

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

1. Our complaints policy

Co-Counsel is committed to providing a high-quality service to its clients. This includes a commitment to putting things right when they go wrong.

If at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service Co-Counsel has provided then you should inform us immediately, so that we can do our best to resolve the problem.

In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues at this stage. If you would like to make a formal complaint, then you can read our full complaints policy set out here. Making a complaint will not affect how we handle your case.

This policy explains how we will deal with any complaint that is referred to us. Examples can include the way in which you have been dealt with, the quality of advice you have received or any invoice that you have received.

2. Our complaints procedure

First stage resolution

If you have a complaint, please contact the lawyer that you have been dealing with in the first instance. They will work hard to resolve the issue. If she or he does not deal with it to your satisfaction, please contact either [Anjanette Pavell](#) or [Lisa Patmore](#), who are the directors of Co-Counsel, choosing a director who has not had direct conduct of the matter. You can contact them in writing by email, post or phone (using the details set out on the "[Contact Us](#)" page). We call this process "second stage resolution".

Second stage resolution

To explain to you how long the second level response process might take we have included our target times for each stage of the process. Where, for any reason, it is not possible to observe any of these limits we will let you know and explain why.

Second stage resolution – what happens next?

- 1) On receipt of your complaint the relevant director will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and might invite you to a meeting to discuss your concerns. We will open a file for your complaint in our system and the relevant director will examine the file that we have on the work that we have been doing for you. We aim to acknowledge your complaint within 4 working days of receiving it and will complete our initial examination within 10 working days.
- 2) We might then invite you to a meeting or we will write to you to ask for further information. Alternatively we might write to you setting out our views on the situation and suggesting any redress that we would feel to be appropriate. We will aim to write to you with our views and any suggestions within 7 days of completing our investigations.
- 3) Where we feel that we have failed in our standards we could offer an apology, a reduction of any bill or a repayment in relation to any payment received.
- 4) If, by this stage, you are still not satisfied, please let us know. It would be helpful to us if you could do so within the next 21 days but there is no obligation on you to do so. We will then arrange to review our decision. We would generally aim to do this within 10 days of hearing from you. With your written agreement, we may ask an appropriate third party, independent of Co-Counsel, to consider the issue. We will be responsible for any costs of the third party.
- 5) We will let you know the result of the review within 7 days of the end of the review and will do so by writing to you to confirm our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

3. What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint?

The Legal Ombudsman may be able to assist you if we are unable to resolve your complaint ourselves. This is particularly if you are instructing us either as a consumer, a member of the public or a micro-enterprise (please check the European Union definition)(other clients may complain, visit www.legalombudsman.org.uk to get

more details) so will not apply to all clients. The Legal Ombudsman will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your case. Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

Within 6 months of receiving a final response to your complaint and not later than 1 year from the date

- of act/omission being complained about; or
- when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman has the discretion to accept out-of-time complaints in circumstances where it deems it "fair and reasonable to do so".

The Legal Ombudsman has introduced additional circumstances in which an ombudsman can dismiss or discontinue a case:

- if they are satisfied that the complainant has not suffered "significant" loss, distress, inconvenience or detriment
- where the size or complexity of the complaint, or the behaviour of the complainant, results in the complaint requiring a "disproportionate" use of resources
- where there has been "undue delay" in bringing a complaint
- where the service provider has made a reasonable offer to resolve the matter that has been accepted by the complainant before they refer the complaint to The Legal Ombudsman

4. Discretion to decline to issue an ombudsman decision

The Legal Ombudsman will have discretion to consider a complaint to have been resolved on the basis of an investigator's case decision if neither party provides "any substantive reasons" for disagreeing with that decision.

An ombudsman may conclude that a final decision is not needed on a case if no substantive issues have been raised in response to the investigator's findings or remedy.

The Legal Ombudsman expects service providers to honour a recommendation by an ombudsman that a remedy is payable.

If a service provider "fails to do so within a defined period of time", the complaint can request that the case is passed to an ombudsman for a decision.

Visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 9am to 5pm.

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167, Slough SL1 0EH

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can also help you if you are concerned about our conduct in relation to a matter or generally. 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. You can raise your concerns direct with (and obtain contact details via) the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. We will do our best to address any dissatisfaction that you have experienced in using the services of Co-Counsel. Our primary objective is to put things right.

5. Contracts made by electronic means

In addition, if you are a client with whom we have made a contract by electronic means, you may be entitled to use an EU online dispute resolution service to assist with any contractual dispute you may have with us. Should you wish to do so that service can be found at <http://ec.europa.eu/odr>. Our email address for this purpose is admin@co-counsel.co.uk

Dated: January 2024