

Thompson Smith and Puxon Complaints Handling Procedure

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. We recognise that, despite our best efforts, things may occasionally go wrong. If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, including our charges, we want to hear from you so that we can understand your concerns, resolve them fairly and promptly, and learn from the experience.

This procedure applies to complaints from current clients, former clients, prospective clients and, where appropriate, other individuals affected by the legal services we have provided.

This procedure is informed by the Legal Ombudsman's Model Complaints Resolution Procedure and is designed to provide a clear, fair and resolution-focused process

1. How do I make a complaint?

1.1 You can raise a concern or complaint with us in writing (by letter or email) or by telephone.

1.2 In the first instance, it may be helpful to speak to the person who is dealing with your matter. They may be able to resolve your concerns quickly and informally.

1.3 If you do not feel able to raise your concerns with them, or if your concerns are not resolved, please contact the person supervising your matter, whose details are contained in your engagement letter.

1.4 If you do not feel able to raise your concerns with either of these individuals, or if you remain dissatisfied, please contact our Head of Professional Standards:

Nicola Crisell

Email: nicola.crisell@tsplegal.com

Direct line: 01206 217012

Mobile: 07808 781077

1.5 To help us understand your concerns, please tell us:

- your full name and contact details
- what has gone wrong
- when the issue occurred
- how you have been affected
- how you would like the matter to be resolved

2. How will we deal with your complaint?

Stage 1: Acknowledgement

2.1 We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days of receiving it.

2.2 Our acknowledgement will:

- confirm receipt of your complaint
- summarise our understanding of your concerns
- identify the person responsible for handling the complaint
- explain the next steps in the process
- provide an estimated timescale for dealing with the complaint
- provide a copy of this procedure if you do not already have one

Stage 2: Early Resolution

2.3 We will seek to understand your concerns and resolve them as quickly and fairly as possible.

2.4 This may include:

- discussing the matter with you by telephone
- meeting with you
- corresponding by email or letter
- providing clarification or explanation
- taking corrective action where appropriate
- agreeing another appropriate resolution

2.5 If the complaint can be resolved at this stage, we will confirm the outcome and any agreed action in writing.

Stage 3: Full Investigation

2.6 If an early resolution is not possible, we will carry out a full investigation.

2.7 This will usually involve:

- reviewing your complaint
- reviewing the relevant file and documents
- discussing the matter with those involved
- obtaining any additional information required

2.8 We may ask you for further information or documents if necessary.

2.9 We will keep you updated regarding the progress of your complaint and let you know if our anticipated timescale changes.

2.10 Where appropriate, we may invite you to attend a meeting to discuss the complaint. Attendance is entirely voluntary, and we will be happy to discuss matters by telephone or video call if preferred.

3. Outcome of the Complaint

3.1 At the conclusion of our investigation, we will write to you explaining:

- our findings
- our decision
- the reasons for our decision
- any action we propose to take

3.2 Where possible, we aim to provide our detailed written response within 20 working days of our acknowledgement of the complaint.

3.3 Depending upon the circumstances, possible outcomes may include:

- an explanation
- an apology
- corrective action
- review of work undertaken
- reduction or refund of fees where appropriate
- another agreed resolution

3.4 If you remain dissatisfied after receiving our response, you should let us know and we will review the matter and provide our final position in writing.

3.5 If we need to change any of the timescales referred to in this procedure, we will tell you and explain why.

4. What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint

4.1 We have eight weeks to consider your complaint. If we have not resolved it within this time, you may be able to complain to the Legal Ombudsman. This applies if you are:

- an individual
- a business with fewer than 10 employees and turnover or assets not exceeding the applicable threshold
- a charity with income below £1 million
- a trust with net assets below £1 million
- or another person entitled to use the Legal Ombudsman scheme

4.2 Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will usually expect you to have attempted to resolve the complaint with us first.

4.3 If eligible, you must normally refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- within six months of receiving our final response; and

- no more than one year from the date of the act or omission complained about; or
- no more than one year from the date when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

4.4 The Legal Ombudsman is independent of the legal profession, and its service is free of charge.

Legal Ombudsman Contact Details

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 555 0333 (9.00am to 5.00pm)

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Post: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

Further information about the Legal Ombudsman's Model Complaints Resolution Procedure is available [here](#).

4.5 Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) bodies exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services. We have chosen not to adopt an ADR scheme. If you remain dissatisfied following completion of our complaint's procedure, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman.

5. What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour

5.1 The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) can help if you are concerned about our conduct or behaviour. Examples include:

- dishonesty
- misuse of money
- discrimination
- serious breaches of SRA requirements

5.2 You can find further information on the SRA's website.

6. What to do if you are unhappy with our handling of your personal data

6.1 If you are dissatisfied with how we have processed your personal data, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

6.2 The ICO encourages individuals to raise concerns with the organisation concerned before making a complaint to them. We therefore encourage you to use this complaints procedure first wherever possible.

6.3 You may nevertheless contact the ICO at any stage if you are dissatisfied with our handling of your personal data.

7. What will it cost?

7.1 We will not charge you for handling your complaint.

7.2 If we have issued a bill which remains unpaid, we may be entitled to charge interest on outstanding sums in accordance with our Terms of Business.

7.3 The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.
