

# COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). We are committed to high quality legal advice and client care and aim to offer all our clients an efficient and effective service. However, should there be any aspect of our service with which you are not satisfied, we ask you initially to contact the partner responsible for the advice given to you who will do everything they can to address your concerns.

If this does not resolve matters we ask you to contact the person in our firm responsible for complaints handling: Mr. Raymond Tooth Senior Partner on 0207 499 5599 or by email to [Sonalidesilva@searstooth.com](mailto:Sonalidesilva@searstooth.com) or by post to 8 Upper Grosvenor London W1K 2LY .

We are keen to resolve any concerns as soon as possible and in order to do this, will follow our complaints handling procedure as follows:

**Step One:** If you have not already done so, we ask you to let us know the full nature of the problem.

**Step Two:** We will write to you acknowledging your complaint within five working days. In this letter, we shall confirm what happens next and enclose a copy of this complaints handling procedure.

**Step Three:** We shall then investigate the matter by reviewing the matter file and speaking to the member of staff concerned and we will update you on the progress of your complaint at appropriate times. Once the investigation has been completed, we may invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. If you do not want to or are unable to attend such a meeting (or the meeting is not necessary), we will send you a detailed, written response, including the proposed solution, within twenty-one working days of sending the letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint. We are also happy to discuss the matter with you by telephone. If, for some reason, the matter cannot be investigated in this timeframe, then we will write to you notifying you of this together with the reason why and giving a revised timescale.

**Step Four:** If you are satisfied with our response following the above steps, that will be the end of the matter. However, if you are not satisfied, you will be invited to contact Mr Tooth again and he will arrange for another senior member of staff to review the decision. We will write to you within fourteen days of receiving the request with confirmation of the firm's final position in relation to the complaint, outlining the reasons and any final redress that is offered.

**Step five:** Other avenues

Clients must always try complaining to us first. In most cases they will not be able to take their complaint further without allowing us the opportunity to put things right.

## LEGAL OMBUDSMAN

We are permitted a minimum of eight weeks to consider the complaint. If for any reason we are unable to resolve the problem between us within that timeframe, then you may ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint.

You are free to refer any complaint about our work, fees or level of service but there are some conditions and time limits. Please be aware that any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six months of receipt of a final written response from us about your complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six years of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring; or within three years from when you should have known about or become aware that there were grounds for complaint. The Legal Ombudsman will not accept complaints where the act or date of awareness was before 6 October 2010.

For further information, please contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or visit [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk). The Legal Ombudsman may be contacted at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ.

## SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY

If you think a solicitor might be dishonest or you have concerns about their ethics or integrity, you have the right to notify our regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). There are no time limits for making a report but there are limits on what the SRA will consider. Please note that the SRA is not able to deal with issues of poor service (complaints of this nature should instead be referred to the Legal Ombudsman). For further information about the SRA's role, please contact the SRA or visit:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page#report>

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about our complaints handling procedures, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Raymond Tooth Senior Partner on 0207 499 5599 or by email to [Sonalidesilva@searstooth.com](mailto:Sonalidesilva@searstooth.com) or by post to 8 Upper Grosvenor London W1K 2LY .