

Complaints procedure for clients

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Mills & Reeve LLP (“firm”) is committed to providing outstanding client service to all its clients and we do our utmost to treat all our clients fairly. When a problem arises or something goes wrong, we need you to let us know. This gives us the opportunity to address the issue and to try to satisfy your concerns. It also helps us to improve our standards.
- 1.2 As stated in Mills & Reeve LLP’s terms of engagement, clients who wish to make a complaint which they are unable to resolve with the individual dealing with the work (or their supervisor) or the person managing the client’s relationship with the firm, are asked to contact the firm’s Managing Partner.
- 1.3 Please also use this complaints procedure if you have a complaint about a bill. In addition, you have the right to object to a bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. If you apply to the court, the Legal Ombudsman (see below for details) may decide not to deal with a complaint about the bill.
- 1.4 The firm is bound by the SRA Code of Conduct 2011. Chapter 1 of the Code deals with complaints handling. The firm is not entitled to charge for handling a complaint.

2 Our complaints procedure

- 2.1 You may complain to:
 - 2.1.1 the lawyer handling your matter who will then (depending on the nature of your complaint) pass on your complaint to their supervising partner, or to the partner managing your relationship with the firm; or
 - 2.1.2 the supervising partner or to the partner managing your relationship with the firm; or
 - 2.1.3 the firm’s Managing Partner.
- 2.2 Within three working days we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and tell you who is dealing with it. We will also supply a copy of this procedure to you. We might also need to ask you for further clarification about your complaint.
- 2.3 It might be possible to offer a solution at this stage and we will write to you to ask whether the solution is acceptable.

- 2.4 The person who acted in your matter will normally be asked to prepare a response, unless in the circumstances it is necessary for someone else to do so. The person who is handling your complaint will examine the response and the complaint file and ask for any further relevant information.
- 2.5 We will then either:
- 2.5.1 contact you to try to arrange a meeting with you to discuss your complaint and put forward a solution. We will do this within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter. Within three days of the meeting we will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions that have been agreed or suggested; or
 - 2.5.2 send a detailed written reply to your complaint, including our suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
- 2.6 If you inform us that the solution is not acceptable, the matter will be passed to the Managing Partner for them to review. Of course, at any time you can ask for your complaint to be referred to the Managing Partner. The Managing Partner will conduct an investigation of your complaint either personally or by referring the matter to another partner or member of the management team.
- 2.7 The Managing Partner (or someone on his behalf and at his direction) will either meet with you or contact you to discuss your complaint or alternatively will write to you within 14 days of the referral to them, confirming our final position on your complaint and setting out our reasons.
- 2.8 If we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction within eight weeks of receiving full details of your complaint, you can ask the Legal Ombudsman at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ (or by email to enquires@legalombudsman.org.uk) to consider the complaint. Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint 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). The act or omission, or when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint must have been after 5 October 2010. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman may consider complaints from prospective clients in certain circumstances but may decline to deal with complaints from certain types of clients. For further information you should contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or go to www.legalombudsman.org.uk.
- 2.9 If we have to change any of the above timescales we will let you know and explain the reasons for the change.

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