

We want to give you the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service we have provided to you then you should inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve the problem for you.

In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the individual who is working on your case to discuss any concerns, and we will do our best to resolve any issues at this stage.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, contact us with details.

What will happen next?

We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain the details set out. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint.

We will record your complaint in our central register and open a separate file for your complaint. We will do this within a 5 working days of receiving your complaint.

We will acknowledge your reply to our acknowledgement letter and confirm what will happen next. You can expect to hear from us within a 5 working days of your reply.

We will then start to investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps:

We will pass your complaint to David Scott, our Client Care Partner, within 5 days. He will ask the case worker to reply to your complaint within 10 days.

He will then examine the reply and the information in your complaint file. If necessary, he may also speak to the case worker. This will take up to 5 days from receiving their reply and the file.

David Scott will then invite you to meet him and discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. He will do this within 5 days.

Within 5 days of the meeting David Scott will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he has agreed with you.

If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, David Scott will send you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include his suggestions for resolving the matter. He will do this within 5 days of completing his investigation.

At this stage, if you are still not satisfied you can contact us again. We will then arrange to review our decision.

Another member of the Management Committee of the company will review David Scott's decision within 10 days.

We will let you know the result of the review within 5 days of the end of the review. At this time we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know, and explain why.

Any complaints concerning the level of service of David Scott will be referred to Jacqueline Wadsworth. The other provisions of our complaints service remain the same.

If you are still not satisfied, you can, subject to your being within their scheme rules, contact the Legal Ombudsman Service about your complaint.

Normally you must exhaust our complaints procedure before you complain to the Ombudsman.

However, if you have complained and the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction within 8 weeks, or if the Ombudsman considers there are exceptional circumstances; or if our relationship has broken down irretrievably, you may be able to contact the Ombudsman direct even though our internal procedures have not been concluded.

If you do want to contact the Legal Ombudsman you must do so within 6 months of the end of our complaints procedure, and in any event within 12 months from the date of the circumstance that gave rise to your complaint or from when you should reasonable have become aware of the problem.

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 (being an enterprise with fewer than 10 staff and a turnover or balance sheet not exceeding 2 million Euros).
- A charity with an annual income of less than £1 million
- A club, association or society with an annual income of less than £1 million
- A trustee of a trust with a net asset value less than £1 million
- A personal representative or the residuary beneficiaries of an estate where a person with a complaint died before referring it to the legal Ombudsman

The Ombudsman's telephone number is 03005550333. Their office hours are 8.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday inclusive. Their email address is enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk. Their postal address is PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ.

If you are not within the above list, you can only obtain redress by using our complaints procedure or by mediation or arbitration, or through the courts.

If your complaint relates to charges or expenses contained in an invoice we have asked you to pay, you may also be entitled to apply to the court under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974 to ask the court to assess the reasonableness of any charges and expenses. If all or part of an invoice remains unpaid, we may be entitled to charge interest.