

## **Complaints Handling Policy**

- 1 We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service.
- 2 We acknowledge that we may not always get it right, so if something has gone wrong, including in relation to our charges, we need you to tell us. Please inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve the problem for you and this will help us to improve our standards of service.
- 3 How do I make a complaint?**
  - 3.1 You can contact us in writing (by email or letter) or by telephone.
  - 3.2 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.
  - 3.3 If you do not feel able to raise your concerns with them, or you are unsatisfied with their response, please contact our Complaints Handling Directors whom has overall responsibility for complaints and whose contact details are: Mrs Natalie Palmer and Mr Martin Williamson, Latimer Hinks Solicitors Limited, 5-8 Priestgate, Darlington, DL1 1NL, by email [nsp@latimerhinks.co.uk](mailto:nsp@latimerhinks.co.uk) (Natalie Palmer) or [mw@latimerhinks.co.uk](mailto:mw@latimerhinks.co.uk) (Martin Williamson), or by telephone 01325 341500.
  - 3.4 To help us to understand your complaint, and in order that we do not miss anything, please tell us:
    - 3.4.1 your full name and contact details;
    - 3.4.2 the details of your complaint;
    - 3.4.3 how you would like your complaint to be resolved; and
    - 3.4.4 your file reference number (if you have it).

3.5 If you require any help in making your complaint we will try to help you.

#### **4 How will you deal with my complaint?**

4.1 We will write to you within two working days acknowledging your complaint, enclosing a copy of this policy.

4.2 We will investigate your complaint. This will usually involve:

4.2.1 reviewing your complaint;

4.2.2 reviewing your file(s) and other relevant documents; and

4.2.3 liaising with the person who dealt with your matter (where this is not the complaints handlers).

4.3 We may also need to ask you for further information or documents. If so, we will ask you to provide the information within a specific period of time.

4.4 We will update you on the progress of your complaint at appropriate times.

4.5 We may also, if appropriate, invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. You do not have to attend if you do not wish to or if you are unable to. We will be happy to discuss the matter with you by telephone or video conference.

4.6 We will write to you at the end of our investigation to tell you what we have done and what we propose to do to resolve your complaint. Where possible, we will aim to do this within 21 days of the date of our letter of acknowledgement.

#### **5 What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint**

5.1 We have eight weeks to consider your complaint. If we have not resolved it within this time you may be able to have the complaint

independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman investigates complaints about service issues with lawyers. This applies if you are an individual, a business with fewer than 10 employees and turnover or assets not exceeding a certain threshold, a charity or trust with a net income of less than £1m, or if you fall within certain other categories (you can find out more from the Legal Ombudsman). The Legal Ombudsman will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your matter.

5.2 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 you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman

5.2.1 within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint.

**and**

5.2.2 no more than one year from the date of the act or omission being complained about:

**or**

5.2.3 no more than one year from the date when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

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

### **Contact details**

Visit: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 10.00 to 16.00

Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

5.4 Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) bodies exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our company wish to use such a scheme, e.g. *such as ProMediate (www.promediate.co.uk)*. We have, however, chosen not to adopt an ADR process. If, therefore, you wish to complain further, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman.

## **6 What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour**

6.1 The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help 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.

6.2 Visit its website to see how you can raise your concerns with the [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#).

## **7 What will it cost?**

7.1 We will not charge you for handling your complaint.

7.2 Please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on the matter, and all or some of the bill is not paid, we may be entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding. This is set out in our *Terms of Business*.

7.3 The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.