

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**Customer service is fundamental to everything we do.**

We know that using legal services can be daunting and aim to make the process as straightforward and personable as we can. We aim to deliver a first class service every time and want your experience with Garvins Law to be a positive one.

Sometimes things go as expected though and we welcome complaints as an opportunity to review and improve our service. If something is wrong, we committed to fairly and transparently investigating it in order to resolve matters to your satisfaction. Please raise any customer issues or service complaints, and endeavour to resolve them for you as swiftly as possible.

## **DURING YOUR CASE**

At each stage of your case we'll provide the name and contact details of the person responsible for it, together with details of the team manager who supervises them. If you have any concerns, or an aspect of our service is less than you expect, we'd like to hear from you immediately. In the first instance please contact the named team manager by phone, email or in writing. The team manager will look to resolve matters informally with you, within two days (excluding weekends) of your contact.

## **INITIAL CONCERNS**

In most cases, an informal chat with the team manager will resolve your concerns.

If it doesn't, you can formalise your complaint or speak with someone other than the team manager. Our Customer Experience Manager will record everything you're unhappy about and recommend the best solution for you.

You can contact the Customer Experience Manager by:

Phone: 0345 8000 800

Email: [complaints@garvinslaw.com](mailto:complaints@garvinslaw.com)

Post:

The Customer Experience Manager  
Garvins Law  
New Acre House  
Shentonfield Road  
Manchester  
M22 4RW

## **WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW**

To direct your complaint correctly, it would be helpful when contacting us if you could provide the following:

Your name and contact details

Reference number

Your concerns

Your preferred contact method

How you'd like us to put things right

### HOW WE AIM TO RESOLVE THINGS

- If you telephone us, we'll endeavour to resolve the issue in that call.
- If you email or write to us, or if your complaint can't be resolved in a call, we'll write back within two days (excluding weekends). We'll acknowledge receipt of your complaint, confirm who'll be investigating it and when they'll reply to you.
- A Manager or member of the Client Care team will conduct an investigation and then write to you with their findings and any action plans or proposed resolutions. We may contact you during the investigation to discuss the complaint and/ or to suggest a resolution. Although the Legal Ombudsman Guidelines allow us eight weeks to resolve your complaint, you should hear from our investigator within 19 calendar days.
- If this initial investigation doesn't resolve your concerns, you can escalate your complaint. We'll need a few details from you to highlight the areas that need further review. A Senior Manager will carry out a further investigation to provide you with our final response. Our Compliance Officer for Legal Practice (COLP), Neil Garvin, has overall responsibility for Client Care and Complaints handling. Neil Garvin can be contacted at: E-mail: [garvin@garvinlaw.com](mailto:garvin@garvinlaw.com) In their absence, a Director will deal with urgent matters.

### OMBUDSMAN SCHEMES

If, after exhausting our escalation process, your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, or the eight week period has expired without our final response, you're entitled to refer your complaint to an Ombudsman Scheme or for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). However, we'll always be happy to discuss your issues further if you wish to do so, prior to taking this step.

For complaints about our service, including billing issues, you may contact the Legal Ombudsman:

Phone: 0300 555 0333

Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

Post:

Legal Ombudsman  
PO Box 6806  
Wolverhampton  
WV19WJ

### ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)

Other complaints bodies, known as alternative dispute resolution providers, exist, such as Small Claims Mediation ([www.small-claims-mediation.co.uk](http://www.small-claims-mediation.co.uk)), which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services, should both you and our firm agree to use such a scheme.

### TIME LIMITS

The Legal Ombudsman aims to resolve complaints and assist clients and their solicitors to reach a mutual agreement. There are, however, time limits for submitting complaints to them: Within six months of receiving our final response

- Eight weeks after lodging your complaint with us, if you received our final response
- Within six years of the date of the act/ omission if you previously complained, or
- Three years from the date that you should have known you had a complaint to pursue and complained previously (if the act/ omission occurred more than six years ago).
- The Legal Ombudsman won't accept complaints where the act/omission or date of awareness was before the 6 October 2010.
- If your complaint is about your bill, you may have a right to apply to the court for an assessment under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. There are strict time limits applicable and you may wish to seek independent legal advice:
- Within one month from the date of invoice you have an unconditional right to a detailed assessment
- After one month the Court may impose restrictions
- After one year from the invoice date, you will lose the right to a detailed assessment, except in special circumstances.
- The Legal Ombudsman may not consider a complaint about a bill if you have applied to the court for such an assessment.

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Your Personal Injury Specialist  
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