

Van Bael & Bellis (London) LLP

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

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. This will help us to improve our standards. If at any point you become unhappy with the service we provide to you or you have concerns about your bill, then you should inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve the problem for you.

If you have a complaint, please contact us with the details.

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within three days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
2. We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to our Complaints Handling Partner, David Hull, who will review your matter file and, if appropriate, speak to the member of staff who acted for you. However, if Mr Hull has been acting for you and your complaint is about him, then Philippe De Baere, our alternative Complaints Handling Partner, will investigate your complaint.
3. The Partner investigating will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. He will do this within twenty-one days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
4. Within three days of the meeting, the investigating Partner will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he has agreed with you.
5. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, the investigating Partner will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including his suggestions for resolving the matter, within twenty-one days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
6. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange for someone unconnected with the matter at the firm to review the decision.
7. We will write to you within fourteen days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
8. If we are unable to resolve your complaint within eight weeks after you have brought it to our attention, then you may be able to have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman.
9. The Legal Ombudsman can accept complaints from an individual client, a micro-enterprise or a charity, trust or a club (or similar organisation) with an annual income of less than £1 million

and will investigate a complaint about poor service on behalf of eligible individuals or organisations.

The Legal Ombudsman can investigate complaints up to six years from the date of the problem happening, or within three years of when you found out about the problem. If you wish to refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman this must be done within six months of our final response to your complaint. The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman are as follows:

- Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk
- Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
- Telephone: 0300 555 0333 between 8.30am to 5.30pm

Calls from both mobiles and landlines to 03 numbers cost no more than calls to national geographic numbers (starting 01 or 02). Calls are recorded and may be used for training and monitoring purposes.

- For minicom call 0300 555 1777
- In writing: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

Do not send original documents to the Legal Ombudsman. They will scan any documents you send to make computer copies and then destroy the originals.

10. The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you if you are concerned about the firm's behaviour. This could be for concerns about dishonesty, taking or losing a client's money or treating a client unfairly because of their age, a disability or other similar characteristic. In such circumstances you may raise your concerns directly with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (www.sra.org.uk).
11. If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.
12. We will not charge you for handling your complaint.