

COLES MILLER SOLICITORS LLP

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Our Complaints Policy

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.

Our Complaints Procedure

Preliminary (Informal Procedure)

In the first instance you are encouraged to try and resolve any outstanding issues with the fee earner who is dealing with your matter. They will endeavour to try and deal with any difficulties which may arise.

Where the member of staff is available, and the matter is relatively straightforward we would hope to resolve any problems within 7 days. If the matter is complex, requires more details investigation or the staff member is away from the office this may take longer in which case you will be advised of the likely timescale for our response.

If it is not possible for the fee earner to resolve the matter, they will refer the matter to the Head of Department to investigate and to communicate with you regarding any problem with a view to resolving it.

Formal Complaint

If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally or the complaint is so serious that you feel that it should be dealt with immediately by way of formal complaint, we would ask you to write to Mr Neil Andrews, our Client Care Partner, setting out your concerns. **You can write to him at 44/46 Parkstone Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2PG or by email at nandrews@coles-miller.co.uk.**

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and may ask you to clarify or further explain the issues which concern you. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint.
2. We will record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint.
3. We will acknowledge your reply to our acknowledgement letter and confirm what will happen next.

4. We will then investigate your complaint considering the matters you raise, the file, and any information from the fee earner concerned.
 - we may then formally respond in writing to your complaint letting you know our decision; or
 - we may ask you or the fee earner for more information. We will advise you of the likely timescale for any further investigation; or
 - where appropriate we may invite you to meet the person who will be dealing with your complaint to discuss and, it is hoped, resolve your complaint.
 - we may need to ask you for further information or documents. If so, we ask that you provide the information promptly.
 - We will update you on the progress of your complaint at appropriate times.
 - We will write to you at the end of our investigation to tell you what we have done and what we propose to do to resolve your complaint.
5. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you can write to us again within 14 days. We will then arrange to review our decision. This will happen in one of the following ways:-
 - the person who will be dealing with your complaint will review his own decision.
 - we will arrange for someone in the Firm who has not been involved in your complaint to review it.
 - Neil Andrews, our Client Care Partner, will review your complaint.
 - we will invite you to agree to independent mediation. We will let you know how long this process will take.
6. We will let you know the result of the review. At this time, we will write to you confirming our final position of your complaint and explaining our reasons.
7. We have eight weeks to consider your complaint. If your complaint is not resolved within that time, you may be able to complain to the Legal Ombudsman. This applies if you are an individual, a business with fewer than 10 employees and a turnover or assets exceeding a certain threshold, a charity, or Trust with a net income of less than £1 Million, or if you fall within certain other categories (you can find out more from the Legal Ombudsman – www.legalombudsman.org.uk).
8. Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:-
 - a) within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint; and
 - b) not more than one year from the date of the act or omission being complaint about; or
 - c) no more than one year from the date when you should reasonably have known there was a cause for complaint.

9. If for any reason we are unable to resolve any problem between us including any complaint about your bill, then complaints and redress mechanisms are provided through the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Legal Ombudsman.

You may contact the Legal Ombudsman at PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH or www.legalombudsman.org.uk, by email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk or by telephone 0300 555 0333 to consider the complaint.

You may also have the right to apply to the Court for an assessment of a bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974.