

Van Bael & Bellis (London) LLP

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

1. Our commitment

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. If at any point you become unhappy with the service we provide to you or you have concerns about your bill, you should inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve the problem for you.

2. How to make a complaint

Please contact, either orally or by email or post, the partner in charge of the matter to which the complaint relates and provide details of your concerns.

3. How we deal with your complaint

We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within three working days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure. We will then investigate your complaint.

This will normally involve passing your complaint to our Complaints Handling Partner, Andreas Reindl, who will review the matter to which your complaint relates, and, if appropriate, speak to the member of staff who acted for you.

We will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. We will do this within twenty-one working days of sending you the acknowledgement letter. Within three working days of the meeting, we will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions we have agreed with you.

If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible to hold a meeting, we will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including our suggestions for resolving the matter, within twenty-one working days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.

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

We will not charge you for handling your complaint.

4. What you can do if we cannot resolve your complaint

If we are unable to resolve your complaint within eight weeks after you have brought it to our attention, you may be able to have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman can accept complaints from an individual

client, a micro-enterprise or a charity, trust or a club (or similar organisation) with an annual income of less than £1 million and will investigate a complaint about poor service from lawyers on behalf of eligible individuals or organisations.

The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to it within one year from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining or within one year from the date you should have realised there was cause for complaint. If you wish to refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman this must be done within six months of our final response to your complaint. The Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first.

5. Contact details for the Legal Ombudsman

The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman are as follows:

- Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk
- Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
- Telephone: 0300 555 0333 between 10am to 4pm
- Relay UK: 18001 0300 555 0333
- Post: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL10EH

Do not send original documents to the Legal Ombudsman. It will scan any documents you send to make computer copies and then destroy the originals.

6. What you can do if you have concerns about the firm's behaviour

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) can help you if you are concerned about the firm's behaviour. This could be for concerns about dishonesty, taking or losing a client's money or treating a client unfairly because of their age, a disability or other similar characteristic. In such circumstances you may raise your concerns directly with the SRA (www.sra.org.uk).

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