

Complaints Handling Procedure

Introduction

This procedure supplements Clause 12 of our standard Terms and Conditions.

If a client is unhappy about any aspect of our service, they should first raise the matter with our Practice Manager:

By post marked "Confidential" addressed to:

East Devon Law, Barton Chambers, 7 Barton Orchard,
Tipton St John, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 0AN

By telephone: 01404 515427

By email: advice@eastdevonlaw.co.uk

Timescale & Process

We will acknowledge all complaints within two working days, and an initial review will be undertaken within 14 days. The client will then be invited to a meeting with our Practice Manager to discuss and attempt to resolve their complaint. Written confirmation of the discussion and any agreed solutions will be confirmed in writing within 7 days of the meeting. If the complaint cannot be resolved at this meeting, or if the client does not wish to attend a meeting, our written final response will be sent to them within eight weeks of the date of their initial complaint.

Ombudsman

If a client is not satisfied with the firm's final response, or they do not receive a response within eight weeks, they can refer their complaint to the Legal Ombudsman (LeO):

By post addressed to: The Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

By telephone: 0300 555 0333

By email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

The website address is: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Ordinarily, a client can ask the Legal Ombudsman to look at their complaint if it meets all three of the conditions below:

1. The problem, or when the client discovered it, occurred after 5 October 2010;
and
2. They are referring their complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within either 6 years of the problem occurring or within 3 years from when they discovered it
and ...

3. They are referring their complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of our final response.

There might be exceptional situations when a client may refer their matter to LeO within the time limits set out above, or without having to first refer their complaint to their service provider.

A client can also refer their complaint to an Alternative Dispute Resolution body (such as Pro Mediate UK Limited of Brow Farm, Top Road, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 6SP) which is competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both the client and the firm wish to use such a scheme. The firm will use Pro Mediate UK Limited. The timescale for contacting them is 12 months.

Chartered Legal Executives

If a client's complaint relates directly to the conduct of a CILEx member, they have the right to complain, free of charge, to CILEx Regulation. Complaints to CILEx Regulation should be made within 12 months of the events that gave rise to the complaint or within 12 months of the client having knowledge of the events, whichever is the greater. CILEx Regulation can be contacted:

By post addressed to: Kempston Manor, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7AB

By telephone: 01234 845770

By email: info@cilexregulation.org.uk

The website address is: www.cilexregulation.org.uk Click on 'I am a Consumer', then 'Complaints'

A copy of the CILEx Regulation Complaints Procedure is available on request or direct from CILEx Regulation.

Solicitors

If a client's complaint relates directly to the conduct of a Solicitor, they have the right to complain free of charge to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). Complaints to the SRA should be made within 12 months of the misconduct that gave rise to the complaint or within 12 months of the client having knowledge of the misconduct, whichever is the greater. The SRA does not investigate issues about the service provided by solicitors, this can only dealt with by the Legal Ombudsman (see above).

The SRA can be contacted:

By post addressed to: The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham B1 1RN

By telephone: 0370 606 2555.

By email: contactcentre@sra.org.uk

The website address is: www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/

A copy of the SRA Conduct Report Form is available on request or directly from the SRA.

The Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP)

If a client who believes that a STEP member has not acted in accordance with STEP's professional standards, they can lodge a complaint:

By post addressed to: The Director of Governance and Professional Standards, STEP, Artillery House (South), 11-19 Artillery Row, London SW1P 1RT

By telephone: 020 7340 0500

By email: Michael.Evans@step.org

A complaint form can be downloaded from the STEP website.

The website address is: www.step.org.uk

Data Handling

If a client's complaint relates to the way the firm processes their personal information, they may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office – please see the accompanying Data Protection Privacy Notice for details of how to contact them.

Person responsible for this policy: Practice Manager

Policy reviewed: 6-monthly

Policy last reviewed: November 2020