Wards Solicitors LLP Formal Complaints Procedure for Clients

**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. This will help us to improve our standards.

**Our complaints procedure**

Normally, we ask you to contact the person you deal with at Wards first if you are unhappy about anything concerning our work for you. Where that is inappropriate or has not been successful, the first thing you need to do is to contact Georgina Peacock (our compliance officer), preferably by email. She will need details of your complaint, including:

* your full name, date of birth and address
* the name of the person you are complaining about
* the type of work we are doing for you
* exactly what it is you are unhappy about

Georgina Peacock’s contact details are:

* 37 Boulevard, Weston-s-Mare, BS23 1PE
* 01934 413535
* [georgina.peacock@wards.uk.com](mailto:georgina.peacock@wards.uk.com)

**What will happen next?**

We may ask the member of staff dealing with your case to write to you or contact you to reply to your complaint especially if it appears there has been a misunderstanding. If this is not appropriate, a stage 1 review will be carried out to investigate your concerns. This will involve our compliance officer reviewing the file and providing a written summary of findings. We normally allow 2 weeks for such a review to take place. If we need longer we will let you know and explain why.

It is sometimes not appropriate for the file to be reviewed if work has reached a sensitive point - for example, if contracts are due to be exchanged on a sale or purchase or there is a court hearing due. In such cases we will advise you that the complaint be put on hold until the file can be reviewed without interrupting urgent work.

If you remain dissatisfied after a stage 1 review, you can contact us again explaining why that is the case. We may then review our decision. This would normally be dealt with by another senior member of the firm. We would aim to carry out such a stage 2 review within 14 days. However, in certain circumstances we may decide that it is not appropriate for a stage 2 review to be carried out. We will tell you if that decision is made.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint then you can have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman investigates complaints about service issues with lawyers. The contact details are:

Legal Ombudsman

PO Box 6806,

Wolverhampton, WV1 9WL

0300 555 0333

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

<https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/>

The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within one year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within one year of you realising there was a concern. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final response to you.

Any complaint to the Ombudsman must usually be made within six months of the date of our final written response.

Other organisations such as ProMediate [www.promediate.co.uk](http://www.promediate.co.uk) also deal with complaints about legal services, should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme.

**Further information**

The above procedure can only be used by clients who feel that our service was in some way deficient. In certain circumstances, clients and others may also have the right to report our work to our regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) if you have concerns about a solicitor’s behaviour. Examples include dishonesty or deliberate overcharging, taking or losing money or unfair treatment due to age, disability or other characteristic. More details on how the SRA can assist are available here:

[www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/](http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/)

*April 2023*