

Complaints procedure

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 maintain and improve our standards.

If you have a complaint, please contact us with the details. If we have to change any of the timescales set out below, we will let you know.

Investigation and meeting

- 1 Within three days we will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain the details. We may suggest that we meet to clarify any details.
- 2 We will then record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint and investigate your complaint. This may involve one or more of the following steps.
 - Jayne Willetts will consider your complaint in detail; or
 - Bronwen Still who is a Solicitor Consultant to the practice will investigate your complaint and report to us.
- 3 At this stage, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you. We would aim to be in a position to meet with you within 14 days of first receiving your complaint. If you would prefer not to meet, or if we cannot arrange this within an agreed timescale, we will write to you setting out our views on the situation and any redress.
- 4 Within three days of the meeting we will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions that we have agreed with you. In appropriate cases we could offer an apology, a reduction of any bill or a repayment in relation to any payment received.

Review

- 5 At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, please contact us again. We will then arrange to review our decision within the next 10 days. This may happen in one of the following ways:-
 - We will review the decision ourselves; or

- We will ask an independent solicitor who is a specialist in professional regulation work to review your complaint. This may take longer than 10 days in which case we will let you know how long this process will take:
or
 - We will invite you to agree to an independent mediation. This again may take longer than 10 days and we will do our best to let you know how long this will take.
- 6 We will let you know the result of the review within 5 days of the end of the review. At this time, we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

Legal Ombudsman

- 7 If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman (www.legalombudsman.org.uk) PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH (0300 555 0333) about your complaint – so that the complaint can be independently reviewed. There are however restrictions to this service for certain businesses and other organisations – see the Legal Ombudsman’s website for further details.
- 8 The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to it **within one year** of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or **within one year** of you realising that there was a concern. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman **within six months** of our final response to you.

Complaints about costs – detailed assessment

- 9 If your complaint relates only to the amount of our costs, you may be entitled to have our charges reviewed by the court. This is called “*detailed assessment*”. The procedure is set out in sections 70, 71 and 72 of the Solicitors Act 1974. You should be aware that there are strict time limits applicable to this procedure. In particular, Section 70 requires an application to the court for assessment of costs to be made within **one month of the date of the solicitor’s bill**. You may wish therefore to seek independent legal advice. We may also be entitled to charge interest on any outstanding sums from any invoices that are unpaid in full or part.

Jayne Willetts & Co Solicitors Limited
8 May 2024