

6.43 – Complaints Handling Procedure for Clients

BERWINS

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At Berwins we do all we can to deliver the highest levels of service to our clients – this is a key element of the culture of exceptional care upon which we model the practice. At the outset of any case we issue Service Standards setting out the minimum service which you can expect to receive from us.

Sometimes, however, things don't go right, or appear not to have gone right; and in order to deal with those instances we have put in place the procedure set out in this information sheet.

What is a complaint?

A formal complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction referred by you, the client, to the firm's complaints officer or to the team leader for the person that you are dealing with.

Who deals with complaints?

The firm's complaints officer is Stephen Root. However in cases of complaints regarding his conduct of matters, those complaints will be handled by Paul Berwin. Contact details are as follows:-

Stephen Root – t: 01423 543122 e: StephenRoot@berwin.co.uk

Paul Berwin – t: 01423 543101 e: PaulBerwin@berwin.co.uk

Address for both – 2 North Park Road Harrogate HG1 5PA

How are complaints handled?

On receipt of a complaint the following steps will be taken:-

- 1 Receipt of the complaint will be notified by the complaints officer to you within 2 working days of your complaint. The complaints officer will consider the fee earner's file in question and will also seek any comments they might have in the substance of the complaint.
- 2 The complaints officer will provide this information sheet to you with his initial letter and if possible a substantive response will be given immediately. If a substantive response cannot be provided immediately then the matter will be referred to the firm's independent complaints handler.
- 3 The firm's independent complaints handler is a person who is totally independent of Berwins Solicitors Limited. The current independent complaints handler is Fiona Gillam

of the Risk and Advice Service. She will be provided with full access to your file and may contact you in order to obtain further information. She is likely to seek comments from the fee earner in question and potentially that person's team leader. She will provide a substantive report to the firm.

The independent complaints handler's report will be considered by the firm's complaints officer who will then communicate with you, the client, to explain the outcome of your complaint and, where the complaint is well founded, to offer appropriate remedial action to resolve the issue. This may include a reduction in your account, an offer of compensation, an offer to change the fee earner handling the file, or an acknowledgement and apology. You should receive a substantive response within 15 working days of your formal complaint being lodged.

- 4 In the event that you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you have the right to refer the matter to the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted at:-

Legal Ombudsman

PO Box 6806

Wolverhampton

WV1 9WJ

Enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Tel 0300 5550333

Please note time limits apply and are usually 6 months from the end of the matter or from when a problem is discovered.