



St James Solicitors

Complaints Procedure

Our Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards.

Our Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint, please contact Peter Woodley, our Client Care Partner. If your complaint relates to Peter Woodley, then please contact Jeremy Wickham. If we have to change any of the timescales or responsibilities set out below, we will let you know and explain why.

What will happen next?

- 1.** Within seven working days we will send a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain any details. If it seems appropriate, we will suggest a meeting at this s
- 2.** We will then record your complaint in our central register. We will also investigate your complaint by examining the relevant file and speaking with the member of our team who acted for you.
- 3.** If appropriate we will then invite you to meet Peter Woodley to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. We would hope to be able to meet you in this way within ten working days after first receiving your complaint. If you would prefer not to meet, or if we cannot arrange this within an acceptable timescale, we will write fully to you

setting out our views on the situation and any redress that we would feel to be appropriate.

4. Within three working days of any meeting, we will write to you to confirm what took place and any suggestions we have agreed with you. In appropriate cases we could offer an apology, a reduction of any bill or a repayment in relation to any payment received.
5. At this stage if you are still not satisfied, please let us know. We will then arrange to review our decision. We would generally aim to do this within ten working days. This will happen in one of the following ways.
 - Peter Woodley will review his own decision
 - We will arrange for our other partner Jeremy Wickham (who will not have been involved in your complaint) to review it
6. We will let you know the result of the review within fourteen days of the end of the process, if the complaint is a complex issue, this may take longer. At this time we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
7. If a complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction within 8 weeks of it being made, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman about your complaint. The question of which complaints are covered by the legal Ombudsman is governed by the scheme rules published by the Ombudsman. Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must normally be made within 6 months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint and within 12 months of the act or omission about which you are complaining (or if outside this period, within 12 months of when you should reasonably have been aware of it).

See extract from Ombudsman's website re time frames for complaints;

"Before bringing a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, you need to give your service provider an opportunity to deal with your complaint under their own complaints handling process. Service providers have a period of eight weeks to respond to your complaint. If they haven't responded within eight weeks of your complaint to them, you can bring your complaint to us.

If the service provider has responded within eight weeks, you can bring your complaint to us once your service provider has made it clear that they have issued their final response.

It is really important to be aware that you must refer your complaint to us within six months of the date of the service provider's final response. From 1 April 2023 you also need to refer your complaint to us within one year of the problem you are complaining about happening, or if the problem occurred more than one year ago, you need to bring your complaint to us within one year of you becoming aware of the problem. We have strict time limits and if you fail to do so, it is unlikely that we will be able to investigate your complaint as we are only able to investigate complaints which fall outside our time limits where it is considered fair and reasonable to do so.

The date a complaint is referred cannot be before either the service provider has issued their final response, or eight weeks have passed since the complaint was raised with them. After that, the date will be determined as either the date the Legal Ombudsman received a fully completed complaint form, or the complaint correspondence.

For complaints referred to the Legal Ombudsman before 1 April 2023, please see [FAQ Section 6 Question 1.](#)"

The address and contact details for the Legal Ombudsman are set out below.

Legal Ombudsman

PO BOX 6806

Wolverhampton

WV1 9WJ

www.legalombudsman.org.uk

wnquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

0300 555 0333

Alternative complaints bodies such as ProMediate (www.promediate.co.uk) exist which are ADR certified and competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme. We do not agree to use ProMediate as the legal Ombudsman already works in a similar way although not currently ADR certified