

Birchwood Solicitors Limited Complaints Handling Procedure

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients, but we understand that sometimes things don't always go the way you would like. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards. This document outlines our policy for dealing with customer issues and handling service complaints. We are committed to making this process as fair and transparent as possible in order to provide a satisfactory resolution.

At the start of your case

At the outset of the case you will be given the name and contact details of the person dealing with your case, along with the details of their supervisor.

Initial Complaint Handling

1. In the first instance you should raise any dissatisfaction with the person dealing with your matter.
2. If they are unable to resolve the issue for you, you can put your complaint in writing to the firm's Client Care Director, Wendy Byrne, her email address is wendy@birchwoodlaw.co.uk.

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within seven working days of receiving it.
2. We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to Wendy Byrne, who will review your file in light of your complaint.
3. Wendy Byrne will then invite you to a meeting at our office to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. She will do this within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
4. Within five working days of the meeting, Wendy Byrne will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions she has agreed with you.
5. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible for you to attend a meeting, Wendy Byrne will send you a written reply to your complaint, including her suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
6. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange for Wendy Byrne to review her decision.
7. We will write to you within 14 days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint, and explaining our reasons.

Referral to the Legal Ombudsman

If we are unable to resolve the complaint with you then you can have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman investigates problems about poor service from lawyers. The Legal Ombudsman is the independent body

established by the Legal Services Act 2007 as an independent and impartial organisation to deal with complaints against solicitors. The Legal Ombudsman may:

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

Before it will consider a complaint the Legal Ombudsman generally requires that the firm's internal Complaints Procedure has been exhausted. If the Legal Ombudsman decides that the firm's proposals for resolving a complaint are reasonable, it may decline to investigate further.

The Legal Ombudsman's address is PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ; telephone 0300 555 0333; website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk; or email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving our written confirmation of our final position on your complaint and within 6 years from the date of the act or omission giving rise to the complaint (or if the act or omission was more than 6 years ago, then within 3 years from the date you should reasonably have known there are grounds for complaint).

The Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

You can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority. Please see website: www.sra.org.uk; or email: contactcentre@sra.org.uk