

## Client Complaints Procedure

### 1. Your right to make a complaint

Bradley Haynes Law is committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. If you are not satisfied with our service, we need to know about this as soon as possible to allow us to review and resolve any issues or concerns you have with how we are handling your matter. We ask that you please follow the procedure set out below so that we may help resolve your concerns.

#### 1.1 Raising the issue with your Fee Earner

In the first instance, where possible, we would ask that you raise any initial client care problems with the person who has day-to-day conduct of your matter at Bradley Haynes Law. This will give them the opportunity of addressing matters directly with you, as we find that matters can often be quickly resolved in this way.

#### 1.2 Raising the issue with a Supervisor

You may, however, prefer to raise your issue or concerns directly with the supervisor of the person handling your matter. The supervisor will acknowledge your concerns and will review the matter. Please allow the supervisor a reasonable time in which to review your matter and provide a response to your concerns.

The supervisor's details can be found in the initial Client Care Letter we sent you at the outset of your matter. If you no longer have access to your Client Care Letter, a further copy may be requested by email from the person handling your matter, or by calling our main office number on 01905 900919. We have also noted on our website each team member's supervisor for easy reference.

#### 1.3 Raising a Formal Complaint

If your concern or complaint has not been dealt with to your satisfaction by the person handling your matter, or by their supervisor, please raise a formal complaint with our Client Care Officer as soon as possible, so they may address your concerns.

Our Client Care Officer is Lizzie Bradley. Please see our Client Care Officer's contact details as follows:

Client Care Officer:	Lizzie Bradley
By letter:	Bradley Haynes Law, Severn House, Prescott Drive, Worcester WR4 9NE
By fax:	01905 330 093
By phone:	01905 900 919
By email:	<a href="mailto:lizzie@bradleyhayneslaw.co.uk">lizzie@bradleyhayneslaw.co.uk</a>

If the complaint relates to the Client Care Officer in their role whilst acting on your matter, then an independent Director at Bradley Haynes Law will take over reviewing the complaint in their place.

## **2 Making a formal complaint**

2.1 If you contact us with a formal complaint, we ask that you include in your complaint the following:

- your full name(s);
- your matter/file reference (found on your initial Client Care Letter);
- details of your complaint;
- what resolution you hope to achieve as a result of your complaint.

## **3 What will happen next?**

3.1 We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your formal complaint within 3 working days of receiving the complaint, enclosing a copy of this procedure. The letter may be sent by email only, if this is the method of communication you used to make your complaint to us. We will tell you how the complaint will be handled and when you can expect to hear from us with an initial and/or substantive response.

3.2 We will deal with your complaint promptly, fairly and free of charge.

3.3 Please inform us if you require this procedure or any documentation / correspondence in a different format to make the complaint procedure more accessible for you. Examples may

include: a large print copy document, an audio version of the procedure, or corresponding with you in paper form with a background colour applied to our written correspondence. This list is not exhaustive, and we welcome hearing from clients if a different format is preferred, which we will endeavour to support as reasonably practicable. Equally, if we can make any reasonable adjustments to any meetings, please inform us in advance and we will endeavour to provide the requested adjustment.

- 3.4 Once we have sent you an acknowledgment letter, we will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve reviewing the matter file and speaking with the member(s) of staff who acts/acted for you on the matter. If a supervisor or Head of Department has not yet reviewed the matter and considered your complaint, the Client Care Officer may delegate the matter review to the supervisor of the matter or the relevant Head of Department.
- 3.5 In the first instance, we will try to resolve the complaint in writing at an early stage. However, please allow the Client Care Officer, or their delegate, a reasonable time to review the complaint and the relevant information on your matter. We will send a detailed written reply to your complaint, including suggestions for resolving the matter, within 28 days of sending the acknowledgement letter noted above.
- 3.6 During their review, the Client Care Officer or Head of Department may invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint if the complaint is more complex in nature, or it is felt this would be the better course of action. Subject to your availability, the meeting will be held within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter noted above. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, for example for geographical reasons, a video call or telephone meeting may be arranged instead. We will aim to complete the meeting to best suit your needs, where possible.
- 3.7 Where a meeting is held, within 7 days of the meeting, the Client Care Officer or Head of Department will write to you to confirm what took place, any solutions that were agreed and to set out our formal response to your complaint.

- 3.8 Where the full response to your complaint is given by a Head of Department, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may request that the Client Care Officer carry out a final review of your complaint. If such a request is made by you, the Client Care Officer will review your matter and provide their final response to you within 14 days of your request for final review.
- 3.9 There may be circumstances where we have to change the timescales above. If this is the case, we will contact you and let you know, explaining why.

#### 4. The Legal Ombudsman and the SRA

- 4.1 Following our final written response to your complaint, if you are not satisfied, you may ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint. We hope that this does not become necessary and that we can resolve matters between us, but if you do feel the need to contact the Legal Ombudsman, their contact details are as follows:

Address:	Legal Ombudsman, PO BOX 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH
Phone:	0300 555 0333
Email:	enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Website:	www.legalombudsman.org.uk

- 4.2 The Legal Ombudsman require that you raise your complaint with us first and receive our final response before contacting them. You can also contact them if you have raised a complaint with us and we have not responded after 8 weeks. Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six-months of receiving a final written response from us and also within the following timescales:
- no later than one year from the date of the act or omission occurring about which you are complaining; or
  - no later than one year from the date you should reasonably have known there were grounds for complaint.

4.3 Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) bodies exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both a client and the firm wish to use such a scheme. We have, however, chosen not to adopt an ADR process. If you do wish to complain further, you should therefore contact the Legal Ombudsman, as above.

## **5. Complaints in relation to your Bill (Invoice)**

5.1 The complaints procedure above also applies to complaints which concern our Bill(s). You may also have a right to object to the Bill(s) by applying to the court for an assessment of the Bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. The Legal Ombudsman may not consider a complaint about a Bill if you have applied to the court for assessment of a Bill.

5.2 Notwithstanding any ongoing complaint, where a Bill has been raised which remains fully or partially outstanding, we reserve the right to charge interest on the outstanding amount and take recovery action.

## **6. Complaints in relation to the Firm's behaviour**

6.1 The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help if you are concerned about Bradley Haynes Law or any of its individual solicitor's behaviour relating to dishonesty or discrimination. To find out how to raise a concern to the Solicitors Regulation Authority, please visit their website: [www.sra.org.uk](http://www.sra.org.uk) or telephone them on 0370 606 2555.

## **7. Costs for dealing with complaints**

7.1 We will not charge you for handling your complaint.

7.2 The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.