

# How BLM will handle your complaint - Clients

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## Introduction

BLM are committed to the delivery of a high quality legal service and to dealing with all our clients fairly. We acknowledge that we may not always get it right so if something has gone wrong, including in relation to the bill, we welcome your feedback. This provides us with an opportunity to monitor and improve the quality of service we provide.

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## 1. How do I make a complaint?

- 1.1 We ask that you raise any concerns by speaking with the person with day to day conduct of your matter in the first instance or, if you prefer, you may contact the person supervising your matter. You can also contact us in writing (by letter or email) if you prefer.
- 1.2 To help us to understand your complaint, and in order that we do not miss anything, please tell us:
  - 1.2.1 your full name and contact details
  - 1.2.2 what you think we have got wrong
  - 1.2.3 what you hope to achieve as a result of your complaint, and
  - 1.2.4 your file reference number (if you have it)
- 1.3 If you require any help in making your complaint we will try to help you.
- 1.4 We take an expression of dissatisfaction seriously and our aim is to put things right as quickly as possible. We will listen to your concerns and try to resolve any issues with you. We hope to do this in an informal way wherever possible. Where your concerns cannot be resolved informally by the person with day to day conduct of your matter or, where you wish to escalate matters to a supervisor or partner we will invoke our formal procedure as below.

## 2. How will you deal with my complaint?

- 2.1 We will record your complaint.
- 2.2 We will write to you within 3 working days acknowledging your complaint, advising who will be investigating.
- 2.3 Our investigation will involve:
  - 2.3.1 reviewing your complaint
  - 2.3.2 reviewing your file(s) and any other relevant documents, and
  - 2.3.3 speaking with the person who dealt with your matter
- 2.4 We may also need to ask you for further information or documents. If so, we will ask you to provide the information within a specific period of time.
- 2.5 We will update you on the progress of your complaint.
- 2.6 We may also, if appropriate, seek a meeting with you to discuss your complaint or, discuss the matter with you on the telephone.
- 2.7 We will write to you at the end of our investigation to inform you what we have done and what we propose to do to resolve your complaint. We have 8 weeks to deal with your complaint however where possible, we will aim to respond to you fully within 35 days of the date of our letter of acknowledgement or within 28 days for complaints in Northern Ireland
- 2.8 If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint we may decide to escalate your complaint for review to a more senior person.

## 3. What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

### 3.1 England & Wales:

- 3.1.1 If we are unable to resolve your complaint internally then you may be able to have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman investigates complaints about service issues with lawyers. To use the Legal Ombudsman service a complainant must be one of the following:
- a) An individual
  - b) A business or enterprise that was a micro-enterprise when it referred the complaint to us
  - c) A charity that had an annual income net of tax of less than £1 million when it referred the complaint to us
  - d) A club/association/organisation, the affairs of which are managed by its members/a committee/a committee of its members, that had an annual income net of tax of less than £1 million when it referred the complaint to us
  - e) A trustee of a trust that had an asset value of less than £1million when it referred the complaint to us
  - f) A personal representative or beneficiary of the estate of a person who, before he/she died, had not referred the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman
- 3.1.2 You can contact the Legal Ombudsman by the following methods:
- a) by post at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ, or
  - b) by telephone: 0300 555 0333, or
  - c) by email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)
- 3.1.3 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 should be done within 6 months of our final written response to your complaint. Further details are available on the website: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

### 3.2 Scotland

- 3.2.1 If you are not satisfied with our consideration of your complaint you can ask the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission to consider the complaint.
- 3.2.2 You can contact the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission by the following methods:
- a) by post at The Stamp Office, 10-14 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3EG, or
  - b) by website: [www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk), or
  - c) by telephone: 0131 201 2130, or
  - d) by email: [enquiries@scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk)
- 3.2.3 The Scottish Legal Complaints Commission operates strict time limits. Details of these time limits are outlined in the [Rules of the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission 2016 \(amended December 2016\)](#), which is available at [www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk).

### 3.3 Northern Ireland

- 3.3.1 Any complaint made to us must be within six months of completion of your case or transaction or within six months of discovering a cause for concern, whichever is later.
- 3.3.2 If we have not been able to resolve your complaint with our internal procedure then you can refer your complaint to The Law Society of Northern Ireland, you must do this within 6 months of our final response.
- 3.3.3 All complaints should be submitted to the Law Society using their Complaints Form which can be obtained at [www.lawsoc-ni.org/3--submitting-a-complaint](http://www.lawsoc-ni.org/3--submitting-a-complaint)
- 3.3.4 You can also request an information pack by telephoning or writing to:
  - a) by post at The Law Society of Northern Ireland, 96 Victoria Street, Belfast, BT1 3GN, or
  - b) by telephone: 028 9023 1614

### 3.4 Clients in the Republic of Ireland

- 3.4.1 If we have not been able to resolve your complaint internally The Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) is the organisation established to accept and investigate complaints which relate to the provision of services by legal practitioners.
- 3.4.2 The LSRA is independent in the performance of its functions.
- 3.4.3 You can complete and submit a complaint form online via the LSRA's website at: <http://www.lsr.ie/en/LSRA/Pages/WP19000004>
- 3.4.4 You can email at [complaints@lsra.ie](mailto:complaints@lsra.ie)
- 3.4.5 You can fill in a Complaint Form or write a letter and send it to: Complaints and Resolutions, Legal Services Regulation Authority, P.O. Box 12906, Dublin 2.
- 3.4.6 You can also contact the LSRA by telephone and request a complaint form on 01-859291
- 3.4.7 The LSRA must provide a copy of your complaint and any supporting documentation/submissions to the legal practitioner and other relevant parties to achieve resolution and or investigate the complaint

## 4. What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour

- 4.1.1 In England and Wales the Solicitor's Regulation Authority can help if you are concerned about our conduct or behaviour.
- 4.1.2 In Scotland, a complaint about conduct, will be referred to The Law Society of Scotland.
- 4.1.3 In Northern Ireland conduct issues are dealt with by the Law Society of Northern Ireland
- 4.1.4 In the Republic of Ireland complaints about alleged misconduct against a solicitor are dealt with by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority
- 4.1.5 Concerns about conduct or behaviour could be for things like:
  - a) dishonesty
  - b) taking or losing your money
  - c) treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic
  - d) acting in the same case for you and for others where your interests are in conflict with theirs

You can visit the appropriate website to see how you can raise concerns as follows:

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- Solicitors Regulation Authority at <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/>
  - Law Society of Scotland at <https://www.lawscot.org.uk/for-the-public/client-protection/complaints-against-solicitors/how-we-investigate-conduct-complaints/>
  - Law Society of Northern Ireland <https://www.lawsoc-ni.org/making-a-complaint>
  - Legal Services Regulatory authority at <http://www.lsr.ie/en/LSRA/Pages/WP19000004>

## 5. What will it cost?

- 5.1 We will not charge you for addressing your complaint.
- 5.2 Please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on the matter, and all or some of the bill is not paid, we may be entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding.
- 5.3 The Legal Ombudsman, Scottish Legal Complaints Commission, Law Society of Northern Ireland and Legal Services Regulatory Authority services are free of charge.