

Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards.

Where possible, we try to resolve concerns informally. We suggest that any issues are raised with the lawyer responsible for your matter, or their supervisor, who will do their best to put things right. However, if you are still unhappy after speaking to the lawyer, or are uncomfortable discussing any issues with your lawyer, you may raise a formal complaint under this procedure. In order to do this, please contact Maria Lloyd, Principal solicitor, by sending an email to maria@marialbsolicitors.co.uk or writing to 8A Oxford Road, Altrincham WA14 2DY. Maria Lloyd has overall responsibility for complaints and will decide how your complaint should be investigated. When contacting us with any concerns, it helps if you set it out in writing, but this is not mandatory and you may prefer to discuss it over the telephone. Please note, however, that we will not deal with complaints through social media or review sites – this is for your protection to ensure client confidentiality.

Who can make a complaint?

Other than in certain limited circumstances, our complaints handling procedure is reserved for clients of the firm. Unless Maria LB Solicitors has provided legal services to you as an individual, or to your business, you will not be able to complain through this procedure.

What can I complain about?

You may complain about any aspect of the service provided by Maria LB Solicitors, including our fees. You should be aware that if you make a complaint about our fees, either through our internal procedure or the Legal Ombudsman scheme, we are not obliged to put your account on hold and may decide to take legal action to recover any outstanding fees. Please note, however, that in circumstances where you are pursuing a professional negligence claim against this firm, we will not deal with complaints arising out of the issues that form the basis of the negligence claim. Individuals have certain rights to complain or request information under data protection law. For full details, please visit our privacy policy.

Our complaints procedure

How does the procedure work?

- Acknowledgement: within five working days of receiving your complaint, Maria Lloyd will send you a written acknowledgment explaining the next steps.
- Investigation: this stage will involve reviewing your file and discussing your concerns with the lawyer who acted for you in order to find out what happened.
- Response: this will normally come from Maria Lloyd, the Principal solicitor. The response will be issued within 8 weeks of the date you submitted your complaint.

Do I have a right of appeal?

Through this procedure we aim to resolve all concerns to your satisfaction. But if you are not satisfied with our response, you may be eligible to refer the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman provided you do so within 6 months of the end of our internal procedure. Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within 6 years from the date of the problem which brought about your complaint, or within 3 years of the date you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint. In addition, only individuals and certain small companies, trusts and charities are eligible to make complaints to that office. The Legal Ombudsman will not normally accept a complaint unless we have been given the opportunity to respond first. But you can usually escalate matters to the Legal Ombudsman if:

- The complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction within 8 weeks from the date it was made; or

- The Legal Ombudsman considers that there are exceptional reasons to consider the complaint sooner, or, without it having been made to the firm first; or
- where the Legal Ombudsman considers that resolution through our internal procedure is not possible due to a breakdown in the relationship between you and the firm. You should also be aware that, when your complaint relates to a bill, the Legal Ombudsman will not consider your complaint while your bill is being assessed by a court.

Legal Ombudsman contact details:

Address: PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

For further information regarding timescales and eligibility, please contact the Legal Ombudsman using the details above.

Are there any alternative schemes to the Legal Ombudsman?

Alternative complaints bodies exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services. In our experience, the Legal Ombudsman's scheme is the most suitable to deal with any complaints about legal services, but please let us know if you would like us to consider using an alternative scheme.

Can I complain to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA)?

Maria LB Solicitors is regulated by the SRA and you have the right to complain to the regulator if you have concerns about this firm or any of our staff. While the Legal Ombudsman handles complaints about the services we provide, or our fees for the services, the SRA deals with complaints about conduct. Further information is available on the SRA website <https://www.sra.org.uk/>

Summary

We are committed to effective complaints handling and will always try our best to promptly resolve any outstanding issues and put things right. At all times we will keep you updated and if we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why. Any queries of concerns regarding this procedure or complaints generally should be sent to maria@marialbsolicitors.co.uk