

CLIENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards. We deal with all complaints fairly, promptly and at no extra cost to you.

1) What is a complaint?

A report by a client that their expectations of what they consider to be a good service have not been met.

2) Making a complaint

In the first instance you should raise any dissatisfaction with the person dealing with your matter, or their supervisor, details of which are given in your initial Client Care Letter. If they are unable to resolve the issue for you or you are uncomfortable raising it with them then please follow the procedure below:

3) Investigating the complaint

- a. Put your complaint in writing to our client care director, Mark Santa-Olalla, who is a senior director at the firm. His email address is marks@gordons-law.co.uk
- b. We will acknowledge the complaint within seven days and notify you who will be handling your complaint.
- c. We will record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint. We will conduct a full investigation and an independent review of the matter.
- d. We aim to respond in full within 28 days. However, if the complaint is of a more complex nature, we will require more time, but we will let you know when you will receive a full response. We may also invite you to meet with the Supervisor to gather more information and resolve the matter.
- e. We will reply to you, usually in writing following the outcome of the review of the complaints investigated.

If still unresolved at this stage, you may take the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman or, in accordance with the Alternative Dispute Resolution Regulations to an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Scheme Provider. We will issue a final letter advising you of this.

4) LEGAL OMBUDSMAN

The Legal Ombudsman is the independent body established by the Office for Legal Complaints under the Legal Services Act 2007 to deal with complaints against Solicitors.

The Legal Ombudsman may:

- Investigate the quality of professional service supplied by a solicitor to a client.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has breached rules of professional conduct.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has unreasonably refused to supply a professional service to a prospective client.
- Investigate allegations that a solicitor has persistently or unreasonably offered a professional service that the client does not want.

Before it will consider a complaint the Legal Ombudsman generally requires that the firm's internal Complaints Procedure (outlined above) has been exhausted. If the Legal Ombudsman is satisfied that the firm's proposals for resolving a complaint are reasonable, it may decline to investigate further. You will have to bring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- within 6 months of receiving our final written response to your complaint; and

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- no later than one year from the date of the act or omission you are complaining about, or one year from the date when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman's address and contact details are:

PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH; telephone, 0300 555 0333; website, www.legalombudsman.org.uk; or email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Who can Complain?

A **complainant** to the Legal Ombudsman must be one of the following:

- a) An individual;
- b) A micro-enterprise as defined in European Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 (broadly, an enterprise with fewer than 10 staff and a turnover or balance sheet value not exceeding €2 million);
- c) A charity with an annual income less than £1 million;
- d) A club, association or society with an annual income less than £1 million;
- e) A trustee of a trust with a net asset value less than £1 million; or a personal representative or the residuary beneficiaries of an estate where a person with a complaint died before referring it to the Legal Ombudsman.

If you do not fall into any of these categories, you should be aware that you can only obtain redress by using our Complaints Handling Procedure or by mediation or arbitration, or by taking action through the Courts.

Prospective Clients

A complaint can also be made by a prospective client if we have:

- Unreasonably refused a service to a complainant;
- Persistently or unreasonably offered a service that the complainant does not want.

5) THE SOLICITOR'S REGULATION AUTHORITY

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of your matter, you should first raise your concerns with us using this complaints procedure.

The **Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA)** regulates solicitors and law firms in England and Wales. The SRA can help if you are concerned about a solicitor's conduct, for example if you believe there has been dishonesty, discrimination, misuse of client money, or other serious breaches of SRA rules. The SRA does not usually deal with complaints about poor service. [sra.org.uk]

You can contact the SRA at:

Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham
B1 1RN

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Telephone: 0370 606 2555

Website: www.sra.org.uk

Report a solicitor or firm: <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/>

6) ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SCHEMES

Alternative dispute resolution bodies exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services, should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme. We do not currently agree to use any such scheme. If you have a complaint about our service, the Legal Ombudsman provides the appropriate independent route, as set out above.

Data Protection Complaints

Under the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, you have a statutory right to complain directly to us if you consider that we have infringed the UK GDPR or Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018 in our handling of your personal data. This is separate from a complaint about the quality of our legal services, which is dealt with under the procedure set out above.

You can submit a data protection complaint to us in writing, by email to marks@gordons-law.co.uk

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 30 days and will take appropriate steps to investigate and respond to you without undue delay. When we respond, we will tell you the outcome of our investigation and explain your right to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office ('ICO') if you remain dissatisfied.

You can contact the ICO as follows:

- Website: www.ico.org.uk
- Telephone: 0303 123 1113
- Address: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

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