

Complaint Handling Procedure

At Ellisons, we are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients and when something goes wrong, we want to encourage you to tell us about it. This will help you and help us to improve our standards.

We strive to deliver the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service we provide, then you should inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve your concerns. If you have a complaint or observation about our service, please say so and follow the following steps to ensure that your concerns are resolved quickly:

- First:** Please speak to the person responsible for your case. This includes any complaint about your bill. You may prefer to put your concerns in writing and if so, please send your letter or email to the person who is acting for you in the first instance.
- Second:** If the person responsible for your case is not able to resolve matters to your satisfaction, or if you find it difficult to speak to them about your concerns, please write or call their Supervisor.
- Third:** If you are dissatisfied by the way the Supervisor has handled your concerns, please contact the Partner in charge of the Department (Head of Department) whose contact details are available on our website.

If after these stages your complaint remains unresolved, please contact our Head of Compliance who will investigate the matter for you. You can email them at ClientCare@ellisonssolicitors.com with the details or write to them at Headgate Court, Head Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1NP.

What will happen next: Formal Complaints Procedure

1. Any formal complaint will be dealt with quickly and reasonable efforts will be made to respond to your concerns.
2. Once the Head of Compliance has received details of your complaint, they will acknowledge it in writing within three working days of us receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure. We will also record it on our central complaints register.

Your complaint will then be fully investigated. This will normally involve a review of your file and speaking with the people who have been dealing with your matter.

4. Within 28 working days of sending you the acknowledgement letter, the Head of Compliance will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including where appropriate, their suggestions for resolution.
5. We have a total of 8 weeks to resolve your complaint. If we need to change this or any of the timescales above, we will let you know in advance and explain why.

What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint

If you are still not satisfied with our final response or our suggestions for resolution then, you can then contact the Legal Ombudsman. They will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your case. Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have not done this then they may refer you back to us.

Please note that when referring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, you must usually refer your complaint:

- Within six months of receiving a final response from us about your complaint; and
- No more than six years* from the date of the act/omission giving rise to the complaint or alternatively, no more than three* years from the date you should have reasonably known there are grounds for complaint. Further details are available on their website.

** **From 1 April 2023**, the Legal Ombudsman time limit is changing from six years to **one year** from the date of the act/omission giving rise to the complaint or alternatively and from three years to **one year** from the date you should have reasonably known there are grounds for complaint. Further details are available on their website.*

You can contact the Legal Ombudsman either by telephone: 0300 555 0333, or by writing to them at The Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ. Their website address is www.legalombudsman.org.uk and their email address is enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you if you are concerned about our conduct. 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. You can raise your concerns through their website: <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/>

Alternative complaints bodies such as ProMediate (<http://www.promediate.co.uk/what-we-do/what-is-mediation/>) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme.

What will it cost?

We will not charge for handling your complaint.

Please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on the matter and or all some of the bill is not paid, we are entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding.

The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.