

Updated 2 March 2023

Complaints Procedure

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This **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE** applies to:

- (1) Alexander Legal Services Limited whose registered office is at Suites 2A-3A Quay View, Union Quay, North Shields, NE30 1HJ (the **Firm**);
- (2) Clients of the Firm (**you**); and
- (3) Third party contacts

1. INTRODUCTION

The Firm is committed to providing a clear and accurate legal service in a timely manner. Client satisfaction is a priority for us, and we want the service clients receive to reflect these principles. That is why we welcome hearing from you if you ever believe that our service has fallen short of these objectives.

2. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND STAGES TO A COMPLAINT

- 2.1 We know it can sometimes be daunting to raise a complaint, but we will never be offended if you do so. Your case will not be prejudiced by you raising concerns either. We hope you will not have any reason to complain, but in case you do, please follow the procedure below.
- 2.2 The time limit for bringing a complaint to our attention is within twelve months of the end of the matter on which you instructed us, or within twelve months of you becoming aware of the circumstances giving rise to your complaint, whichever is the greater. If you wish to complain about our service after the expiry of these time limits you may still be able to make a complaint directly to the Legal Ombudsman, but we will not be obliged in those circumstances to consider your complaint under this procedure, and you should contact the Legal Ombudsman to establish whether your complaint falls within the time limits of their scheme.
- 2.3 Where your complaint relates to the misconduct of a CILEX member, CILEX Practitioner or a CILEX Approved Manager, you can refer your complaint free of charge to CILEx Regulation for them to investigate. Misconduct complaints must be made within twelve months of the act or omission that gave rise to the complaint or within twelve months of you becoming aware of the circumstances giving rise to your complaint, whichever is the greater. CILEx Regulation's contact details are:

CILEx Regulation
Room 301, Endeavour House
Wrest Park, Silsoe
Bedford
MK45 4HS

T: 01234 845770
E: info@cilexregulation.org.uk
W: www.cilexregulation.org.uk

- 2.4 The following stages are in place for us dealing with complaints:

2.4.1 First stage

In the first instance, please raise your concerns directly with the person dealing with your matter by email, post or over the phone. If your lawyer does not resolve your concerns to your satisfaction, your complaint will reach the second stage.

2.4.2 **Second stage**

- (a) You may progress your complaint to our Compliance Manager and the Firm's principal, Shaun Alexander. When you do so, please set out as much detail as possible regarding your complaint. You may find the template letter on the Legal Ombudsman's website useful (<http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/>). We prefer to receive your complaint by post or email as we can then make sure we reply to all the points you raise. Shaun's contact details are:

Alexander Legal Services Limited
Suites 2A-3A Quay View
Union Quay
North Shields
NE30 1HJ

E: shaun@alexanderlegal.co.uk
T: 0191 307 7150

- (b) We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days;
- (c) We will tell you how long it will take us to investigate your complaint. This normally is around three or four weeks, but it could be less or more (either due to the circumstances of your complaint, illness or staff holidays). In any event it should never be more than eight weeks after acknowledging receipt of your complaint;
- (d) We will review your file and if necessary, talk to the person dealing with your matter;
- (e) We will send you the result of our investigation by email or post, depending on how you contacted us in the first place or any preference you may have. We may also offer to meet with you to discuss your complaint and resolve it;
- (f) If we agree with you and we find the service you received was not as we would have liked it to be, we will work with you to try to find a way to resolve your complaint;
- (g) If we find that your complaint does not support a finding of poor service, we will let you know the reasons why. We will let you know what to do if you are unhappy with our decision;
- (h) If you are dissatisfied with the findings and/or proposed action in our response:
- (i) You have the automatic right to refer the matter to the Legal Ombudsman, who's contact details are confirmed in 2.5.3(b) below. You also have this right if you do not receive a written response to your complaint within eight weeks of the Firm receiving the original complaint; and
 - (ii) We may also agree to using Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to resolve your complaint. ADR bodies such as the Institute of Professional Willwriters (IPW) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should you and the Firm agree to use ADR. We would consider using ADR through the IPW, provided you:

- (A) Have followed the first and second stages of this procedure; and
- (B) Request the use of ADR within eight weeks of receiving a final written response from us regarding your complaint.

(iii) The IPW's contact details are:

Institute of Professional Willwriters
Trinity Point, New Road
Halesowen
B63 3HY

T: 0345 257 2570

E: compliance@ipw.org.uk

W: www.ipw.org.uk

2.4.3 **Third Stage**

- (a) If we are unable to resolve the complaint with you then you can have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman investigates problems about poor services from lawyers. 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 can take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within the following time limits:
 - (i) No more than one year from the date of act or omission giving rise to the complaint; or
 - (ii) No more than one year from when you should reasonably have known there was a cause for complaint.
- (b) The Legal Ombudsman's contact details are:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

T: 0300 555 0333

E: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

W: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

3. **REVIEW**

This policy, and all other policies and procedures are reviewed annually, or sooner, if the need arises, by the Firm's principal, Shaun Alexander.