

We are committed to providing all clients with a high-quality service and we are confident of doing so. We value our clients and would not wish to think that you have reason to be unhappy with us. However, if you have any queries, concerns or other problems about the service we are providing, you are entitled to bring them to our attention. Where appropriate, you may also make a formal complaint.

There are three potential stages for dealing with complaints:

1. Informal internal review
2. Formal internal complaints procedure
3. Referral to outside bodies

**Internal review**

In the first instance, please contact the partner who is responsible for your case. If that is difficult, for example because your concern relates to that partner, please contact another partner. Do this as soon as possible, as many concerns can be resolved quickly at this stage.

**Formal internal complaint**

If an informal internal review does not resolve the matter, please write to us setting out your complaint in detail and address your complaint to Paul Taylor, Compliance Officer for Legal Practice (or "COLP"). (Written complaints are preferred for specificity and detail, but oral complaints will still be recognised and recorded.) Please do not mark your letter "private" and/or "confidential", as this could delay our response if he is away. You can also email your complaint to [ptaylor@richardbuxton.co.uk](mailto:ptaylor@richardbuxton.co.uk).

We will acknowledge your complaint by letter or email and address any immediate queries. If Paul Taylor is not dealing with the complaint personally, we will tell you who will be responsible for it. You can expect to receive our acknowledgement within five days of us receiving your complaint.

We will then investigate your complaint. The below process is subject to the caveat that, where the complaint concerns the complaints handler or raises a conflict, another partner or suitably independent person will handle/review it.

This will normally involve the following steps:

- If he acted for you personally, Paul Taylor or another partner (depending on the circumstances and whether Paul Taylor is the subject of the complaint) will consider your complaint and send you a detailed response or invite you to a meeting to discuss the matter, normally within 14 days.
- If someone else acted for you, Paul Taylor will ask him or her to reply to him about your complaint. He will then examine the reply and the information in your complaint file and write to you with a detailed reply or invite you to a meeting to discuss the matter with him and probably the person who dealt with the matter. This will normally be done within 14 days.

If we have a meeting, we will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions agreed with you.

If you are not satisfied with our detailed response or with the outcome of a meeting, you should let us know. We will then arrange for the decision to be reviewed. This review may be carried out in one of the following ways:

- Paul Taylor will review the decision himself within seven days.
- Paul Taylor will arrange for someone not connected with the complaint to review his decision within 14 days.
- Paul Taylor may ask the local Law Society or another local firm of solicitors to review your complaint. We will tell you how long this process is expected to take.
- We may invite you to agree to independent mediation. If so, we will explain what this involves, including the expected timescale.

We will tell you the outcome of this second-stage review within seven days of its completion. At the same time, we will confirm our final position on your complaint and explain our reasons.

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

Please remember that you have every right to make a complaint, and we will do our best to resolve it. It is usually better to raise concerns early, so that any difficulties can be addressed efficiently and amicably. Making a complaint will not affect the way we handle your case. Complaints will be dealt with promptly, fairly and free of charge.

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

If the internal steps above do not resolve your concerns, you may contact the Legal Ombudsman or the Solicitors Regulation Authority. Their roles overlap in some areas, but broadly:

The Legal Ombudsman is usually the appropriate body for concerns about the standard of service you have received. 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 first tried to resolve your complaint with us. The following time limits then apply:

- You must refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving our final response to your complaint;
- You must refer your complaint no more than one year from the date of the act or omission complained of, or no more than one year from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint; and
- You must first allow us eight weeks to resolve the issue before the Legal Ombudsman will investigate.

The Legal Ombudsman's contact details are available at [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk).

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help if you are concerned about our behaviour. This may include concerns about dishonesty, taking or losing your money, or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic. Their contact details can be found at [www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page](http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page).