Complaints Handling Procedure

We want to give you the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service, we have provided then we would encourage you to inform us immediately, so that we can do our best to resolve the problem.

In the first instance it may be helpful to contact an advisor who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues. If you still have queries or concerns, please contact Debbie Rylands, FCILEX partner debbierylandsi@asflsolicitors.co.uk or by telephone on 01934641191. Your right to complain might relate to the way in which your matter is being handled or the fee we are seeking from you.

For further information or if you want to make a formal complaint, then you can read our full complaints procedure here [insert link to info below] . In our procedure, we explain how we will handle a formal complaint. We also explain the role of the Legal Ombudsman and the Solicitors Regulation Authority and provide useful contact details so that you can be properly aware of your rights and the options available to you.

Our Complaints Handling Procedure

We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). We are committed to high quality legal advice and client care and aim to offer all our clients an efficient and effective service. However, if our clients would like to discuss how the service to them could be improved, the level of their bill, or should there be any aspect of our service with which they are not satisfied, we ask them to please contact the person in our firm responsible for complaints Handling: Debbie Rylands, FCILEX Partner on 01934 641191, email debbierylands@asflsolicitros.co.uk or by post to 19 Boulevard, Weston Super Mare BS23 1NR.

We are committed to high quality legal advice and client care and are keen to resolve any concerns as soon as possible and in order to do this, will follow our complaints handling procedure.

We will endeavour to handle your complaint promptly, fairly and free of charge.

Our complaints procedure is as follows:

<u>Step One:</u>

If they have not already done so, we ask our clients to let us know the full nature of the problem.

<u>Step Two:</u>

Our Complaints Handling Representative will write to the client acknowledging their complaint within five working days. In this letter, we shall confirm what happens next.

<u>Step Three:</u>

Our complaints Handling Representative shall then investigate the matter by reviewing the matter file and speaking to the member of staff concerned within ten working days of acknowledging receipt of the complaint. If, for some reason, the matter cannot be investigated in this timeframe, then we will write to the client notifying them of this together with the reason why and giving a revised timescale.

Once the investigation has been completed, our Complaints Handling Representative shall invite the client to a meeting to discuss the issue(s) they have raised and hopefully resolve the complaint. This could be a meeting, video conference call or telephone call and the client's preference will be taken into account along as well as how best the matter may be dealt with. This process of engagement will take place within ten working days of our concluding the investigation of the matter. Following the meeting or call, our Complaints Handling Representative shall write to the client within five working days of the meeting or call to confirm the discussion and the solution agreed upon.

If the client does not want to or is unable to attend such a meeting or engage in a discussion (or the meeting or call is not necessary), we will be happy to send the client a detailed, written response, including the proposed solution, within fifteen working days of our concluding the investigation of the matter.

Step Four:

If the client is satisfied with our response following the above steps, that will be the end of the matter. However, if the client is not satisfied, they will be invited to contact our Complaints Handling Representative again and they will arrange for Sarah Rochford, practice manager to review the decision. They will write to the client within ten working days of receiving the request with confirmation of the firm's final position in relation to the complaint, outlining the reasons and any final redress that is offered.

Step Five: Other avenues

Clients must always try complaining to us first. In most cases they will not be able to take their complaint further without allowing us the opportunity to put things right.

Legal Ombudsman

We are permitted a period of eight weeks to consider the complaint. If for any reason we are unable to resolve the problem between us within that timeframe, then our clients are advised that they may ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint.

Clients are free to refer any complaint about our work, fees or level of service but there are some conditions and time limits. Please be aware that any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six months of the client having received a final written response from us about their complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within one year of the act or omission about which the client is complaining occurring or from when the client should have known about or become aware that there were grounds for complaint.

For further information, please contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or visit www.legalombudsman.org.uk. The Legal Ombudsman may be contacted at PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH.

Solicitors Regulation Authority

If someone thinks a solicitor might be dishonest or you have concerns about their ethics or integrity, they have the right to notify our regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). There are no time limits for making a report but there are limits on what the SRA will consider. Please note that the SRA is not able to deal with issues of poor service (complaints of this nature should instead be referred to the Legal Ombudsman). For further information about the SRA's role, please contact the SRA or visit:

https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page#report.