

Information

Raising concerns and making complaints

Procedure for clients

Introduction

- 1.1 Mills & Reeve LLP (“the **firm**”) is committed to providing outstanding client service to all its clients and we do our utmost to treat all our clients fairly. When a problem arises or something goes wrong, we need you to let us know as soon as possible. This gives us the opportunity to investigate your concerns objectively, address the issues you have raised, and to try to satisfy your concerns. It also helps us to improve our standards.

What to do if you have concerns or a complaint about our service

- 2.1 In the first instance, if you have concerns you will probably find it helpful to discuss these with someone from the team dealing with your matter. This might be the individual working on your matter day to day (the matter manager), their supervising partner (the matter partner), or the person responsible for managing the firm’s relationship with you (the client relationship partner). You can find their contact details in the firm’s Letter of Engagement sent to you at the start of your matter and you may contact them either by telephone, by email, or in writing.
- 2.2 The lawyer looking into your concerns will acknowledge receipt as soon as possible. They may also need to ask you for further clarification about your concerns if further information is required.
- 2.3 It may be possible to offer a solution to resolve your concerns quickly and informally. The type of solution offered and the manner in which it is proposed will depend on the individual circumstances. If appropriate, the lawyer may send you a detailed reply to your concerns or suggest a meeting. When addressing your concerns in this way, we will aim to provide you with a substantive reply or proposals within 28 days of receiving the necessary details of your concerns.
- 2.4 If your concerns are not resolved to your satisfaction, you may ask that they be referred to one of the firm’s complaints managers to be reviewed as a formal complaint. Alternatively, if for any reason you feel it is appropriate to raise your concerns outside of the team dealing with your matter, you may refer them directly to one of the complaints managers straight away, to be reviewed as a formal complaint. In either case, if you have not already done so, you will need to set out your complaint, preferably in writing. The firm’s complaints managers are:

Angus Turner
Partner

angus.turner@mills-reeve.com

Tel: 0121 456 8283

Chris Belcher
Partner

chris.belcher@mills-reeve.com

Tel: 01223 222618

Richard Dawson-Gerrard
Partner

richard.dawson-gerrard@mills-reeve.com

Tel: 0161 234 8797

Review by a complaints manager

- 3.1 The complaints manager allocated to deal with your complaint will acknowledge it in writing (usually by email if that is your preferred mode of contact) within three working days of receiving details of your complaint.
- 3.2 The complaints manager will arrange for an investigation and will aim to write to you with a full response to your complaint by no later than 56 days from when your concerns or complaint were first raised with the firm. That response will summarise the findings of the investigation, the firm's conclusions on your complaint, and the solution proposed.
- 3.3 If it is not possible to issue a detailed response within 56 days, which may be the case if the matter has first been raised as a concern with the team, the allocated complaints manager will update you on the progress of the investigation and provide an estimate of the likely time frame for issuing a final written response.
- 3.4 If the complaints manager considers that your complaint would be better addressed by a different means, for example, in a meeting, they will contact you to propose this.
- 3.5 You will not be charged for the handling of your complaint.

Referring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman

- 4.1 If we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction within eight weeks of you first raising your concerns or complaint with us, you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider your complaint where it is about poor legal service (including costs).
- 4.2 The Legal Ombudsman is an independent complaints body which was established under the Legal Services Act 2007 and deals with legal services complaints. Note that the Legal Ombudsman may consider complaints from prospective clients as well as existing or former clients, and from beneficiaries of trusts and estates, but may be unable to accept complaints from certain types of clients (for example, if a client which is a business rather than an individual does not meet the Legal Ombudsman's criteria for being a micro-enterprise or small business).
- 4.3 You may wish to submit your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman via their online form at: [Make A Complaint | Legal Ombudsman](#). Alternatively, you can submit your concerns via PO Box 6167, Slough SL1 0EH.
- 4.4 You will normally need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within:
 - (i) six months of receiving a written response from us about your complaint; and
 - (ii) within a year of the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining or within a year of when you should reasonably have realised there was cause for complaint.
- 4.5 For further information you should contact the Legal Ombudsman via enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk, by telephone 0300 555 0333 (or +44 121 245 3050 if overseas), or go to www.legalombudsman.org.uk.
- 4.6 We are obliged to point out to you that there are alternative complaints bodies, such as ProMediate (www.ProMediate.co.uk), who can deal with complaints about legal services where all the parties agree to use such a scheme. The firm submits to the jurisdiction of the Legal Ombudsman but does not agree to use ProMediate.

Complaints about bills

- 5.1 Please also use the procedure above if you have a concern or complaint about a bill. In addition to this procedure, you have the right to object to a bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. If you apply to the court, the Legal Ombudsman (see paragraph 4.1 above) may decide not to deal with a complaint about the bill.

Referring a misconduct complaint to approved regulators

- 6.1 Subject to paragraphs 4.2 and 5.1 above, complaints about poor service relating to any legal services provided by the firm or any of its partners or staff (including solicitors, members of staff who are barristers or who are authorised by the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives ("CILEX")) should be directed to the Legal Ombudsman. However, if your concerns relate to professional misconduct, then you should report those to an approved regulator. The appropriate regulator depends on whose misconduct you wish to report:

- 6.1.1 If your concerns relate to the misconduct of an individual solicitor at the firm, or the firm as a whole, you should report these concerns to the Solicitors Regulation Authority ("SRA"). Details of how to do this can be found at: www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems. The SRA can be contacted via their website: <https://www.sra.org.uk/home/contact-us/> or by the following means:

- (i) Tel: 0370 606 2555 / +44 (0)121 820 2250
- (ii) Post: Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN.

- 6.2 In addition to solicitors, the firm employs other staff (barristers and CILEX individuals), whose conduct is regulated by other approved regulators. These roles and their regulatory status should be clear from the letter of engagement, but if you are in doubt, please contact your client relationship partner for clarification.

- 6.2.1 If your concerns relate to the misconduct of a barrister, you should report those concerns to the Bar Standards Board. (Note that if the barrister is not employed by the firm but is a self-employed barrister, typically working from a barristers' chambers, whom the firm has retained to act on your matter, a complaint about poor service by the barrister should be made in accordance with the complaints' procedure of those chambers). The Bar Standards Board can be contacted via their website: <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/ask-us-a-question-or-report-a-concern-landing.html> or by the following means:

- (i) Tel: 020 7611 1444 or
- (ii) Email: contactus@barstandardsboard.org.uk.

- 6.2.2 If your concerns relate to the misconduct of an individual who is regulated by CILEX, you should report those concerns to CILEX, which can be contacted via their website: <https://cilexregulation.org.uk/report-to-us/> or by the following means:

- (i) Tel: 01234 845770 or
- (ii) Web contact: [Contact Us - CILEx Regulation](#)

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