

Information

Raising concerns and making complaints

Procedure for clients

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Mills & Reeve LLP (“the **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 as soon as possible. This gives us the opportunity to investigate your concerns objectively, address the issues you have raised and to try to satisfy your concerns. It also helps us to improve our standards.

2 What to do if you have concerns about our service

- 2.1 In the first instance, you will probably find it helpful to discuss your concerns with someone from the team dealing with your matter. This might be the individual working on your matter day to day (the matter manager), their supervising partner (the matter partner) or the person responsible for managing the firm’s relationship with you (the client partner). You can find their contact details in the firm’s Letter of Engagement sent to you at the start of your matter and you may contact them either by telephone, in writing or by email.
- 2.2 The lawyer looking into your concerns will acknowledge their receipt as soon as possible. They may also need to ask you for further clarification about your concerns if they need further information.
- 2.3 It may be possible to offer a solution to resolve your concerns quickly. The type of solution offered and the manner in which it is proposed will depend on the individual circumstances. If appropriate, the lawyer may send you a detailed reply to your concerns or suggest a meeting. When addressing your complaint in this way, we will aim to provide you with a substantive reply or proposals within 28 days of receiving the necessary details of your concerns.
- 2.4 If your concerns are not resolved in this way you may ask for a formal review, in which case the matter will be referred for a review by one of the firm’s complaints partners. The firm’s complaints partners are Angus Turner, Chris Wilkinson and Justin Ripman. Their contact details are:

Justin Ripman justin.ripman@mills-reeve.com Phone: 01603 69 3256

Angus Turner angus.turner@mills-reeve.com Phone: 01214 56 8283

Chris Wilkinson chris.wilkinson@mills-reeve.com Phone: 01612 34 8843

3 Review by a complaints partner

- 3.1 The complaints partner allocated to deal with your complaint will acknowledge it in writing (usually by email if that is your preferred mode of contact) within three working days of receiving details of your complaint.

- 3.2 The complaints partner dealing will arrange for an investigation and will endeavour to write to you with a full response within 28 days of your complaint being referred to him. That response will summarise the findings of the investigation, the firm's conclusions on your complaint and the solution proposed.
- 3.3 If it is not possible to issue a detailed response within 28 days, we will update you on the progress of the investigation and provide an estimate of the likely time frame for issuing a final response.
- 3.4 If the complaints partner considers that your concerns would be better addressed other than by detailed response in writing he will write to you and let you know how he proposes to resolve the complaint. For instance, he may suggest a meeting with you to discuss your concerns.
- 3.5 You will not be charged for the handling of your complaint.

4 Referring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman

- 4.1 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 to consider your complaint. The Legal Ombudsman is an independent complaints body which was established under the Legal Services Act 2007 and deals with legal services complaints. You may wish to submit your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman via their online form at: <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/helping-the-public/make-a-complaint/>. Alternatively, you can submit your concerns via: cat@legalombudsman.org.uk or PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ. 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 via enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk, 0300 555 0333 (or +44 121 245 3050 for international callers), or go to www.legalombudsman.org.uk.
- 4.2 We are obliged to point out to you that there are alternative complaints bodies, such as ProMediate, (whose website address is: www.ProMediate.co.uk), exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should all parties agree to use such a scheme. The firm submits to the jurisdiction of the Legal Ombudsman but does not agree to use ProMediate.
- 4.3 As a result of European regulations on alternative dispute resolution (“**ADR**”), we are obliged to provide a link on the Mills & Reeve website to the European online dispute resolution (“**ODR**”) platform. Please note, however, that the ODR platform only transmits disputes to ADR bodies which are approved under European law and these do not currently include the Legal Ombudsman scheme. We do not agree to use such ADR bodies.

5 Complaints about bills

- 5.1 Please also use this procedure if you have a concern or 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 above for details) may decide not to deal with a complaint about the bill.

6 Referring a complaint to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (“SRA”)

6.1 Subject to paragraph 5.1 above, complaints about poor service should be directed to the Legal Ombudsman. If you are concerned about matters such as conduct or ethics, you should report these concerns to the SRA. Details of how to do this can be found at: <http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/>.

6.2 The SRA can be contacted via their website (<http://www.sra.org.uk/contactus/>) or by the following means:

6.2.1 Phone: 0370 606 2555 (or +44(0)121 329 6800 for international callers)

6.2.2 Fax: +44 (0)121 616 1999

6.2.3 Post: Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharf Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN

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