

This Complaints Handling 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 Manager, Lauren Chambers. You can write to Lauren Chambers, 238 South Coast Road, Peacehaven, East Sussex, BN10 8JS or send an Email to [practicemanagement@barwells.com](mailto:practicemanagement@barwells.com). Lauren may investigate your complaint herself or may delegate this to another senior manager.

What will happen next?

- 1 Your complaint will be recorded in our central register and a file will be opened.
- 2 We will send out a letter to you acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain the details set out. You will also be advised of the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. You can expect to receive our letter within five working days of us receiving your complaint.
- 3 We will acknowledge your reply to our acknowledgement letter and confirm what will happen next. You can expect to hear from us within five working days of your reply.
- 4 We will then start to investigate your complaint. This may involve one of the following steps: -
  - we may ask the member of staff who acted for you or their Head of Department to reply to your complaint within five working days or: -
  - the Complaints Partner may examine your reply and the information in your file. We may then require more information from within the firm. This will take up to ten working days from the Complaints Partner receiving the reply and the file.
- 5 We will send a detailed reply to your complaint or, if appropriate, we will invite you to meet a partner to discuss the matter. This reply will include our suggestions for resolving the matter.
- 6 If a meeting takes place, we will write to you to confirm what took place and any suggestions we have agreed with you.
- 7 At this stage, if you are still not satisfied you can write to us again. We will then arrange to review our decision. This will happen in one of the following ways: -
  - the person responding will review his or her own decision within five days or
  - we will arrange for someone in the firm who has not been involved in your complaint to review it. He or she will do this within 10 days or
  - we will ask our local Law Society or another local firm of solicitors to review your complaint within ten days. We will let you know how long this process will take or
  - we will invite you to agree to independent mediation. We will let you know how long this process will take.
- 8 We will let you know the result of the review within ten 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. We will also give you the name and address of the Legal Ombudsman. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact them about your complaint within six months.

### **What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint**

The Legal Ombudsman can help you if we are unable to resolve your complaint ourselves. They will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your case.

Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint

and

- No more than six years from the date of act/omission; or
- No more than three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, please contact them.

### **Contact details**

Visit: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 9.00 to 17.00.

Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH.

### **What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour**

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help 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.

Visit their website to see how you can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority [www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/](http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/).