

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Our aim as a practice is to provide our clients with a professional and effective service in an approachable manner. We hope you will find that we achieve that aim and that you will be happy with the service you receive. However, if at any time you have any problem or issue over the conduct of your matter then you are entitled to complain and our procedure for this is set out below:

In the first instance, you should raise your complaint with the Fee Earner assigned to your matter and we are required to respond to your complaint within 8 weeks of receipt.

If you do not feel that your complaint has been addressed to your satisfaction, you should notify the relevant Head of Department (Mr. Stephen Hall for Private Client, Civil Litigation and Conveyancing; Mrs. Janet Hutchings for Family).

If your complaint is in relation to Mrs. Janet Hutchings, then please refer the matter to Mr. Stephen Hall.

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If still unresolved to your satisfaction, you may take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. Normally, you should bring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of receiving a final response from us about your complaint and not later than 12 months from the date of the act or omission giving rise to the complaint or, alternatively, 12 months from the date you should reasonably have known there are grounds for complaint.

Should you wish to take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, the contact details are as follows:

The Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

A complainant to the Legal Ombudsman must be one of the following:

- An individual;
- A micro-enterprise as defined in European Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 (broadly, an enterprise with fewer than 10 staff and a turnover or balance sheet value not exceeding €2 million);
- A charity with an annual income less than £1 million;
- A club, association or society with an annual income less than £1 million;

- A trustee of a trust with a net asset value less than £1 million; or a personal representative or the residuary beneficiaries of an estate where a person with a complaint died before referring it to the Legal Ombudsman.
- If you do not fall into any of these categories, you should be aware that you can only obtain redress by using our Complaints Handling Procedure or by mediation or arbitration, or by taking action through the Courts.

If the matter refers to a probate issue, the following terms shall apply:

- (a) where a complaint is referred by a personal representative or beneficiary of the estate 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
- (b) 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 the deceased's) own knowledge, disregarding what the complainant (or the deceased) might have been told if they had sought advice.

Kindly note that you have the right to object to your bill by giving notice to us in accordance with the Notice on the reverse of our account. If it is not satisfactorily resolved, you may object by applying to the Court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors' Act 1974 and, if all or part of our bill remains unpaid, we may be entitled to charge interest.

If your complaint relates to our behaviour such as dishonesty, misuse of your funds or discrimination on the grounds of your age, disability or other characteristic, you should seek advice from The Solicitors Regulation Authority. For more information, please visit <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/>