



Complaints Procedure

This procedure tells you how we will deal with your complaint and how long it is likely to take. It also provides important information about what you can do if you are not happy with the way in which we are dealing with your complaint, or about our final decision. Our Complaints Policy contains further information about what you can expect from us when you make a complaint.

Designated Complaints Handler

If you have any concerns about our service, our work or our charges, you should discuss these first with the individual who has day-to-day control of your matter.

If this person cannot satisfactorily address your concerns and you wish to make a complaint, please contact our Designated Complaints Handler, Philip Jackson.

You can write to him at **Imperium Law Solicitors Limited, Wesley Chapel, 22 Sunderland Street, Macclesfield, SK11 6JL** or send an email to **pjackson@imperiumlaw.co.uk**

Step One: Acknowledging your Complaint

Within two working days of receiving your complaint, it will be recorded in our Complaints Register and a separate file will be opened in which we will store any correspondence and other documents relating to your complaint.

Within two working days we will also send you a letter acknowledging your complaint.

Step Two: Investigating your Complaint

Within five working days of receiving your complaint, we will review your file(s) and any other relevant documentation and send you a letter telling you how we propose to deal with your complaint. Examples of what we might say in this letter are as follows:

- If your complaint is straightforward, we might make suggestions as to how we can put things right or we may offer you some form of redress;
- If your complaint is more complicated, we might ask you to confirm, explain or clarify any issues;
- We may ask to meet with you to discuss things face-to-face and we would hope to meet with you no longer than fourteen working days after first receiving your complaint. If you would prefer not to meet, or if we cannot arrange this within an agreeable timescale, we will write to you fully setting out our views on the situation, making suggestions as to how we can put things right or asking you to confirm, explain or clarify any issues. Within three working days of any meeting, we will write to you again to confirm what took place and to confirm any offer of redress that we have made.

Whichever form our investigation takes, we will aim to give you our final decision as soon as possible but within six weeks of receiving your complaint.

Step Three: Appealing against our Final Decision

If you are not satisfied with our final decision, please let us know and we will review our decision again. We will let you know the result of any appeal within five working days of receiving your appeal. We will also advise you whether we are prepared to engage in alternative methods of mediation.

Step Four: The Legal Ombudsman

If you are still not satisfied, you can then contact the Legal Ombudsman about your complaint (provided you do so within six months of the end of our Internal Complaints Procedure).

In addition, there are time limits relating to the date you first became aware or should have become aware of the problem. The relevant time limits are set out in the version of the Legal Ombudsman's Scheme Rules in force from time to time and may only be extended by the Legal Ombudsman in exceptional circumstances. These Rules can be accessed via: <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/helping-the-public/#scheme-rules>

Ordinarily, you cannot use the Legal Ombudsman unless you have first attempted to resolve your complaint using our internal Complaints Procedure, but you will be able to contact the Legal Ombudsman if:

- the complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction within eight weeks of first making the complaint to us; or
- the Legal Ombudsman decides that there are exceptional reasons why the Legal Ombudsman should consider your complaint sooner, or without you having to use our internal Complaints Procedure first; or
- the Legal Ombudsman considers that your complaint cannot be resolved using our internal Complaints Procedure because the relationship between you and us has broken down irretrievably.

The Legal Ombudsman will:

- investigate the quality of professional service supplied by a solicitor to a client;
- investigate allegations that the solicitor has breached rules of professional conduct;
- express a view on whether the solicitor's charges are found reasonable;
- reduce fees; and/or award compensation for inadequate professional services.

The Legal Ombudsman will not:

- determine whether a solicitor has been negligent;
- determine whether anything a solicitor has done amounts to misconduct;
- give legal advice or tell a solicitor how to handle a case;
- review the outcome of a Court case.

If the Legal Ombudsman believes that there may have been a breach of the rules governing the professional conduct of solicitors (as opposed to a problem with the service we have provided) it may refer the matter to the Solicitors Regulation Authority which is a separate independent body charged with the regulation of the solicitors' profession.

If you wish to make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman you must be one of the following:

- an individual;
- a micro-enterprise as defined in European Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 (broadly, an enterprise with fewer than 10 staff and a turnover or balance sheet value not exceeding €2 million);
- a charity with an annual income less than £1 million;
- a club, association or society with an annual income less than £1 million;



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- a trustee of a trust with a net asset value less than £1 million; or
- a personal representative or the residuary beneficiaries of an estate where a person with a complaint died before referring it to the Legal Ombudsman.

If you are not, you should be aware that you can only obtain redress by using our Complaints Procedure or by mediation or arbitration, or by taking action through the Courts.

Legal Ombudsman Contact Details

Address: **PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ**

Telephone: **0300 555 0333**

Email: **enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk**

Website: **www.legalombudsman.org.uk**