

APPENDIX H CLIENT COMPLAINT POLICY

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards. A copy of this document will be supplied to any person who indicates a wish to record a formal complaint. You also have the right to report us directly to the SRA if your complaint is not service related. More information can be found at <http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page>

How do I make a complaint?

1. If you have a complaint or feel unhappy with our services, we hope that you will first discuss the matter with the person dealing with your case (the caseworker). In the event that you remain dissatisfied and wish to make a formal complaint, you can contact us in writing (by letter, fax or email) or by speaking with our Complaints Manager whose contact details are as follows:

Mr J M Mason
Solicitor and LLP Member
Clarks Solicitors
Hazledine House
Telford Centre
Telford
Shropshire TF3 4JL

Telephone : 01952 291666
FAX : 01952 291331
Email : jonathan.mason@clarkeslaw.co.uk

He is responsible to the firm's Managing Partner.

2. When making contact and to assist us to understand your complaint, please tell us the following:
 - Your full name and contact details;
 - What you think has gone wrong;
 - What you are hoping to achieve following your complaint;
 - The person who dealt with your matter, and
 - Your file reference (from any correspondence that you have from us).
3. If you feel you need assistance in making your complaint we will try to assist where possible.

How will you deal with my complaint - what will happen next?

4. We will record your complaint in our Central Register and open a file for your complaint. We will do this immediately we receive your email, letter, fax or call.
5. The Complaints Manager will write to you to acknowledge your complaint and enclose a copy of this document. You can expect to receive a written acknowledgement from the Complaints Manager within three working days of receiving your email, letter, fax or call.
6. The Complaints Manager will refer your complaint to the relevant Head of Department. We will then start to investigate. This may involve one or more of the following steps:

- (a) We may ask the person who acted for you (the caseworker) to reply directly to you within five working days.
 - (b) We may consider the caseworker's reply and any information in your complaint file. We may then ask the caseworker for more information. This could take a further five working days from receiving the caseworker's reply, up to a total of ten working days from receipt of your referral.
 - (c) If appropriate, we will invite you to meet the Head of the Department, to discuss and hopefully to resolve your complaint. We will do this within five working days of receiving all the necessary details from the caseworker who dealt with your case, up to a total of ten working days from receipt of your referral. Within five working days of that meeting, we will write to confirm what took place, with details of any solutions that we may have agreed with you.
7. We will always try to deal with your concerns in person or by telephone. In the event that you do not want a meeting, or if it is impossible to arrange one, we will send you a written reply, identifying your concerns and setting out our suggestions for resolving the matter. We will use email whenever possible. This will happen within five working days of us completing our investigations.

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

8. If you are still not satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman and ask for your complaint to be reviewed by them. The Legal Ombudsman's contact details are as follows:
 - By post at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ;
 - By telephone 0300 555 0333;
 - By email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
9. In most cases, you must refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final written response to your complaint and within six years of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurred (or within three years of you becoming aware of it) as long as the alleged act or omission occurred after 5 October 2010. Further details are available on the Legal Ombudsman's website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Will there be a cost to me when making a complaint?

10. We do not make any charge to you for handling your complaint.
11. If we have issued an Invoice for work carried out on the matter you are making a complaint about and all or some of the Invoice remains outstanding, we may be entitled to charge you interest on the amount outstanding.
12. Access the Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.