

# Whittinghams Solicitors Complaints Policy

We want to give you the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service, we have provided then you should inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve the problem.

In the first instance, it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues at this stage. If you would like to make a formal complaint, then you can read our full complaints procedure below. Making a complaint will not affect how we handle your case.

## Our complaints policy

Whittinghams Solicitors is committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we want you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards.

## Our complaints procedure

If you have a concern or a complaint, please contact us as soon as you are aware of the problem so this can be addressed. Please address your concerns in writing to Howard Jones at Whittinghams Solcitors, Address 5-7 Court Road, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan, CF31 1BE, Wales or via email to [howard.jones@whittinghams.co.uk](mailto:howard.jones@whittinghams.co.uk)

## What will happen next?

1. We will review your submission and respond to you with acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within five working days of our having received it. If you have special requirements regarding the correspondence due to a disability, please let us know and we shall do our best to accommodate any alternative arrangements you may require.
2. We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to our complaints handling partner, Howard Jones, who will review your matter file and speak to the member of staff who acted for you.
3. Howard Jones will then respond to you in writing or call you to discuss and, it is hoped, resolve your complaint. He will do this within 14 working days of sending you the acknowledgement letter. Within 7 working days of the call, Howard Jones will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he has agreed with you.
4. Howard Jones will then send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including his suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 working days.
5. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again to explain why you remain unhappy with our response and we will review your comments.
6. We will write to you within 14 working days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint, and explaining our reasons.
7. If you are still not satisfied, you can then contact the Legal Ombudsman using the details that follow.

(Our timescales are subject to be amended depending on the complexity of the matter and submission. If we must change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.)

### **What do to if we cannot resolve your complaint?**

The Legal Ombudsman can help you if we are unable to resolve your complaint ourselves. They will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your case.

Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint

From the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2023, the Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them **within a year of the date of the act or omission** about which you are concerned, **or within a year of your realising there was a concern**.

### **Contact details;**

Visit: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 9am to 5pm.

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

Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

### **Please Note before contacting the Legal Ombudsman:**

1. If your complaint is specifically about our bill, you have the right to object to it and apply for an assessment of it under part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. If you should choose to exercise this right, and the court is assessing our bill, you may be unable to use the Legal Ombudsman service.
2. If you are complaining as a business client, unless you are a “micro business” (as defined by the European Union), you may not be able to use the Legal Ombudsman scheme and should check the guidance on Legal Ombudsman’s website.
3. If you refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman as a trustee/personal representative (executor/administrator) or beneficiary of the estate/trust of a person who, before they died, had not referred the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman the period runs from when the deceased should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint; and when the complainant (or the deceased) should reasonably have known there was a cause for complaint will be assessed on the basis of the complainant’s (or deceased’s) own knowledge, disregarding what the complainant (or the deceased) might have been told if he/she had sought advice.
4. If the Ombudsman considers there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. serious illness or you were still within the time limits when you made your initial

complaint to them) then he/she may extend any of the above time limits to the extent that he/she considers fair.

### **The Solicitors Regulation Authority**

The Solicitors Regulation Authority 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 the [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#).