

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to sort out any mistakes or misunderstandings, and to improve our standards.

Initial concerns

In most cases, an informal chat with the lawyer responsible for your matter will resolve your concerns.

If it does not, you can formalise your complaint or speak to someone other than the lawyer responsible for your matter. Our Complaints Manager, Darren McGuinness can record everything you are unhappy about and recommend the best solution for you. You can contact Darren at dmc@haroldstock.com

What we need to know

To deal with your complaint correctly, it would be helpful when contacting us if you could provide the following information:

- Your name, contact details and preferred contact method
- File reference number
- Details of your concerns
- How you would like us to put things right.

What will happen next?

1. If you telephone us, we will endeavour to resolve the issue in that call.
2. If you email or write to us, or if your complaint cannot be resolved in a phone call, we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within two days of receiving it.
3. Our Complaints Manager will conduct an initial investigation into the issues raised. This will normally involve reviewing your file and speaking to the staff member who acted for you. We will send you a detailed reply which sets out our findings and any action plans or proposed resolutions within **5 weeks** of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
4. If this initial investigation does not resolve your concerns, you can escalate your complaint to a senior member of the firm, who has not had any dealings with your matter thus far, to review the initial decision. We will need a few details from you to highlight the areas that need further review. We will then write to you within **2 weeks** of receiving your request for a second

review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasoning.

5. If we have to change any of these timescales, we will let you know, explain why and seek your agreement before proceeding.
6. If you have exhausted our internal escalation process yet remain dissatisfied, or a period of eight weeks has expired since we acknowledged your complaint without our final response being received, you are entitled to refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman will look at the complaint independently and any investigation by them will not affect how we handle your case. Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve the complaint with us in the first instance. We will always be happy to discuss your issues further, prior to you going down this route, if you wish to do so.
7. For complaints about our service, including billing issues, you may contact the Legal Ombudsman via one of the methods below:
 - Phone: 0300 5550333
 - Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
 - Post: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV19 9WJ
8. Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six months of the date of our final written response to your complaint. Other time limits to be aware of are:
 - The Ombudsman will consider your complaint if you refer it on to them within either of the following: six years of the problem happening or three years from when you found out about it.
 - The Ombudsman will not accept complaints where the act/ omission or the date of awareness was before 5 October 2010.
9. Note that the Legal Ombudsman service cannot be used by businesses or most other organisations unless they are below certain size limits. Further details are available from the Legal Ombudsman.
10. If your unresolved complaint relates to an insurance policy covering your case, you may contact the Financial Ombudsman Service:
 - Phone: 0800 023 4567
 - Online complaint forms available via their website:
 - Post: Financial Ombudsman Service, Exchange Tower. Harbour Exchange. London. E14 9SR.
11. If a complaint cannot be resolved, you may also be able to ask for it to be referred to a process of alternative dispute resolution using a certified provider. We are not required to agree to such a request. In any case this is not available to businesses, only consumers. We will give you more information about that right if it becomes relevant.