

COMPLAINTS POLICY

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. If you are not happy with the way in which your matter is being handled, we would wish to know at once so that we can immediately improve our service to you. Likewise, if you are pleased with our service please tell us and your friends and business contacts. All such feedback will help us to monitor and improve our service to all our clients.

Our Complaints Procedure

If you feel that we are not providing the level of service we should, please immediately tell the member of staff conducting your matter or the supervising Partner so that they have the opportunity to improve their handling of it for you.

If you are not confident that the person handling your matter can or will adequately address your concerns or has failed to do so and you would like the service you have received more formally investigated, you may raise the issues with our Compliance and Risk Officer at Girlings by writing to 16 Rose Lane Canterbury CT1 2UR, by emailing garethharvey@girlings.com or by calling 01227 768374. Our Compliance and Risk Officer will record your complaint in a central register and will be responsible for seeing that it is dealt with promptly. He or she will regularly check on progress if its detailed investigation is delegated to others.

Our Compliance and Risk Officer will acknowledge your initial letter of complaint within five working days of its receipt and will inform you of the name and contact details of the person from whom you should expect to receive a detailed response.

That person will contact you within a further seven working days, either with a response to your complaint or with a time estimate within which a considered response will be provided.

If you are not then satisfied with the response received, it will be open to you to request that the reply to your complaint be considered by a senior partner within Girlings. The further consideration of your complaint will state our final position in relation to your complaint. We will provide our final response within 8 weeks of your initial complaint.

If you are still not satisfied with our response, or we have not been able to resolve it with you within 8 weeks of your initial complaint, you will have the option of referring your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman. You may contact the Legal Ombudsman:

- By Phone on 0300 555 0333
- By email at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk or
- By post at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ

If you wish to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, generally you should do so:

- within six months of the date of our final response to your complaint; and
- within six years from the date of the act/omission; or
- three years from when the complainant should have known there was cause for complaint (if the act or omission took place more than six years ago).

For further information on making a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, please refer to their website at www.legalombudsman.org.uk

If your complaint is about your bill, you may have the right to apply to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. If you wish to take advantage of this procedure you should be aware that strict time limits apply and the Legal Ombudsman may not consider a complaint about a bill if you have applied to the court for an assessment.

Alternative complaint bodies exist (such as Pro Mediate UK) which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and the Firm wish to use such a scheme. We do not agree to use such a scheme due to the existence of the Legal Ombudsman.

The Legal Ombudsman deals with service issues. If you are concerned about our conduct or behaviour rather than our service, your complaint should be addressed to the Solicitors Regulation Authority. If you would like any further information on this procedure, please feel free to contact our Compliance and Risk Officer.