



Our Complaints Policy (Mediation Services Only)

Wake Smith Solicitors is committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all of our clients. In the event of a problem arising, we want you to tell us about it. This will allow us to resolve the issue to your satisfaction, help us to improve our standards, and assist in preventing any reoccurrence of the problem.

In the event of a complaint, our intention is that this policy:

- is easy for clients to use and understand, and is responsive to the needs of individual clients
- reassures clients who complain that the Company will address their concerns without delay, and that it takes all complaints seriously
- assists in identifying client dissatisfaction if and when it arises
- enables complaints to be dealt with promptly and fairly, with decisions based on an investigation of the circumstances from which the complaint has arisen
- ensures that dissatisfaction is addressed and resolved wherever possible
- provides for appropriate remedies that does not involve any additional charges to clients
- ensures that a client is provided with all necessary information concerning the handling of a complaint
- enables the Company to learn from experience, so as to lessen the risk of future complaints

Our Complaints Manager is Neil Salter, the Chairman of the firm

Complaints Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with our service, we would ask you firstly to bring the issue to the attention of the person who has conduct of your case, or their supervisor (Elizabeth Shaw (Head of Civil/Commercial Litigation Department) elizabeth.shaw@wake-smith.com).

If your dissatisfaction cannot be resolved at that stage, you should write to our Complaints Manager, Neil Salter, at No 1 Velocity, 2 Tenter Street, Sheffield, S1 4BY with full details of the issues causing your dissatisfaction. Alternatively, you can send him an email with those details at neil.salter@wake-smith.com.

If you wish to complain about the Complaints Manager, then please write or ask to speak to Terry Regan, one of the other Directors, who will undertake the role of the Complaints Manager in respect of your complaint.

You do not have to raise your complaint in writing. However, setting out your complaint in writing, either in a letter or an email, may help you to focus on the specific issues causing you dissatisfaction and would assist us in understanding the nature of your complaint and the remedy or remedies you are seeking. It is important for both of us to be clear as to the cause of your concerns and how they might be resolved to your satisfaction.

Once you have formally confirmed your complaint to us, the following process will begin:

1. Your complaint will be acknowledged by post within five (5) working days of receipt. If there are any further details needed to investigate your complaint, you will be requested to provide them, and you may be asked to confirm or explain any points which remain unclear.
2. Your complaint will be recorded in a central register and a separate file for your complaint will be opened. The Complaints Manager will review your complaint, and decide how it will be best investigated. He may decide to delegate the investigation of your complaint and a response to it to another director within the Company if it appears to him that to do so would provide a more effective means of resolving your complaint. If he decides upon this course of action, he will notify you who will be investigating your complaint, and why. However, all complaints will be investigated and responded to within 21 working days of receipt. On occasions further time may be required, in which case you will be notified in writing.
3. If, having received our final response to your complaint, you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman (LeO) for investigation and/or the Civil Mediation Council ("CMC") in certain circumstances. Such referrals to the CMC are considered having regard to whether the matters raised could amount to Serious Professional Misconduct and could thereby meet the requisite high threshold of seriousness. Please note that, as a CMC referral relates only to matters which could give rise to Serious Professional Misconduct, this is not a route to compensation, redress, or resolution, and cannot be used to appeal, change, or otherwise alter or overrule the outcome of a CHP. Further information is available at: www.civilmediation.org/concerns

You should be aware that, under the rules operated by the LeO, your complaint should be brought to the LeO either:

- within one year of when whatever it was that caused the complaint took place, or
- (if outside the above one year period) within one year of when you should reasonably have known about the matter that caused you to complain.

You should also be aware that complaints should be brought to the LeO within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint from us. Both of these time limit rules should be satisfied for LeO to accept your complaint.

If you want to contact the LeO, you should call 0300 555 0333, e-mail enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk or write to The Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ. The LeO website address is <http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/>

If your concern relates to our behaviour, as opposed to our service or advice, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) can help. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

Visit the SRA's website to see how you can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority.