

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

## HOW WE DEAL WITH A COMPLAINT ABOUT OUR HANDLING OF YOUR PERSONAL INJURY CLAIM



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## **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients.

However, we appreciate that occasionally something may go wrong and if this happens we need you to tell us about it.

This will help us to maintain and improve our standards.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

If you have a complaint, please contact Steven Hinchliffe, who is the firm's Principal. You should write to him setting out the details of your complaint. You may do so at any time, both during the conduct of your personal injury claim and after it has been completed.

You will not be charged for the time we spend in dealing with a complaint.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?**

Steven Hinchliffe will deal with the issues raised by you, and he will send you a letter that acknowledges receipt of your complaint and confirms what will happen next. If necessary he may ask you to confirm or explain some or all of the matters you raise. You can expect to receive this initial letter from him within two working days of us receiving your complaint.

We will record your complaint in our Central Register of Complaints file and will open a section within the file, where we will keep all correspondence and documents relating to the matter. We will do this within a day of receiving your complaint.

If we have asked you for further confirmation or additional details, we will acknowledge receipt of your reply and will then confirm what is to happen next. You can expect to hear from us within two working days of receiving your reply. However, if further details of your complaint were not requested, this stage will be unnecessary.

We will then start to investigate your complaint. This may involve one or more of the following steps.

- Steven Hinchliffe will consider your complaint and will send you his detailed reply and invite you to discuss the matter with him, either face to face or on the telephone. He will write to you within seven working days of his previous letter.
- When considering your complaint Steven Hinchliffe will speak to the person (or people) who have handled your personal injury claim for you and will also examine your file.

When we discuss your complaint and our detailed reply we hope it will be possible to satisfactorily resolve matters with you at that stage.

Within two working days of our discussion with you, we will write to you to confirm what was discussed. We will set out any solutions that have been agreed with you, and will also confirm any issues that still remain unresolved.

If you do not want to discuss matters with us, you may respond to our detailed reply in writing. Steven Hinchliffe will then send a further reply to you, and if appropriate this will contain suggestions for resolving the matter. You can expect to receive this further letter within seven working days of receipt of your reply.

At this stage, if you notify us in writing that you remain dissatisfied, Steven Hinchliffe will then arrange to review his decision and will write to you with the result within seven

working days of receipt of your written notification. When you notify us, please set out the issues in respect of which you are still unhappy.

- In reviewing his decision, Steven Hinchliffe may arrange for another solicitor within the firm to consider your complaint, any further information that you have provided, the letters written to you in reply and your personal injury file.

When writing to you with the result of this review we will confirm the final position on your complaint and explain the reasons for our conclusions.

After eight weeks from the date that we receive details of your complaint, if matters remain unresolved you should confirm this to us in writing.

You may then pursue your complaint further with the Legal Ombudsman, whose address is PO Box 15870, Birmingham, B30 9EB. The telephone number is 0300 555 0333 and the address of the website is [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk).

Please note that you only have six months from the completion of our complaints procedure to take the matter further with the Legal Ombudsman.

Further, you can only refer a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within one year of the date when you knew or ought to have known about the act or omission complained about.

## **CHANGES TO TIMESCALES**

If we have to change any of the timescales set out in this leaflet, Steven Hinchliffe will let you know and will explain the reasons why this has been necessary.

## **CAN YOU CONTINUE WITH YOUR PERSONAL INJURY CLAIM?**

If your complaint occurs before the conclusion of your personal injury claim you will still be able to continue with it.

Following a full investigation of your complaint, if you or we feel it to be inappropriate for us to continue to handle the claim on your behalf, your file can be transferred to another firm of solicitors of your choice.

## **CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP**

If you make a complaint we sincerely hope to be able to resolve it with you.

We value you and it is our wish to restore your confidence in us so that you feel able to remain a client of the firm.

## **REGULATION**

We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

Our solicitors are members of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) and the firm is an APIL corporate accredited practice. We are committed to the APIL Code of Conduct & Consumer Charter (visit [www.apil.com](http://www.apil.com) for details).

Our Head of Department is a member of the Law Society's Personal Injury Panel.