

Mercers Complaints Handling Procedure

The SRA Standards and Regulations require Solicitors to operate a Complaints Handling Procedure and to ensure that clients are told whom to approach in the event of any problem with the service provided by Solicitors. Clients are entitled to request a copy of the Firm's Complaints Handling Procedure.

This is Mercers' Complaints Handling Procedure.

Level 1

At the beginning of every matter, the Fee Earner and Supervising Partner will ensure that the client knows who is dealing with his or her matter and receives information on what to do if unhappy with any aspect of the service received. Initially, you should talk with the person responsible for the day to day handling of your work and/or the Partner with overall responsibility for it (the Supervising Partner) who will try to resolve any problems quickly. They will also explain what other courses of action are open to you. It is hoped that any problems, particularly if they are reported early, will be resolved at this level.

Level 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily at Level 1, the complaint should be referred to the Client Relations Partner, Peter Hopkins, who will investigate the complaint and endeavour to resolve it. The procedure will be as follows:-

- Peter Hopkins will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within three days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
- Peter Hopkins will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve him reviewing your matter file and speaking to the member of staff who acted for you.
- Peter Hopkins will then either invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint or alternatively, if you prefer, will discuss the matter with you over the telephone. He will do this within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
- Within three days of the meeting or phone call, Peter Hopkins will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he has agreed with you.
- If you do not want a meeting or phone discussion, or if it is not possible, Peter Hopkins will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including his suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.

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

Level 3

If the complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily at Level 2, you can 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.

Generally, the Legal Ombudsman can consider complaints from individuals, small businesses and small Trusts, Estates, Charities and Clubs. If in doubt, the Ombudsman can clarify the position.

Timescales - You must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint – and;
- No more than six years from the date of act/omission; or
- No more than three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, please contact them.

Visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk or call: 0300 555 0333 between 9.00 to 17.00 or Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

The Legal Ombudsman's postal address is PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

Professional conduct

If you are unhappy with the behaviour or professional conduct of the Firm or a representative of the Firm, you have the right to complain to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA).

Visit the SRA website to see how you can raise your concerns www.sra.org.uk – see the section for the general public/problems with a solicitor/report a solicitor:- [Solicitors Regulation Authority](http://www.sra.org.uk).or you can call them on 0370 606 2555 or E-mail contactcentre@sra.org.uk

The SRA's postal address is The Cube 199 Wharfside Street Birmingham B1 1RN