

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

CLIENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Trethowans are proud of the high-quality service we provide to our clients. However, sometimes things go wrong and if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service we have provided, we want you to tell us. It is our policy to investigate all complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction to assist us in the improvement of the service we provide.

Any expression of dissatisfaction about the service you have received from us will be considered seriously and will be dealt with promptly, fairly and sympathetically. Please be assured that making a complaint will not prejudice anything we are doing for you.

As part of the Lawfront Group, we have a central Professional Standards Team who will assist with investigating and responding to your complaint and who will arrange for your concerns to be investigated objectively with a view to reaching a positive and speedy conclusion.

Submitting a complaint

Stage 1

If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, in the first instance you should raise this with the individual who is working on your case, or you can refer your complaint to their supervisor. The name of the supervisor can be found in the initial correspondence we sent to you or, if you do not have this, by contacting our Professional Standards Team at professionalstandards@lawfront.com. We will do our best to resolve any issues at this stage.

Stage 2

If you have been unable to resolve any issues with the individual dealing with your matter, or their supervisor, your complaint can be referred to **Cathryn Selby, Lawfront's Chief Risk Officer and Group Legal Counsel**, who leads our Professional Standards Team. You can contact her by email or telephone but we may ask you to send confirmation in writing at which point we will confirm the correct postal address for you to write to.

Complaints by email should be directed to professionalstandards@lawfront.com.

Full details should be provided including the background leading up to the complaint and details of all areas of concern.

On receipt of your complaint, an acknowledgement letter will ordinarily be issued within five (5) working days. This letter will include the following information:

1. The name of the person investigating the complaint;
2. If appropriate, confirmation of our understanding of the nature of your complaint and a statement that you should contact us if you disagree with this.

Investigation of your complaint

We will promptly and thoroughly investigate your complaint. The investigation will usually be carried out by a suitably qualified partner who has not had direct involvement in the subject matter giving rise to the complaint.

The timescales we aim to achieve are as follows:

1. Within four (4) weeks of receiving your complaint we will either:
 - a. send you our final response after completing our investigation; or
 - b. send you a holding letter explaining why we are not in a position to resolve your complaint and advising when we will make further contact.

2. Before the end of eight (8) weeks after we have received your complaint we will either:
 - a. send you our final response after completing our investigation; or
 - b. send you a response which explains why we are still not in a position to provide our final response and informing you of other remedies which may be available to you.

3. On concluding our investigation we will produce a written report which will explain:
 - a. the outcome of our investigation; and
 - b. the nature and terms of any offer of compensation; or
 - c. reasons for not making an offer;
 - d. any further remedies which may be available to you.

We shall assume that the complaint is resolved if we have not heard from you within two (2) weeks of our response.

Stage 3

If you are not satisfied with our final response to your complaint and eight (8) weeks have passed from the date of your complaint, you have a right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, an independent complaints body established under the Legal Services Act 2007, which deals with legal services complaints. This is a free and independent service.

Ordinarily the time limits for referring complaints to the Legal Ombudsman are:

- no more than one (1) year from the date of the act or omission being complained about; or
 - no more than one (1) year from the date when you should have realised that there was cause for complaint;
- and**
- within six (6) months of the date of our final response to your complaint.

For further details see www.legalombudsman.org.uk, or call them on 0300 555 0333, or email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk or write to Legal Ombudsman at PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH.

Alternative complaints bodies (such as Pro-Mediate and Small Claims Mediation) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and the firm wish to use such an alternative scheme. We do not agree to use any of these or similar schemes as we believe our complaints procedure and the availability of the Legal Ombudsman scheme are sufficient.

What to do if you think there has been professional misconduct or a regulatory breach

If your complaint is about professional conduct or regulatory concerns you may refer it to the Solicitors Regulation Authority. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money, or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic. For further details visit the 'Reporting an individual or firm' page on their website at www.sra.org.uk. You can also call them on 0370 606 2555 or contact them at The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN.

What to do if your complaint relates to an insurance policy

If your unresolved complaint relates to an insurance policy covering your case, you may refer the matter to the Financial Ombudsman Service via their online complaints form available via their website or call them on 0800 023 4567, or email complaint.info@financialombudsman.org.uk or write to them at Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange, London, E14 9SR.