

## **Straw & Pearce**

### **Complaints Handling Procedure**

#### **Our complaints policy**

We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). 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. We are committed to identifying the cause of your complaint. This will help us to improve our standards and correct any unsatisfactory procedures.

#### **Our complaints procedure**

If you have a complaint, please contact our client care partner, Ms Gemma Cole who has overall responsibility for handling complaints, with the details. If the complaint relates to Ms Cole then please contact Mr Wardley.

We will endeavour to handle your complaint promptly, fairly and free of charge.

#### **What will happen next?**

1. If you have not already done so, we ask that you let us know the full nature of the problem.
2. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within five working days of us receiving the complaint, enclosing a copy of this procedure to explain what happens next.
3. We shall then investigate the matter by reviewing the matter file and speaking to the member of staff concerned within ten working days of acknowledging receipt of the complaint. If, for some reason, the matter cannot be investigated in this timeframe, then we will write to you notifying you of this together with the reason why and giving a revised timescale.
4. Once the investigation has been completed the client care partner will either send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including any suggestions for resolving the matter, or invite you to a meeting within fifteen working dates of the investigation being completed.
5. If a meeting takes place, the client care partner will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he/she has agreed with you. This will be done within 5 working days of the meeting.
6. If you are satisfied with our response following the above steps, that will be the end of the matter.
7. If you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange for another partner to review the decision.
8. We will write to you within 10 working days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
9. If there are good grounds for your complaint we will consider making appropriate redress.

## **Legal Ombudsman**

We are permitted a period of eight weeks to consider the complaint. If for any reason we are unable to resolve the problem between us within that timeframe, then our clients are advised that they may ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint.

Clients are free to refer any complaint about our work, fees or level of service but there are some conditions and time limits. Please be aware that any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six months of the client having received a final written response from us about their complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within one year of the act or omission about which the client is complaining occurring or from when the client should have known about or become aware that there were grounds for complaint. The Legal Ombudsman will not accept complaints where the act or date of awareness was before 6 October 2010.

For further information, please contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or visit [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk). The Legal Ombudsman may be contacted at PO Box 6167 Slough SL1 0EH

## **Solicitors Regulation Authority**

If you believe that one of our solicitors might be dishonest or you have concerns about their ethics or integrity, you also have the right to notify our regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). There are no time limits for making a report but there are limits on what the SRA will consider. Please note that the SRA is not able to deal with issues of poor service (complaints of this nature should instead be referred to the Legal Ombudsman). For further information about the SRA's role, please contact the SRA or visit: <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page#report>

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.