the independent organisation which handles complaints against solicitors. The Legal Ombudsman service is open to all members of the public, very

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small businesses, charities, clubs and trusts. For more information including who may use their services and the time periods for involving them please contact the Legal Ombudsman:

<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk">enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk</a>
<b>Address</b>	PO Box 6167. Slough, SL1 0EH
<b>Telephone</b>	0300 555 0333
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk">www.legalombudsman.org.uk</a>

**Please note there are time limits that you must meet before the Legal Ombudsman will investigate your complaint.**

The act or omission you wish to complain about must have happened after 5 October 2010, or, if it happened on or before 5 October 2010, you must only have become aware of it after 5 October 2010.

You must refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman no later than:

- (i) **one** year from the act or omission; or
- (ii) **one** year from when you should have reasonably known there was cause for complaint.

In addition, you must contact the Legal Ombudsman no more than six months after the date of our final response to your complaint - otherwise they may be unable to investigate your complaint. If you are concerned about meeting this deadline, please call the Legal Ombudsman - 0300 555 0333.

The Legal Ombudsman may ask for your confidential information and/or documentation from your file. Where required, we will co-operate with the Legal Ombudsman.

- 6 **If we do not hear from you 28 days from the date of our letter at number 3 above, we will consider that response to be our final response and will close your complaint. Your time limit to take your matter to the Legal Ombudsman will be six months from the date of that letter.**
- 7 If you are concerned about our conduct or behaviour rather than our service, your complaint should be addressed to the Solicitors Regulation Authority at <http://www.sra.org.uk>.
- 8 You may have a right, under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974, to ask the court to assess whether the charges in our bill are reasonable. However, the Legal Ombudsman may not be able to consider a complaint about our bill if you have applied to the court for the bill to be assessed.
- 9 If we have issued a bill for work done on your matter and it remains unpaid, either in full or in part, we may be entitled to charge interest on the outstanding amount. This is detailed in our general terms of business.