

Complaints

What happens if things go wrong?

We are committed to providing a high quality legal service and to dealing with our clients fairly and with integrity. If you feel that something is not right, including in relation to your bill, we need you to tell us so that we can work together to try and put things right.

How do I make a complaint?

You can contact us in writing (by letter, fax or email) or by speaking to us.

In the first instance you should raise your concerns with the person dealing with your matter; or their Team Leader who will be responsible for investigating and responding to your concern. You will have been provided with details of these individuals at the outset of your matter in the client care letter.

If you would prefer not to raise your concern direct with the individual or their Team Leader, then please contact our Client Service Manager whose contact details are:

Julia Richardson
Coffin Mew LLP,
1000 Lakeside North Harbour,
Western Road,
Portsmouth
PO6 3EN

Telephone: 02392 366013
Fax: 02392 210952
Email: juliarichardson@
coffinmew.co.uk

To help us understand your complaint, and in order that we do not miss anything, please tell us:

- your full name and contact details
- what you think we have got wrong
- what you hope to achieve as a result of your complaint,
- your file reference number (if you have it)

If you require any help in making your complaint we will try to help you.

Please note that it is important that complaints are made following this procedure and not through online reviews. We cannot respond in full to online reviews due to client confidentiality.

How will we deal with your complaint?

We will record your complaint centrally.

The Team Leader will write to you within five working days acknowledging your complaint, giving you a copy of this policy and providing a timescale within which they hope to complete their investigation.

Your complaint will be investigated, this will usually involve:

- reviewing your complaint
- reviewing your file and other relevant documents, and
- speaking with the person who dealt with your matter

We may also need to ask you for further information or documents. If so, we will ask you to provide the information within a specific period of time.

You will be updated on the progress of your complaint at appropriate times.

You may also, if appropriate be invited to a meeting to discuss your complaint. You do not have to attend if you do not wish to or if you are unable to. We will be happy to discuss the matter with you on the telephone.

At the end of our investigation, we will write to you to tell you what we have done and what we propose to do to resolve your complaint. We will aim to do this within 14 days of the date of our letter of acknowledgement. If your complaint remains unresolved, then our Client Service Partner who has overall responsibility for our complaints process will review and investigate your concern. Contact details as follows:

Ian Dawes
Coffin Mew LLP,
1000 Lakeside North Harbour,
Western Road,
Portsmouth
PO6 3EN

Telephone: 023 8048 3755
Fax: 02392 210952
Email: iandawes@coffinmew.co.uk

We aim to do this within 28 days from the date of your complaint; the maximum amount of time this process will take is 8 weeks.

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

If you are still unhappy you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to look into your complaint. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman:

By post at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ, by telephone on 0300 555 0333, or by email to enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Telephone calls to the Legal Ombudsman cost the same as calling a normal 01 or 02 landline number, even from a mobile phone, and are recorded for training and monitoring purposes. The team is available Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.30pm.

There is a time limit within which you can request the involvement of the Legal Ombudsman which is generally six months from the completion of our complaints procedure. Please also note that you can also only request the Ombudsman's involvement if either: (a) the issue you are complaining about happened on, or after, 6 October 2010; or (b) the issue happened before 6 October 2010 but you only became aware of it on or after 6 October 2010.

There is a long-stop date within which you must refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. The date is no later than six years from the date of the act/omission or three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

The scheme rules are subject to change and you can check the current position by contacting the Legal Ombudsman as above or visiting the Legal Ombudsman's website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) bodies exist which can deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme, eg ProMediate. We have, however, chosen not to adopt an ADR process. If you wish to complain further you should contact the Legal Ombudsman.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint, and it relates to a contract we entered into online or by other electronic means, you may also be able to submit your complaint to an approved alternative dispute resolution provider in the UK via the EU 'ODR platform', an interactive website for disputes between consumers and traders relating to online contracts. It is available to consumer clients only <http://ec.europa.eu/odr>

What will it cost?

We will not charge you for handling your complaint.

Please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on the matter, and all or some of the bill is not paid, we may be entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding.

The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.

Will it affect my case?

It is highly unlikely that your complaint will prejudice or disrupt your case. Very occasionally though a complaint may impact on your case; for example, we may need to tell you to seek legal advice from another firm of solicitors. We will explain any such impact to you as early as possible.