

ADAMS HETHERINGTON Complaints Handling Policy

Our Complaints Policy

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 you have a complaint please contact us with the details. We have 8 weeks to consider your complaint. If we have not resolved it within this time you may complain to the Legal Ombudsman.

What will happen next?

- 1.0 We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within 5 days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
- 2.0 We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to our client care partner Tony Hetherington who will review your matter file and speak to the member of staff who acted for you.
- 3.0 Tony Hetherington will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. This will be done within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
- 4.0 Within 3 days of the meeting Tony Hetherington will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he has agreed with you.
- 5.0 If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible Tony Hetherington will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including his suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement.
- 6.0 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.
- 7.0 If you are still not satisfied, you can then contact the Legal Ombudsman at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ about your complaint within 6 months of receipt of our final response to your complaint.
(www.legalombudsman.org.uk)
- 8.0 Following a review in early 2022 the Legal Ombudsman announced that its Scheme Rules would be revised from 1st April 2023.
- 9.0 There are 3 key areas for change:
 - 9.1 The time limit for referring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman will be not later than one year from the date:

- 9.1.1 of the act or omission being complained about or
 - 9.1.2 When the complainant should have realised that there was a cause for complaint
 - 9.1.3 The Legal Ombudsman will have discretion to accept out of time complaints where it deems it "fair and reasonable to do so".
- 10.0 The Legal Ombudsman will introduce additional circumstances in which an ombudsman can dismiss or continue a case such as:
- 10.1 If they were satisfied that the complainant has not suffered "significant" loss, distress, inconvenience or detriment.
 - 10.2 Where the size or complexity of the complaint or the behaviour of the complainant results in the complaint requiring a "disproportionate" use of resources.
 - 10.3 Where there has been "undue delay" in bringing a complaint.
 - 10.4 Where the service provider has made a reasonable offer to resolve the matter that has been accepted by the complainant before they refer the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.
- 11.0 The Legal Ombudsman will have discretion to consider a complaint to have been resolved on the basis of an investigator's decision if neither party provides "any substantive reasons for disagreeing" with that decision.
- 12.0 If you are unhappy about our behaviour the Solicitors Regulation Authority can help. 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.
- 12.1 Visit their website to see how you can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority or
 - 12.2 For guidance on the complaints process call the SRA contact centre on 0370 606 2555