



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### **If you are not happy with the service you have received:-**

Although we strive for excellence in the service we provide to all our clients there is still the possibility that you may be dissatisfied with our performance. So when something goes wrong we need you to tell us about it so that we can monitor and improve our standards. Our Complaints Procedure is intended to set out our approach to client complaints and to reassure you that these will be dealt with fairly, effectively and swiftly whilst helping us to retain your goodwill and continuing professional relationship with the firm.

### **What is a complaint?**

- A report by a client that their expectation of what they consider to be a good service has not been met, or
- A report by a prospective client that we have unreasonably refused a service to them and/or persistently or unreasonably offered a service that they do not want

### **Our Complaints Procedure**

If you have a concern or complaint you should contact the Solicitor/Fee Earner who is handling your matter as soon as you become aware of the issue to try and resolve your concerns with them. In many cases, the Solicitor will be able to resolve any problem for you immediately, however, it is sometimes necessary for a review to be carried out on your file which may take a little longer. You will be provided with an acknowledgment of when you can expect to receive a response which should be within 10 days. If the issue is not resolved at this point the matter can be referred to the Supervisor for the Solicitor to carry out an independent investigation of your complaint and provide a response usually within 14 days. Sometimes we may suggest a telephone call if we think it might help to resolve the issues. If the Supervisor is unable to meet this timescale you will be contacted again with a revised date on which their investigations are expected to be completed. Our written reply will confirm the outcome of our findings together with our proposed solutions or remedies.

If you remain unhappy at this stage of the procedure your complaint can be escalated further. The person with ultimate responsibility for client care is Julie Flint, the Complaints Manager for the firm. Julie will review your complaint if the people already identified in this process have so far been unable to resolve matters to your satisfaction. She will review all findings of the investigation carried out up to that point and will provide you with her final response together with any further suggestions for resolution. You can expect to receive a response usually within 21 days.

If you do not accept or are dissatisfied with our final response you will be entitled to refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, contact details of which you will find below.

**It is important to note that a formal complaint will be handled separately from an ongoing conveyancing transaction. The individuals involved in reviewing your complaint will not be able to assist you in the day-to-day progression of your matter.**

### **The Legal Ombudsman**

If at the end of this process you remain unhappy you can refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. Any complaint should be referred to them:-

- Within 6 months of receiving a final response from us
- No more than 1 year from the date of the act/omission being complained about
- No more than 1 years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint
- If your transaction completed more than one year ago, within 1 of you becoming aware of the act or omission that is the subject of your complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman may investigate:-

- the quality of professional service supplied by a Solicitor to a client
- allegations that a Solicitor has breached rules of professional conduct
- allegations that a Solicitor has unreasonably refused to supply a professional service to a prospective client
- allegations that a Solicitor has persistently or unreasonably offered a professional service that the client does not want

Please note that the Ombudsman expect Solicitors to try and resolve complaints within 8 weeks of them being raised before you are entitled to refer the matter to them. Of course it is our intention to work with clients to resolve any issues swiftly and satisfactorily. Please note that making a complaint will not affect how we handle your ongoing matter.

Contact details for the Legal Ombudsman: PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH; email at [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk) or by telephone on 0300 555 0333. Their website address is [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

#### Escalation Process and Complaints Manager's Contact Details

Escalation Process	
First Instance	Solicitor/Fee Earner dealing with your transaction
Second Instance	Supervisor for the Solicitor/Fee Earner (details can be found on your initial client care letter)
Third and Final Instance	Complaints Manager (Julie Flint) <a href="mailto:Julie.flint@onpgroup.co.uk">Julie.flint@onpgroup.co.uk</a> , Telephone: 01782 389822

#### The Solicitors Regulation Authority

The most common complaints about Solicitors are about poor service and should therefore be sent to the Legal Ombudsman. If, however, you consider that your complaint involves a breach of SRA Standards and Regulations (<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations>) refer the matter to them. Please note however that the SRA do not have the power to award compensation for poor service or to reduce or refund your legal fees