

## 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.

If your complaint is about how we have handled your data please ask for a copy of our Data Complaints Handling Procedure.

As part of the Lawfront Group, we have a central Professional Standards Team who will oversee the handling of your complaint and ensure that your concerns are investigated objectively with a view to reaching a positive and speedy conclusion. You may contact the Professional Standards Team directly at any stage.

### Submitting a complaint

#### Raising your concerns with your legal team

If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, we encourage you to first raise this with the individual who is working on your case, or 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](mailto:professionalstandards@lawfront.com). We will do our best to resolve any issues at this stage and many concerns can be resolved informally often through a conversation.

#### Contacting our Professional Standards Team

If you prefer not to raise your concerns with the individual who is working on your case, or their supervisor, or if your concerns have not been resolved, you can refer your complaint to our Professional Standards Team, who manage all formal complaints on behalf all the firms which are part of Lawfront.

In some circumstances, concerns raised informally may also be referred by the fee earner to the Professional Standards Team where appropriate.

You can contact the team by email or telephone, but we may ask you to confirm your complaint in writing. If so, we will provide the correct postal address. Complaints by email should be directed to

[professionalstandards@lawfront.com](mailto:professionalstandards@lawfront.com)

The Professional Standards Team is led by Cathryn Selby, Lawfront's Chief Risk Officer and Group Legal Counsel, who has overall responsibility for the complaints process.

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.

## **Investigation of your complaint**

Once your complaint has been referred to the Professional Standards Team, it will be handled in accordance with the process set out below.

We will ensure that your complaint is promptly and thoroughly investigated. 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.

## **Further help**

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 may be entitled 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](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk), or call them on 0300 555 0333, or email [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:complaint.info@financialombudsman.org.uk) or write to them at Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange, London, E14 9SR.