

## Appendix 1

### ROBINSON WILSON SOLICITORS COMPLAINTS POLICY

Robinson Wilson Solicitors is committed to providing a high quality service to everyone we deal with. In order to do this we need you to give us any comments about our service, and to tell us when we get things wrong. We want to help you resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

We treat as a complaint any expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a response. We listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service.

#### Contents

<b>What is a complaint? .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Persistent and or vexatious complaints.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Our standards for handling complaints .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Confidentiality.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How to Complain .....</b>	<b>3</b>
The stages of the complaints procedure.....	3
Timescales for handling a complaint.....	3
If you remain dissatisfied .....	3
<b>Remedies.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Recording complaints .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Contacting us.....</b>	<b>4</b>

### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not.

### **Our policy covers complaints about:**

- a. the standard of service we provide;
- b. the behaviour of our staff, and
- c. any action or lack of action by staff.

### **Our complaints policy does not cover**

- a. comments about our policies or policy decisions
- b. dissatisfaction with our policies or decisions about individual cases
- c. matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints procedure, or
- d. anonymous complaints.

### **Persistent and or vexatious complaints**

All complaints will be processed in accordance with this policy. However, during this process, staff may have contact with unreasonable complainant behaviour and unreasonably persistent complainants.

These are becoming an increasing problem and difficulties in handling such complaints can place strain on time and resources and can be stressful for solicitors who have to deal with these complex and challenging issues.

We follow the guidance outlined by the Law Society in regards to persistent or vexatious complaints and we will ensure that all complaints are reviewed carefully in a respectful and professional manner.

### **Our standards for handling complaints**

- We treat all complaints seriously.
- You will be treated with courtesy and fairness at all times. We would hope, too, that you will be courteous and fair in your dealings with our staff at all times.
- We will treat your complaint in confidence within our practice.
- We will deal with your complaint promptly. We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within five working days and we will send you a full reply within 20 working days of receipt. If we cannot send a full reply within 20 working days of receipt we will tell you the reason why and let you know when we will be able to reply in full.
- We will not treat you less favourably than anyone else because of your:
  - sex or marital status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, and gender (including gender reassignment, whether proposed, commenced or completed)
  - sexual orientation
  - colour or race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality

- disability
- religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation, or
- other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties or age.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the GDPR.

### **How to Complain**

You can make a complaint to the address below or alternatively by:

- By telephone
- By email
- In writing or letter
- In person

We have a two-stage complaints procedure. At each stage it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much clear detail as possible, including any documents and correspondence and stating that you are making a complaint in line with our procedure.

You must complain within one month of the cause for complaint happening. Failure to do so will mean we may not be able to acknowledge your complaint.

### **The stages of the complaints procedure**

#### **Stage 1**

This is the first opportunity for us to resolve a complainant's dissatisfaction, and we aim to resolve the majority of complaints at this stage. In the first instance, we will try to get your complaint resolved by the principle dealing with your complaint. Upon receipt of your complaint, we will inform the fee earner and ask them to deal with your complaint.

#### **Stage 2**

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request a review by Mrs Williams Principal solicitor . Alternatively you can contact them by:

#### **Stage 3**

### **Timescales for handling a complaint**

**Stage 1** - maximum 20 working days  
Acknowledgement within 5 working days  
Full response within 20 working days

**Stage 2** – maximum 20 working days  
Acknowledgement within 5 working days  
Full response within 20 working days

**Extending time limits**

We aim to complete all complaints within the timescales above; however, if a complaint is very complex it may occasionally be necessary to extend the time limit. If this is the case we will keep the complainant informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and inform them of the new deadline.

Following any stage of the procedure, a complainant has a maximum of 28 days from the date of the final response to request that their complaint be progressed to the next stage.

**If you remain dissatisfied**

If having followed the two stages of our complaints procedure you still remain dissatisfied, you can ask to have your complaint considered by the Legal Ombudsman. For more information regarding the legal ombudsman please visit

[www.legalombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint)

The address to contact the Legal Service Ombudsman is:-

Legal Ombudsman  
PO Box 6806  
Wolverhampton  
WV1 9WJ

Alternatively you can contact them by:

**Telephone:** 0300 555 0333

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

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:

Within Six Months of Receiving a Final Response to Your Complaint

No More Than Six Years from the Date of Act/Omission; Or

No More Than Three Years from When You Should Reasonably Have Known There Was Cause for Complaint

The Legal Ombudsman Authority can help you 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.

Complaining to the Solicitor Regulation Authority ( SRA )

If you are not satisfied with our service you can make a complaint to the SRA , please see details of how to make a complaint by clicking on the link below

<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/>

### **Remedies**

When we get things wrong we will act to:

- a. accept responsibility
- b. explain what went wrong and why, and
- c. put things right by making any changes required.

The action we take to put matters right (i.e. redress) in response to a complaint, can include any combination of the remedies set out in the “menu” below. The general principle we follow is that a complainant should, so far as possible, be put in the position he or she would have been in, had things not gone wrong.

The remedy chosen needs to be proportionate and appropriate to the failure in service and take into account what people are looking for when they complain. An apology is normally appropriate, but other action may also be necessary.

- A sincere and meaningful apology, explaining what happened and or what went wrong) - an apology is not an acceptance of liability under Section 2 of the Compensation Act 2006
- Putting things right (for example change of procedures to prevent future difficulties of a similar kind, either for the complainant or others)
- Training or supervising staff; or any combination of these

### **Recording complaints**

We will log all complaints we receive so that we can monitor the types of problems, the best way to sort them out and how long we are taking to deal with them. This also helps us to take a closer look at how we can improve our own service delivery.

We will handle your information in line with data-protection legislation.

### **Contacting us**

All complaints and requests for review under our complaints procedures should be made in the following ways:

In writing:

Selbourne House

36 A Elgin Avenue

London

W9 3AZ

Or

By Telephone:

0208 964 3913

Or

By Email:

[enquires@robinsonwilsonsolicitor.co.uk](mailto:enquires@robinsonwilsonsolicitor.co.uk)