

Fisher Stone Solicitors

Complaints Handling Procedure

We work hard to ensure that the service our customers receive is of the highest possible standards and encourage all our clients to provide honest feedback on all aspects of the quality of the service they receive.

However, we do recognise that occasionally the service provided may fall below the standards we strive to achieve and you may want to raise a complaint about the work we have undertaken.

We will inform all client's in writing at the outset of their matter of their right to complain and how complaints can be made. We will also advise you of your right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, the time frame for doing so and full details of how to contact the Legal Ombudsman.

We aim to deal with any complaints promptly, fairly, openly and effectively.

Definition of a complaint

In order to ensure that all our clients can raise a complaint with us, if they feel that is necessary, our broad definition of a complaint includes any written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction referred to any person in our organisation by a client. A complaint can be identified through a letter, telephone call, e-mail, and fax or in the course of a face to face conversation.

Issues of a very minor nature, for example, not returning a non-urgent telephone call until the following day will not be recorded as a complaint.

Dealing with complaints

It is the policy of the firm that every complaint made by a client is recorded centrally and Karin Oliver, who is the sole director of Fisher Stone Solicitors is made aware that a complain has been made as soon as possible after the complaint is received.

On receipt of a complaint, we will send you our standard letter which sets out our complaints handling procedure, outlining the relevant stages and timescales. Where appropriate, we will ensure that our procedure is tailored in response to the needs of our individual clients, especially those who are vulnerable.

Complaints Procedure

Step One:

If you have not already done so, you will be asked to detail the full nature of the problem. Ideally, your complaint should be confirmed in writing, in order to limit the possibility of misunderstandings. However, this is not obligatory and you are welcome to provide the details of any complaint over the telephone or face to face. If you are setting out your concerns in writing then you can do this by emailing karin.oliver@fisherstone.co.uk or writing to Fisher Stone Solicitors, Trinity House, Blackwall, Halifax HX1 2QR.

Step Two:

We will write to you acknowledging your complaint within 5 working days and will confirm what will happen next and the time-frame for each step.

Step Three:

Within 5 days, your complaint will be investigated by reviewing your matter file and speaking to any members of staff concerned. If, for any reason, the matter cannot be investigated in 5 days we will write to you to let you know, including the reason for the delay and to provide a revised timescale.

Once our investigation has been completed, you will be invited to discuss the issue(s) you have raised and hopefully resolve the complaint. This could be a meeting or telephone call and will take place within 14 working days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.

We shall then write to you within 5 working days of any meeting or phone call to confirm our discussion, the solution agreed and/or any final redress that may be appropriate.

Alternatively, if you do not want to or are unable to attend such a meeting or you would prefer to continue to correspond by letter or email (or if a meeting is not required), we will send you a detailed, written response, including any proposed solution, within 14 working days of the letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint.

Step Four:

If you are satisfied with our response following the above steps, that will be the end of the matter. However, if you are not satisfied, you should contact us again with your reasons why you are not satisfied and the proposed resolution of your complaint will be reviewed. If appropriate we may arrange for a member of staff who is unconnected with the matter to review the decision. We will write to you within 14 working days of receiving your request with confirmation of the firm's final position in relation to your complaint, outlining the reasons and any final redress that is offered.

Step five (other avenues):

You must always raise any complaints with us initially. We are confident that we will be able to resolve any concerns that you have, and in most cases you will not be able to take your complaint further without allowing us the opportunity to put things right.

If within 8 weeks of you making us aware of your complaint, you continue to be unsatisfied with the resolution of your complaint that Fisher Stone Solicitors have proposed, you may ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider your complaint.

You are free to refer any complaint about our work, fees or level of service but there are some conditions and time limits. Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within 12 months of you having received a final written response from us about your complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six years of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring; or within three years from when you should have known about or become aware that there were grounds for complaint. The Legal Ombudsman will not accept complaints where the act or date of awareness was before 6 October 2010.

For further information, please contact the Legal Ombudsman on 0300 555 0333 or visit www.legalombudsman.org.uk. The Legal Ombudsman may be contacted at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ.

Solicitors Regulation Authority

If you think that any solicitor you have dealt with might be dishonest or you have concerns about their ethics or integrity, you also have the right to notify our regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). There are no time limits for making a report but there are limits on what the SRA will consider. Please note that the SRA is not able to deal with issues of poor service (complaints of this nature should instead be referred to the Legal Ombudsman). For further information about the SRA's role, please contact the SRA or visit: <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page#report>

Where a client raises a potential negligence claim or where a client claims financial loss, compensation or threatened legal action, we will decide, in conjunction with our insurers, whether we should continue with this complaints procedure or adopt some other course of action.