

THE GRANT STEPHENS FAMILY LAW COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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.

If you have a complaint please contact the first instance Grant Stephens at grant@grantstephensfamilylaw.co.uk who will be responsible for recording and acknowledging your complaint. An investigation will then be conducted. If we have to change any of the timescales set out below, we will let you know and explain why.

Please ensure that your correspondence is marked 'Complaint' and please also particularise your complaints (if there are more than one) by numbering each one, providing a heading and detailed explanation of your complaint and the concern that it has caused you with any evidence in support.

What will happen next?

1. We will endeavour to write to you acknowledging your complaint within 5 working days of receiving it. This will not always be possible but will ensure that it will be acknowledged no later than 2 weeks from the date of receipt. We may ask you to clarify any details in writing. If you have any special requirements due to a disability please let us know and we shall do our best to accommodate any alternative arrangements you may require.
2. We will investigate your complaint, examine the file and speak to members of staff concerned.
3. If appropriate we will invite you to a meeting to discuss the matter or to mediation (details will be provided) in the hope that we resolve your complaint. Otherwise, a full response will be sent to you in writing. We should be in a position to do this within 5 weeks of acknowledging your complaint.
4. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again to explain why you remain unhappy with our response and we will review your comments. Depending on the matter we may at this stage arrange for another partner to review the decision.
5. We will write to you again within 14 days of receiving your request for a review. We will set out our final position on your complaint together with reasons.
6. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman using the details shown below:

PO Box 6806,

Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

Tel: 0300 555 0333 E Mail: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

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

Please note before contacting the Legal Ombudsman;

1. If your complaint is specifically about our bill, you have the right to object to it and apply for an assessment of it under part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. If you should choose to exercise this right, and the court is assessing our bill, you may be unable to use the Legal Ombudsman service.
2. If you are complaining as a business client, unless you are a “micro business” (as defined by the European Union), you may not be able to use the Legal Ombudsman scheme and should check the guidance on the Legal Ombudsman’s website.
3. Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within 12 months of you having received a final written response from us about your complaint. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within six years of the act or omission about which you are complaining; or within three years from when you should have known about or became aware that there were grounds for complaint. The Legal Ombudsman will not accept complaints where the act or date of awareness was before 6 October 2010.
4. If you refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman as a trustee/personal representative (executor/administrator) or beneficiary of the estate/trust of a person who, before they died, had not referred the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman the period runs from when the deceased should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint; and when the complainant (or the deceased) should reasonably have known there was a cause for complaint will be assessed on the basis of the complainant’s (or deceased’s) own knowledge, disregarding what the complainant (or the deceased) might have been told if he/she had sought advice.
5. If the Ombudsman considers there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. serious illness or you were still within the time limits when you made your initial complaint to them) then he/she may extend any of the above time limits to the extent that he/she considers fair.