

Annex J Complaints Handling Policy



Our Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need our clients to tell us about it. This will help improve our standards. Whenever possible, please raise any initial problems with the person acting on your case to give them the opportunity of resolving matters with you. Often, matters can be quickly resolved in this way.

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the service you have received, please contact Edward Judge on 01823 251571 or by email to edward.judge@risdonhosegood.com. The postal address is Mendip House, High Street Taunton Somerset TA1 3SX. We will request that you detail your complaint in writing. This can be by email or by letter. However please feel free to call to discuss your concerns at any time.

We have a procedure in place which details how we handle complaints as follows:

Our Procedures

1. Please try to initially address your concerns with the person you are dealing with. This should be done as soon as possible. If that fails then please contact their manager. It may be possible that the solution is to offer another person to finish off or handle your matter and that should be arranged as soon as possible to avoid there being delays. We know this does not always resolve the issue that you may have and that speaking to the person you are dealing with may be hard for you to do. The details of how to complain and the name of the person/s to complain to appear in your first letter (the one about costs). If you want to know the name and you do not have the letter then ring Mr Judge or his secretary and they will tell you who to speak to initially.
2. If you feel the need to complain further or you do not feel that the matter has been adequately resolved; then please do so in writing if possible, giving as much detail as you can and we will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within 4 working days of receiving it. Doing this usually means we can look into your complaint more thoroughly right from the start.
3. We will investigate your complaint. We will send a complaint form including full details of your complaint to the person handling your case and we may then ask for a written report from them. After this if appropriate we will look at your case file and the notes and letters that have been kept. This will take a little while. We usually allow 10-14 working days for this part of the investigations.

If your complaint relates to Edward Judge, himself, it will be dealt with by an appointed deputy, we will tell you who that is but it will be another partner or senior manager within the firm.

4. We will then write to you and tell you about our initial findings and if necessary tell you how much longer we need to obtain all the information to write out to you in full. Usually this will be within around 21 working days. Sometimes it may be longer dependent upon the complexity and nature of the complaint. If we need more time we will tell you as soon as we know that and give you an idea of the time we will need.

If you would then like to meet to discuss this direct, we will agree a date time and venue with you to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint.

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5. Within 4 working days of that meeting we will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions agreed with you.
6. If you do not want a meeting, you will still be sent a detailed written reply to your complaint, including the suggestions for resolving the matter. We try to deal with most complaints within 28 working days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
7. If you are still not satisfied with our handling of your complaint you can then ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint. The Ombudsman service like you to have exhausted our internal process before you complain to them. Their contact details are as follows:

Address:	PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ
Telephone:	0300 555 0333
Email:	enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Website:	www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint. We would hope that this does not become necessary and that we can resolve matters between ourselves. If this is not the case however, we would be happy to provide you with the necessary information to make such a complaint. Some public authorities are excluded by the Legal Ombudsman criteria and the above website should be visited for eligibility details.

If we have to change any of the above timescales we will let you know and explain why.

The complaints procedure also includes complaints arising concerning our bill. There may also be a right to object to the bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974; and that if all, or part, of a bill remains unpaid, the firm may be entitled to charge interest. If you do apply for such assessment the Legal Ombudsman may not be able to deal with your complaint. For more information the Ombudsman has a very good website and help line.