



### **Introduction to our complaints procedure:**

We are committed to providing a high quality service to our clients. We do our utmost to avoid complaints and, on the odd occasion when one may occur, we aim to investigate thoroughly and resolve any issues quickly.

We ask that you tell us straight away if you are at all unhappy so that we can put it right. Initially, please raise the issue direct with the member of our staff undertaking your work, either verbally or in writing. We would hope that most issues or misunderstandings could be resolved at this level. Within 3 working days the member of staff receiving the complaint will then pass a note of it and the action taken to the Complaints handler, Carol Sketchley.

If you would rather not speak to the person handling your matter about your complaint, or you remain unhappy after speaking to them about it, please contact Carol Sketchley direct. You may write, email [carol@sketchleysolicitors.co.uk](mailto:carol@sketchleysolicitors.co.uk) or 'phone 01926 484488.

Carol will write to you within 3 working days acknowledging your complaint and offering you a meeting to confirm or explain the details. In the alternative, you will have the option of submitting the details in writing if you have not already done so. A copy of this procedure will be enclosed with the letter. Carol will then investigate your complaint and send you a detailed response within 10 working days, including, if appropriate, suggestions for a resolution of all issues.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, or if we do not give you our final response to your complaint within 8 weeks of you formally lodging it, you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk). The Legal Ombudsman is the statutory complaints handling body for complaints about solicitors and can be contacted at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ or [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk) or by telephone on 0300 555 0333. Please note that complaints need to be made to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of receiving our final written response to your complaint.

Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us or within six years of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring (or if outside of this period, within three years of when you should reasonably have been aware of it).

To complain to the Legal Ombudsman, you must be:

1. An individual;
2. A business or enterprise that is a micro-enterprise (employing fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed €2 million);

3. A charity that has an annual net income of less than £1 million;
4. A club/association/organisation, which is managed by its members/a committee/a committee of its members, that has an annual net income of less than £1 million;
5. A trustee of a trust with an asset value of less than £1 million; or
6. A personal representative or beneficiary of the estate of a person who, before they died, had not referred the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.

### **Alternative Complaints Handling Body**

Under EU law, we are required to inform you that alternative complaints handling bodies (for example Pro mediate, Brow Farm, Top Road, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 6SP, 01928 732455, [www.promediate.co.uk](http://www.promediate.co.uk)) exist which can deal with complaints about legal services should both parties wish to use such a body. However, given that the decision of a mediator is not binding on either party it is, in our view, of little benefit and we are unlikely to agree to it.

Complaints about a client's rights under the General Data Protection Regulation must be submitted to the Information Commissioner's Office: [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk)

In the case of a complaint about your bill, you may be entitled to have your bill assessed by the court under Sections 70 – 72 of the Solicitors Act 1974. If any bill, or part of a bill remains unpaid whilst a complaint is under investigation, we may be entitled to charge interest if the bill is upheld. Please note that, if you exercise your right to have a bill assessed by the court, the Legal Ombudsman may not be able to consider your complaint.

### **Complaints Review**

Records of complaints are reviewed regularly so that we can address any underlying problems and prevent future difficulties.

### **Jurisdiction**

Any disputes or legal issues arising from our Client Care and Terms of Business will be determined by the laws of England and Wales and considered exclusively by the English courts.

