

Complaints procedure

1. Aim

We are committed to providing high quality legal advice and client care. We realise that we may not always get it right so if you are unhappy about any aspect of our service, or about the bill, please tell us. This will help us to improve our standards. We will deal with your concerns promptly, fairly, openly and effectively.

2. How to complain

- 2.1. You can contact us in writing (by letter, fax or email) or by speaking to our Client Care Solicitor, who has overall responsibility for complaints handling, (Neil Riley) whose contact details are: direct dial 0114 218 4064, by email at neil.riley@tayloremmet.co.uk, by post at 20 Arundel Gate, Sheffield, S1 2PP.
- 2.2. To help us to understand your complaint, and in order that we do not miss anything, please tell us:
 - Your full name and contact details;
 - What you think we have got wrong;
 - What you hope to achieve as a result of your complaint; and
 - Your file reference number (if you have it).

3. How will we deal with your complaint?

- 3.1. We will record your complaint centrally.
- 3.2. Upon receipt of your complaint Neil will allocate it to the (Partner) Head of the Department in which your complaint has arisen, unless you are complaining about that person, in which case another Partner (or Associate Solicitor) in the Department concerned will process your complaint.
- 3.3. We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 2 working days. A complaint file will be opened and we will send you a copy of this procedure so that you know how your complaint will be handled.
- 3.4. We will investigate your complaint. This will usually involve:
 - Reviewing your complaint;
 - Reviewing your file(s) and other relevant documents; and
 - Speaking with the person who dealt with your matter.

We may also need to ask you for further information or documents. If so, we will ask you to provide the information within a specific period of time.
- 3.5. We will, if it is appropriate, invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. You do not have to attend if you do not wish to, or if you are unable to.
- 3.6. At the end of our investigation we will write to you with a detailed response to your complaint. This will be done within 14 working days of the date on which we acknowledged receipt of your complaint. If we need longer, we will let you know, explain to you why this is necessary and advise you of the fresh timeframe.
- 3.7. Your complaint will, in any event, be resolved within 8 weeks of the date that it was received by us.

4. What if you are not satisfied with the outcome once our complaints procedure has been completed?

- 4.1. If you remain unhappy you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to look into your complaint. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman by post at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ or by telephone on 0300 555 0333, or by email at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.
- 4.2. You must usually refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of our final written response and within 6 years of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring (or within 3 years of you becoming aware of it). Further details are available by visiting www.legalombudsman.org.uk.
- 4.3. There are alternative complaints bodies, such as Smalls Claims Mediation (website: www.small-claims-mediation.co.uk) which are able to deal with complaints about legal services, should both you and this firm wish to use this scheme. We do not agree to use Small Claims Mediation because we consider that the service offered by the Legal Ombudsman is the most appropriate means of resolving the issues between us.
- 4.4. The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you if your complaint relates to our behaviour. This could be in respect of things like treating you unfairly or acting in breach of professional requirements. You can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority whose contact details are: <http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page>, or by post at The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN, by email at contactcentre@sra.org.uk, or by telephone on 0370 606 2555.
- 4.5. **Online matters only:** if we are unable to resolve your complaint and it relates to a contract we entered into with you online or by other electronic means you may be able to submit your complaint to an approved Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provider in the UK via the EU “ODR Platform”. The ODR Platform is an interactive website offering a single point of entry for disputes between consumers and traders relating to online contracts. The ODR Platform is available to consumer clients only, i.e. where you have instructed us for purposes outside your trade, craft or profession. The website address for the ODR Platform is: <http://ec.europa.eu/odr>.

5. What will it cost?

- 5.1. We will not charge you for handling your complaint.
- 5.2. Please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on your matter, and all or some of the bill is not paid, we may be entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding.
- 5.3. The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.
- 5.4. The ODR platform itself is free to use, but the ADR entity to which the complaint is transmitted may charge for its service. The ADR entity is responsible for informing all parties of the cost of its dispute resolution procedure.