

Complaints Handling Procedure

Introduction

It is our aim to provide you with the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service we have provided then we would encourage you to inform us immediately, so that we can do our best to resolve any problems between us.

In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the advisor who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and he/she will do their best to resolve any problems.

Your right to complain might relate to the way in which your matter is being handled or the fee we have charged you. If we are unable to resolve your problem and you would like to make a formal complaint about our services, then please refer to our full complaints procedure set out below.

This Complaint Procedure will explain how we will handle a formal complaint when we receive it. It also explains the role of:

1. the Legal Ombudsman (LeO);
2. the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA);
3. provide useful contact details so that you can be properly aware of your rights and the options available to you. You can contact us:

- in person at our office: Imperial House, Suite 21, 64 Willoughby Lane, London, N17 OSP, England
- by telephone: 0208 885 3999
- by email: info@virgosolicitors.co.uk or email the person handling your matter.
- email to: Dr. Abess A.N. Taqi, Complaints Handling Officer at abess@virgosolicitors.co.uk

Our Complaints Handling Procedure

We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). We are committed to providing high quality legal advice and client care and we aim to offer all our clients an efficient and effective service. However, if our clients would like to discuss how the service to them could be improved, our charges, or should there be any aspect of our service with which they are not satisfied, we ask them to please contact the person in our firm responsible for Complaints Handling matters who is, Dr. Abess Taqi, Director:

- by email: abess@virgosolicitors.co.uk
- on telephone: 0208 885 3999
- address: Imperial House, Suite 21, 64 Willoughby Lane, London, N17 OSP, England

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Website: www.virgosolicitors.co.uk | **Notary Website:** www.abesstaqi.com



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If your complaint is in relation to the conduct of our Complaints Handling Representative, we will make alternative arrangements for the investigation and handling of your complaint. We are committed to high quality legal advice and client care and are keen to resolve any concerns as soon as possible and in order to do this, we will follow our complaints handling procedure. We will endeavour to handle your complaint promptly, fairly and free of charge.

Our complaints procedure is as follows:

Step One:

Let us know the nature and reason for your complaint. It is better to speak with your case worker or advisor directly and let them know that you intend to make a formal complaint.

Step Two:

Our Complaints Handling Representative will write to you to acknowledge your complaint within five (5) working days. In this letter, we will confirm what happens next.

Step Three:

Our complaints Handling Representative will then investigate the matter by reviewing the matter file and speaking to the member of staff concerned within ten (10) working days of acknowledging receipt of the complaint. If, for some reason, the matter cannot be investigated within this timeframe, then we will write to you to inform you of this together with the reason why we are unable to meet the prescribed time frame. We will also provide you with a revised timescale.

Once the investigation has been completed, our Complaints Handling Representative will invite you to a meeting to discuss the problem you have raised and hopefully resolve the complaint.

This could be a meeting and/or video conference call or telephone call and your preference will be taken into account along as well as how best the matter may be dealt with. This process of engagement will take place within ten (10) working days of our concluding the investigation of your complaint.

Following the meeting or telephone call with you, our Complaints Handling Representative will write to you within five (5) working days of the conference with you to confirm the discussion and any solution agreed upon.

If you do not want to or are unable to attend such a meeting or engage in a discussion (or the meeting or call is not deemed necessary), we will be happy to send you a detailed, written response, including the proposed solution, within fifteen (15) working days of our concluding the investigation of your complaint.

Step Four:

If you are satisfied with our response following the above steps, that will be the end of the matter. However, if you remain unsatisfied, you will be invited to contact our Complaints Handling Representative again and he will arrange for Partner/Director and/or another senior staff member who is unconnected with the matter or another local solicitor

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to review the decision. You will be written to within ten (10) working days of receiving the request with confirmation of the firm's final position in relation to the complaint, outlining the reasons and any final redress that is offered.

Step Five: Other avenues

Please note that we encourage all our clients to express dissatisfaction with respect to our services to us in the first instance. In most cases you will not be able to take your complaint further without providing us with the opportunity to put things right and resolve the problem.

Legal Ombudsman

We are permitted a period of eight weeks to consider the complaint. If for any reason we are unable to resolve the problem between us within that timeframe you may ask the Legal Ombudsman (LeO) to consider the complaint.

Clients are free to refer any complaint about our work, fees or level of service but there are some conditions and time limits. Please be aware that any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six (6) months of the client having received a final written response from us about their complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within one year of the act or omission about which the client is complaining occurred or from when the client should have known about or become aware that there were grounds for complaint.

For further information, please contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or visit www.legalombudsman.org.uk. The Legal Ombudsman may be contacted at PO Box 6167, Slough SL1 0EH.

Solicitors Regulation Authority

If someone thinks a solicitor might be dishonest or you have concerns about their ethics or integrity, they have the right to notify our regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). There are no time limits for making a report but there are limits on what the SRA will consider. Please note that the SRA is not able to deal with issues of poor service (complaints of this nature should instead be referred to the Legal Ombudsman). For further information about the SRA's role, please contact the SRA or visit:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page#report>.

Information Commissioners' Office

To the extent that your complaint relates to a breach of Personal Data or it is evident that you are exercising your Rights as a Data Subject under data and information rights legislation (including, but not limited to the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018), there may be aspects of the complaint that we may have to deal with and/or respond to differently in light of our obligations as a Data Controller.

It may be that aspects of your complaint will need to be passed to our Data Protection Officer, Dr. Abess Taqi, to assess and respond to in accordance with our Data and Privacy Notice which is on our website and available on request. Our

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standard complaint handling timescales noted above may also not be appropriate and we will advise you if we must escalate the timeframe for responding.

In the event of an allegation of a breach of Personal Data and/or any concern that our firm has not handled your personal information properly, we will consider whether a report needs to be made to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Not all breaches are reportable, and we will advise you of the results of our assessment.

Should it be clear that you are exercising your rights under data and information rights legislation, please be assured that we will handle that aspect of your complaint in accordance with our regulatory obligations. For instance, we will aim to provide a full response to a Personal Data request within one month but if we cannot respond within that timescale, we will let you know when we will be able to respond. You can find guidance on our obligations under data and information rights legislation on the ICO's website (www.ico.org.uk) as well as information on their regulatory powers and the action they can take. You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the ICO provided that you have first allowed us the opportunity to attempt to resolve it ourselves. For further information or to contact the ICO please visit www.ico.org.uk/concerns or call 0303 123 1113.

Your rights to refer the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman and SRA (as set out above) may still be available to you in addition to your Personal Data rights.

Further Information

For further information about our complaints handling procedures, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Abess Taqi, Director of Virgo Solicitors Limited:

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