

CLIENT POLICY

Complaints Procedure Policy – Legal Services and Data Protection Applicable from 22 May 2026

Legal Service Complaints

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it so we can investigate it and see what we can do to put it right and to help us to improve our standards.

If your complaint relates to the handling of personal data under UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and/or the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, please see the “Data Protection Complaints” section further below. If your complaint raises issues regarding both service levels and data protection, we will endeavour to deal with each aspect of your complaint in tandem.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is any dissatisfaction with the service that we provide to you and which you raise with us, such as poor customer service, unfair fees, or unreasonable delays.

Scope

Whilst we will usually endeavour to deal with any complaint from any of our clients, this policy is designed to deal with complaints from the following:

- individuals
- a business or enterprise that is classified as a micro-enterprise
- a charity with annual income net of tax of less than £1m
- a club/association/organisation, the affairs of which are managed by its members/a committee/a committee of its members, that has an annual income net of tax of less than £1m
- a trustee of a trust that has an asset value of less than £1m
- a personal representative or beneficiary of an estate of a deceased person

We reserve the right to adjust (or depart from, in its entirety) this policy at our discretion if you do not meet one of the above criteria.

In any case, we will only deal with complaints about the legal services that we have provided to you, or (in the case of personal representatives of beneficiaries) to the relevant estate.

Likewise, this complaints procedure is designed to deal with service-level complaints only. If you believe that we have been negligent in the performance of our services and such negligence has caused you loss, you should consider whether to write to us in accordance with the Pre-Action Protocol for Professional Negligence (Protocol). If we believe that your complaint is actually an allegation of negligence, we reserve the right to request that you write to us in accordance with the Protocol rather than in accordance with this Policy. Further details as to this distinction and the Legal Ombudsman's stance on such matters can be found here:

<https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/media/jkyax3gf/guidance-complaints-alleging-negligence-2019.pdf>

Our Legal Service Complaints Procedure

- 1.** If you make a complaint, then the person with day-to-day conduct of your matter (or the matter to which the complaint relates) should first try to resolve it with you informally.
- 2.** If the fee-earner concerned is unable to resolve your complaint, the matter will be referred to the relevant head of department, who should also try to resolve it with you informally. At this point, our Client Care Partner will also be made aware of your complaint. You will also be sent a copy of this Policy.
- 3.** If the relevant head of department is also unable to resolve your complaint, you will normally then be asked to set out your complaint in writing, giving as much detail as you can about the matter complained of. Your complaint should be addressed to Mr Joseph long, our current Client Care Partner. You can write to him at 2 Quay View Business Park, Barnards Way, Lowestoft, NR32 2HD or at jlong@nicholsonslaw.com. If you are unable to set out your complaint in writing, for example if you have a disability, we will offer reasonable adjustments to this procedure (for example by speaking with you on the telephone or in a meeting to take further details of your complaint).
- 4.** In the event that the complaint is regarding the service provided to you by the relevant head of department or our Client Care Partner, or those persons are unavailable due to absence/ill-health, this procedure will be adjusted such that an independent person with comparable seniority deals with your complaint.
- 5.** Depending on the nature of the complaint, our Client Care Partner may require that further attempts at resolving the complaint in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 are made before proceeding further (for example, because the Client Care Partner reasonably believes that insufficient effort has been made to resolve the complaint with

the fee-earner and/or the head of department). We will not do this if the conduct complained of is serious or is of a regulatory nature.

- 6.** We will report any serious failure to comply with the SRA Handbook and/or serious misconduct to our regulators, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), whether or not this is revealed as a result of a complaint.
- 7.** Following receipt of your written complaint in accordance with paragraph, we will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and (if necessary) asking you to confirm or explain the details set out in your complaint, or as applicable providing us with further detail. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. Our letter may also require you to make further attempts to resolve the complaint in accordance with paragraph 5. You can normally expect to receive our letter within 2 working days of us receiving your complaint.
- 8.** At the same time as acknowledging your complaint in accordance with paragraph 7, we will also record your complaint in our central register.
- 9.** We will then start to investigate your complaint (assuming the procedure set out in paragraph 5 has been exhausted/does not apply). This may involve one or more of the following steps (which are not exhaustive):
 - a.** We may ask the person who dealt with your matter and/or the relevant department head to respond to the issues raised in your complaint within 5 working days, including the provision of any appropriate documentation.
 - b.** We may examine their response and the information in your file. We may then ask them for more information. This will take up to 3 working days from receiving their reply, and they will have a further 2 working days to provide the requested information.
 - c.** We will then respond to your complaint in writing or, if we consider it appropriate, we may invite you to a meeting to discuss it before responding in writing. We will endeavour to do this within two working weeks after sending you the letter of acknowledgment (assuming further attempts to resolve the complaint in accordance with paragraph 5 are not required). We may require an extension to this timeframe if reasonably necessary (for example if any of the personnel involved in your complaint are away for all or part of the process, or if the subject-matter of the complaint is particularly complex/requires us to review a significant amount of correspondence and/or documentation).

- d.** We will try and identify the cause of the complaint and will consider any complaint on its merits. If we do not consider there is any justification for the complaint we may reject it, but if we do consider there is some justification we may offer appropriate redress and/or correct any unsatisfactory procedures.
 - e.** If we have a meeting our letter will confirm what took place and any solutions agreed with you.
 - f.** At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you can write to us again. We will then arrange to review our decision. This will happen in one of the following ways, depending on how the original decision was made and our views on the merits of your complaint:-
 - i.** The partner in charge of the department concerned will review their own decision within 5 working days.
 - ii.** We will arrange for someone in the firm who has not been involved in your complaint to review it. They will do this within 10 working days.
 - iii.** Mr Joseph Long, our Client Care Partner, will review your complaint within 10 working days.
 - iv.** We may ask our local Law Society or another local firm of Solicitors to review your complaint within 5 working days. We will let you know how long this process will take.
 - v.** We may invite you to agree to independent mediation. We will let you know how long this process will take.
 - g.** We will let you know the result of the review within 5 working days of the end of the review. At this time we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH about your complaint. The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within one year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within one year of you realising there was a concern. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final response to you. For further information/guidance, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or by email at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.
- 10.** We will carry out an annual documented review of this procedure and of any complaints which have been made to ensure that they are in effective operation across the practice.

- 11.** If your complaint reveals any serious failure to comply with the SRA Handbook or any serious misconduct of any person then our compliance officer for legal practice (COLP), currently Joseph Long, must report this to the SRA.

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.

Data Protection Complaints

Scope

We are obliged to consider complaints relating to the handling of personal data under UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 by clients, former clients, prospective clients, beneficiaries, witnesses, third parties, or any other individual affected by our handling of personal data.

Complaints About Personal Data

If your complaint concerns how we collect, use, store, share, or otherwise process personal data, we will handle the complaint in accordance with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018; and
- The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (DUAA)

you should make a complaint in writing to the person at the firm responsible for data protection, which is currently Joseph Long. You can write to him at 2 Quay View Business Park, Barnards Way, Lowestoft, NR32 2HD or at jlong@nicholsonslaw.com. If you are unable to set out your complaint in writing, for example if you have a disability, we will offer reasonable adjustments to this procedure (for example by speaking with you on the telephone or in a meeting to take further details of your complaint).

We will:

- Acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days;
- Provide any data access or audit information within 20 working days; and
- Send a full response within 30 working days, unless the DUAA allows an extension (which we will explain to you).

You may also have the right to raise concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if you are unhappy with how we have handled your personal data.

We encourage individuals to contact us first so we can try and resolve complaints promptly.