

TAYLOR BRACEWELL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

As required by the Solicitors' Regulation Authority, we have a procedure for dealing with complaints.

Your complaint may relate to any aspect of the service that we provide, including our bill.

Our aim is to resolve complaints "in house" if possible. We hope that a diligent approach to complaints handling may preserve your goodwill, even if matters relating to your file have gone wrong.

There is no doubt that some of the complaints about us will be well-founded. We all make mistakes. If your complaint is well-founded, we shall endeavour to deal with it sympathetically and quickly.

Complaints Handler

All complaints are referred to me. I am our firm's Complaints Handler and also the Practice Manager. I will record your complaint and investigate it. This process will almost certainly involve me speaking to the person who has handled your case. In some cases, I may ask one of my colleagues to investigate the matter on my behalf.

How to contact me

If you wish to get in touch with me in order to make a complaint then please contact me by post at Taylor Bracewell, 17-23 Thorne Road, Doncaster, DN1 2RP, by email at priya@taylorbracewell.co.uk. Please note that all complaints need to be made in writing to me.

Response

I (or my designated colleague) will endeavour to acknowledge your complaint within five working days of receiving it.

The length of time it will take me to investigate your complaint will depend upon the circumstances. However, I would expect, save in the most exceptional of cases, to be in a position to write to you with my detailed response within 21 working days of receiving your complaint. Please note that the period of 21 working days starts from the time we receive your complaint in writing.

In some cases, I may have to request from you further information about your complaint so that I can thoroughly investigate it and respond appropriately.

Remedies

If your complaint is justified, my response to you will include one or more of the following: -

- (a) An apology and an assurance that the problem that has arisen will not happen again.
- (b) A reduction in your bill.
- (c) Abatement of your bill in total.
- (d) Confirmation of your right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman Service (LOS).
- (e) Notification of your right to see another solicitor and to obtain advice on the issue of whether or not we have been negligent.

If you disagree or are not content with my response then you may ask for the matter to be reviewed by our firm's Partner, Mr Peter Caswell. In such a case, Mr Caswell will carry out his review and, again save

in the most exceptional of cases, will write to you with his views within 21 working days of you requesting the review. If Mr Caswell is the person about whom the complaint has been made, the review will be conducted by another Partner of the firm. Whichever Partner conducts the review, he or she may invite you to attend a meeting to discuss the matter.

Bills

As I have indicated above, your right to complain includes complaints about any bill that we have sent to you. In certain circumstances you are entitled to apply to the Court for our bill to be assessed, pursuant to Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974.

Please note that there is a time limit on this option. If the application is lodged within one month of the date of delivery of the bill, then the Court *shall* order that the bill be assessed. If the application is lodged outside the initial one-month period but within twelve months of the date of the delivery of the bill then the Court *may* order that the bill be assessed. If the application is lodged more than one year after delivery of the bill then only in exceptional circumstances will the Court order that the bill be assessed.

You are entitled to request a breakdown of our charges but you must do so within 60 days of the date upon which the invoice in question is sent out to you. Providing that your request is made within that 60-day period, a breakdown will be provided.

Legal Ombudsman Service

If you remain unhappy with the way that we handle your complaint, you have open to you the option of referring the matter to the Legal Ombudsman Service (LOS).

We have eight weeks to consider your complaint, including the time of appeal. If for any reason we are unable to resolve the problem between us within that timeframe, then you may ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint. The Legal Ombudsman may be contacted at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ. You may also be able to obtain further information from the LOS website, the address of which is www.legalombudsman.org.uk.

The LOS does not provide a service for all clients. It is, however, available to you if you are an individual member of the public, a very small business, a certain category of charity, club or trust, or a personal representative of or beneficiary of a person's estate.

Please be aware that any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six months of your having received a final written response from us about your complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within one year of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring; or within one year from when you should have known about or become aware that there were grounds for complaint.

If the LOS considers that there are fair and reasonable circumstances to do so, then they may extend any of the time limits referred to above to the extent that they consider fair. For example, the LOS might extend a time limit if you were prevented from meeting that time limit as a result of serious illness or where the time limit had not expired when you first raised the complaint with us. For further information, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk.

Priya Joy
Practice Manager and Complaints Handler
Taylor Bracewell Solicitors