

Hannays Solicitors & Advocates Limited

Complaints

Hannays Solicitors and Advocates want to give you the best possible service. If at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service we are providing or have provided, then you should inform us immediately, so that we can do our best to resolve the problem.

We take complaints received very seriously and try our best to resolve the issues being complained about. If your matter is ongoing making a complaint will not affect how we handle your matter.

In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues at this stage.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, then you can read our full complaints procedure which is set out below.

Kim Rainford, our Managing Director is our Complaints Manager, and he can be contacted directly by calling 0191 4555361 or writing to us at our address.

Although we hope to be able to resolve any issues raised in a complaint ourselves, the Solicitors Regulation Authority <http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page> can help you if you are concerned about our behaviour. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

We take any problems that do arise very seriously. We aim to ensure that any complaints that our clients may have are identified quickly and dealt with quickly and thoroughly.

If you make a complaint to this firm:-

- we will treat your complaint confidentially
- it will not affect our relationship in future
- it should be made within one year from the date of the act or omission or within one year from when you realised you had a concern.
- We will not charge fees for considering your complaint

In the first instance you may wish to raise the matter informally with the member of staff dealing with your matter or raise the matter directly with the Responsible Director.

Every client has the benefit of a single Director level Solicitor contact (**“the Responsible Director”**) and that person will take responsibility for the work being carried out for you. Quite often, some or all of your work, will be delegated under the supervision of the Responsible Director or other Directors. The Responsible Director will make every effort to ensure that the standard of services provided by the firm meets your expectations. Details of the Responsible Director are included in the client care letter sent to you when we first started to act for you. If, however, you are in any doubt as to who the Responsible Director is, please request this information from your immediate point of contact within the firm.

If your complaint is related to the fees that you have been billed, please raise the matter with us first. If you are still unhappy you may have the right to object to the bill by applying to the Court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974.

However, if all or part of a bill remains unpaid, we may be entitled to add interest.

If your complaint is a general complaint about our firm this should be directed to our Client Care Director, Mr Kim Rainford.

If you feel that the matter cannot be dealt with informally and you wish to submit a written complaint it will be dealt with in accordance with this procedure.

To whom do you complain?

You can register your complaint with the Responsible Director or with our Client Care Director, Mr Kim Rainford.

Mr Rainford is responsible for the process of investigating and resolving your complaint. Mr Rainford is also our Managing Director, and he is responsible for ensuring that complaints are handled effectively and in accordance with this procedure.

Our address is:

Hannays Solicitors & Advocates
19 Beach Road
South Shields
Tyne & Wear
NE33 2QA

Or you can contact us by:

Telephone: 0191 4974630 or 0191 4555361

Fax: 0191 4975895

Email: info@hannayslaw.co.uk

Our Complaints Procedure

Stages

1st Stage: Investigation and response

How do we investigate your complaint?

Raising a complaint with us does not cost you any additional fees or disbursements.

Once a complaint is received it is acknowledged within three days and logged in our complaints register so that we can monitor progress on how it is being handled.

You can submit your complaint to us in writing or by contacting our Client Care Director (Kim Rainford) and explaining your complaint verbally. Mr Rainford will record the details and send you a copy.

When we acknowledge your complaint, we will send you a copy of this procedure.

Our aim is to resolve your complaint within 28 days, but if your complaint is more complex, we will require more time, and we will let you know if it will require more time for you to receive a full response.

We will investigate your complaint in an appropriate manner which may include one or more of the following steps;

- Conducting a file review.
- We may ask the member of staff who acted for you to provide a response to your complaint to our Client Care Director within 5 days.
- We may examine their response and the information in your complaint file and may then ask the member of staff for more information.

How do we respond to you?

After full investigation, we will reply to you, usually in writing, and may suggest a meeting. We will invite you to meet with the Client Care Director dealing with your complaint to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint.

Within two days of the meeting, we will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions we have agreed with you. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, we will send you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include our suggestions for resolving the matter.

2nd Stage: Review of decision

At this stage, if you are still not satisfied that your complaint has been investigated and has been resolved you can contact us again.

We will then arrange to review our decision. This will happen in one of the following ways:

1. We will ask the member of staff who investigated and responded to your complaint to review his/her own decision within five days.
2. We will arrange for someone in the firm who has not been involved in your complaint to review it. They will do this within 10 days.
3. Our Client Care Director will review your complaint within 10 days.
4. We will ask our local Law Society or another local firm of solicitors to review your complaint. We will let you know how long this process will take.
5. We will invite you to agree to independent mediation. We will let you know how long this process will take and what is involved.

The process of review chosen will be at the selection of Hannays Solicitors and Advocates and will be the most appropriate method given the circumstances of the complaint.

When this stage is complete we will send you our final decision.

3rd Stage: Legal Ombudsman

If your complaint remains unresolved following our final decision, you have the right to take your complaint to the **Legal Ombudsman Service**.

The Legal Ombudsman is an independent organisation established to deal with complaints against Solicitors.

The Legal Ombudsman can help you if we are unable to resolve your complaint ourselves. They will look at your complaint independently. The involvement of the Ombudsman will not affect how we handle your case if it is still ongoing.

Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then if you wish to take the complaint further you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- Within six months of receiving a final response from us to your complaint
- and**
- No more than one year from the date of act/omission being complained about, or,
 - One year from the date when the complainant should have realised that there was a cause for complaint.

These time limits changed on 1st April 2023 as the Ombudsman had found that older cases were more challenging to investigate due to factors such as difficulties in gathering evidence, faded recollection of events, closed service providers, and lawyers having moved on or retired since the complained about events took place.

If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, please contact them directly:

Legal Ombudsman Contact details

Visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 9am to 5pm.

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Write: Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH (correct address from 22.1.24)

Negligence and Insurance Claims

Some complaints issues cannot be dealt with under our complaints procedure, for instance if we have been negligent in carrying out the work we have completed for you. In this instance, please consider raising the matter with us first as we will report the matter to our indemnity insurers to ensure the issues are dealt with fairly and properly.

Reading our Complaints Procedure to you

If you would like us to read our Complaints Procedure to you, we will make arrangements with you to do so. This will not incur any charges.