

Complaint Procedure

Our Complaints Policy

Ward Hadaway is committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our Clients. When, however, something goes wrong we need you to tell us about it. This will assist us in resolving the situation and help us to raise our own standards.

Our Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint (including a complaint about the firm's invoices) please contact the person dealing with your matter, or Jamie Martin, our Senior Partner. If you are not a client of ours, please contact Jamie Martin. Contact methods are detailed below.

Your complaint is likely to be passed to the Partner in charge of the Department or Unit that is involved in progressing the matter upon which your complaint is based. Where we have to change any of the timescales, set out below, in dealing with your complaint we will let you know and explain why.

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain any details, within three days of the receipt of your complaint. If it seems appropriate we will suggest a meeting at this stage. We will also let you know the name and contact details of the person who will actually be dealing with your complaint.
2. We will then arrange to record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint. The appointed person will investigate your complaint.
3. If appropriate, we will then invite you to discuss the matter with us and hopefully resolve your complaint. We would hope to be in a position to have a discussion with you within 14 working days following receipt of your complaint. If you prefer not to have a discussion, or if we cannot arrange this within an agreeable timescale, we will write fully to you setting out our views on the situation and any redress we are able to offer if relevant.
4. Within five working days of any discussion, we will write to you to confirm what took place and any suggestions that we agreed with you.
5. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you can write to us again. We will then arrange to review our decision. We would generally aim to do this within 14 working days of your response. This will happen in one of the following ways:
 - We will review our position.
 - We will arrange for someone else within the firm, who has not been involved in your complaint, to review it.

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6. We will let you know the result of the review within 5 working days of the end of the review. At this time we will write to you confirming Ward Hadaway's final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons. We will also give you details of the Legal Ombudsman (www.legalombudsman.org.uk), where this is appropriate. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact them about your complaint. In respect of any disputed invoice, you may apply to the court for an assessment of the invoice under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. It is very much to be hoped, however, that this will not prove necessary.

Before accepting your complaint The Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman :

- Within 6 months of receiving a formal response to your complaint and;
- No more than 6 years from the date of act / omission; or
- No more than 3 years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

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

Visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk, Call: 0300 555 0333, Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

7. If your concern relates to our conduct or behaviour the Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you. This could be for things such as dishonesty, taking or losing money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic. You can contact the Solicitors Regulatory Authority by telephone: 0300 606 2555 or via the website www.sra.org.uk
8. We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (www.sra.org.uk) and the rules and regulations governing how we should act and carry out our business are contained in the SRA Handbook and in particular the SRA Code of Conduct. These can be accessed and downloaded on www.sra.org.uk/handbook/ or obtained by asking us for the relevant code of conduct or regulations).
9. Alternative complaints bodies also exist, which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme. **An example is Independent Mediators whose website is www.independentmediators.co.uk** . We do not wish to use such an alternative complaints body as we consider that the Legal Ombudsman has the most experience in dealing with such complaints.
10. How to contact us:
Ward Hadaway Solicitors, Sandgate House, 102 Quayside, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3DX
Telephone: 03301373000
E-Mail: complaints@wardhadaway.com