

CLIENT CARE AND COMPLAINTS

1. SCOPE

1.1 This section ensures that any complaint made by a client is recorded, receives a prompt and appropriate response or redress, that the cause of the complaint is investigated and rectified together with action to ensure against re-occurrence.

1.2 This section covers:

1. The Scope of the Section
2. The Responsibility for the Section
3. The Recording of Complaints
4. Attending to Complaints
5. Investigating Complaints
6. Corrective Action
7. Documentation

2. RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 Joanne Black is the Complaints Manager and she has responsibility for the investigation and monitoring of all complaints received by the Firm. She may delegate certain duties in this regard but will retain the overall responsibility. If the complaint involves Joanne Black then then Mr Black will be responsible for the investigation and monitoring of it or delegate it to a Solicitor of supervisor standard.

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3. THE RECORDING OF COMPLAINTS

3.1 At the inception of every case, the client is advised in writing of the name of the person at the Firm to whom any complaint should be addressed.

3.2 The person to whom any complaint should be addressed will be Joanne Black or John Black if on any of Joanne Black's files (this is included in her Client Care letter's).

3.3 A formal [complaint is](#) defined as:

- Any expression of dissatisfaction from a client made in writing by telephone, by email, in face to face interview, or otherwise. Any member of staff becoming aware of a complaint must immediately report it to the Complaints Manager.

3.4 The Complaints Manager will maintain a central register of all complaints which will record the following:

- The Date of the Complaint.
- The Name of the Complainant.
- A Brief Summary of the Complaint and action taken.
- The Date and Authority Closed.

3.5 The Complaints Register shall comprise a collection in sequential order of an individual Complaints Investigation Form for each complaint recorded.

3.6 The form will include the name of the person who has made a complaint, details of the complaint; any investigation carried out; how the complaint has been resolved; and what corrective action has been taken to prevent re-occurrence.

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ATTENDING TO COMPLAINTS

Received by telephone

- 4.1 Any query concerning the handling of case work received by a fee earner from a client over the telephone will be resolved by the fee earner with the client wherever possible.
- 4.2 Where the matter can not be resolved by the Fee-earner, the call will be referred to the Complaints Manager if available.
- 4.3 Any query concerning the handling of case work received by the Complaints Manager from a client over the telephone will be resolved if possible by the Complaints Manager with the client.
- 4.4 Where the matter cannot be resolved by the Complaints Manager or she is unable to attend to the call, the client will be advised to submit the complaint in writing to the Complaints Manager.

Received by post

- 4.5 Where the complaint is received by a fee earner in writing, the Complaints Manager will be advised and a copy of the letter of complaint forwarded.
- 4.6 If the complaint has not been previously discussed with the client, the fee earner will arrange to discuss it with the client as soon as possible.
- 4.7 The fee earner will advise the Complaints Manager as to the outcome of the discussion as soon as possible, and whether the matter has been resolved or not.
- 4.8 Where the matter can not be resolved by the fee-earner, or the Complaints Manager it will be entered in the Complaints Register as an official complaint.

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INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 All official complaints will be investigated under the direction of the Complaints Manager. Any complaint against the Complaints Manager in her capacity as a fee-earner will be investigated by Mr Black in the Firm. The Complaints Manager shall upon investigating an official complaint at the start of that investigation provide the client with a copy of the Complaints Procedure.
- 5.2 A record of the investigation and any conclusions agreed will be recorded on a Complaints Investigation Form.
- 5.3 The Complaints Manager will monitor the progress of all complaint investigations to ensure that they are being expedited.
- 5.4 When an investigation has been finalised and any necessary action taken, the Complaints Investigation Form will be returned to the Complaints Manager.
- 5.5 The Complaints Manager will either confirm the conclusions or action that have been agreed or suggest any further action that he considers may be necessary.
- 5.6 Where a complaint cannot be resolved within the Firm, the Complainant will be advised about the Legal Ombudsman and contact details will be provided.
- 5.7 When a complaint has been fully investigated, the Complaints Manager will write to the Complainant either to confirm, or advise what action has been taken or agreed, and will then sign the Complaints Investigation Form, as the authority for closure.
- 5.8 Where there is any delay in investigating a complaint the Complainant will be kept fully informed of its progress.
- 5.9 Complaints Investigation Forms will be retained as part of the Complaints Register.

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CORRECTIVE ACTION

- 6.1 If following a complaints investigation any corrective action is indicated or required, the Complaints Manager will take steps to ensure required action is carried out.
- 6.2 The Complaints Manager will authorise any corrective action required in terms of this section.
- 6.3 Where a complaint has occurred through a non-conformance in the Quality System, the Complaints Manager will initiate any corrective action.
- 6.4 Where a complaint has occurred through negligence or an error made by a member of staff, the Staff Officer will be informed who will advise the member of staff and initiate re-training where necessary.
- 6.5 The Complaints Register will be annually reviewed by the Complaints Manager to ascertain any trends or patterns where client care needs attention.

7. DOCUMENTATION

Complaints Register and Investigation
Form

COMPLAINTS REGISTER

Date of Complaint _____ / _____ / _____

COMPLAINT NO: _____

Fee-earner concerned: _____ Case Ref: _____

COMPLAINANT: Address: _____

Tel. No. _____

Details of Complaint.

Handling of Complaint.			
Complaint acknowledged:	Let/Tel	Date /	
Fee-earner. Or Supervisor	advised:	Fe/Sup	Date / /
Passed for investigation to:		Date /	
Full description of investigation: (use continuation sheet if necessary)			

Issue _____ Date: _____
Approved By: _____

Date returned to Complaints Officer

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Signed:

Record of Action Taken		
Has the complaint be substantiated:	Yes/No	I
Action Taken:	I i I i i	
Complainant Advised of:		
Action to be taken by Firm:	Date	/ /
Right to Complain to the Law Society:	Date	/ /
Other options that may be taken:	Date	/ /
Complainant's response:		
Outcome		
Resolved to Complainant's satisfaction:	Date	//
Dissatisfied but no further action required:	Date	//
Law Society notified:	Date	
Other Action taken:	Date	//

Complaint Closed

Final Response given to Complainant: Date / /

Issue Date:

Approved By:

Closing instructions:

Retain on register foryears

Signed: Complaints Partner. Date /
