

SANDS Legal LLP

Complaints Handling Policy

October 2025

A. Introduction

The Solicitors' Regulation Authority (“SRA”) requires that every firm of solicitors has an effective policy for handling complaints by their clients. SANDS Legal LLP (the “SANDS”, “we” or “us”) is authorised and regulated by the SRA with SRA ID number 8011806. We must comply with the SRA Standards and Regulations, including the Codes of Conduct. For further details about the SRA, please consult the SRA website: www.sra.org.uk. This also sets out when it would be appropriate to contact the SRA in relation to a solicitor's service or behaviour (for further details see below).

B. Our aim

SANDS strives to provide its clients with the highest possible standards of legal advice and service at all times. Should you feel that at any point we have fallen short of this aim and wish to raise concerns or a complaint with us, we have put in place a Complaints Handling Policy, details of which are set out below.

We aim to deal promptly, fairly and effectively with any complaint a client may have about any aspect of our service.

We are committed to providing a high-quality service to all our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our service. We do not charge for the time taken to resolve a complaint.

C. How to submit a complaint

If you have a complaint, please give the details (by letter, email or telephone) to the partner with whom you feel you have the closest relationship.

If you have not dealt directly with a partner, please contact the partner named in our engagement letter as the partner responsible for supervising your matter or (if you prefer) Max Lemanski, (max.lemanski@sands-legal.co.uk).

The individual you contacted will discuss your concerns with you at a mutually convenient time to try to resolve them. We will then consider your complaint and will respond within eight weeks. If we have not resolved it within this time, you may be eligible to complain to the Legal Ombudsman.

It is possible that, after investigation, the partner to whom you first notified your complaint can quickly resolve it to your satisfaction, in which case that partner will record in writing to you within seven days of your first contacting us the agreed manner of resolution. If, however, your complaint is not resolved to your complete satisfaction, you should notify (by letter, email or telephone) the partner first who you first contacted that you require your complaint to be investigated by another partner.

D. What happens next

If we cannot reach a quick and informal resolution in the manner described above, and you request that we progress with your complaint, we will appoint another partner to investigate the issues you have raised.

This will normally involve passing your complaint to our Complaints Officer (or, if the Complaints Officer is the subject of the complaint, another partner) who will:

- send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint and enclosing a copy of this procedure; and
- nominate a person unconnected with your matter to review your matter file and speak to the member of staff who acted for you.

The partner nominated to investigate your complaint will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. That partner will aim to do this promptly.

Thereafter, the partner who met with you will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions that partner has agreed with you.

If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, the partner nominated to deal with your complaint will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including that partner's suggestions for resolving the matter, usually within 21 days of the acknowledgement letter.

At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should (by letter, email or telephone) contact our Complaints Officer who will review the decision.

Our Complaints Officer will write to you within 14 days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

E. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

If you are still not satisfied following the operation of the procedure above, you may be able to ask the Legal Ombudsman (“**LeO**”) to resolve the matter. This applies if you are an individual, a business with fewer than 10 employees and turnover or assets not exceeding a certain threshold, a charity or trust with a net income of less than £1m, or if you fall within certain other categories. The LeO will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your matter. The LeO's service is free of charge.

Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the LeO will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the LeO:

- a) within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint; and
- b) no more than one year from the date of the act or omission being complained about or no more than one year from the date when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

If you would like more information about the LeO, it can be contacted as follows:

- website: <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/>
- by letter at: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH
- by telephone at: callers from UK: 0300 555 0333 / callers from overseas: +44 121 245 3050
- by email at: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

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

F. The Courts

If your complaint relates to fees, you may have the right to object to an invoice by applying to the court for an assessment of the invoice under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974.

G. The Solicitors Regulation Authority

You may also complain at any time to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (“**SRA**”), for example if your complaint relates to the conduct of one or more of our partners or employees. Such instances would include concerns regarding a solicitor’s behaviour, e.g. acting dishonestly, unfair treatment because of age, gender or race or taking or mishandling client money.

The SRA can be contacted at: Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN. The standards and requirements that we are expected to achieve are contained in the SRA’s Standards and Regulations which can be viewed at: <https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations>.

Should you wish to do so there is a reporting form at this link:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page>

Further details can be found at www.sra.org.uk

H. Complaints from non-clients

We aim to deal promptly, fairly and effectively with any complaint a non-client may have about any matter relating to the LLP or a solicitor or other SRA-registered lawyer affiliated with us. If you are a non-client who makes a complaint to us, we will follow a procedure appropriate to the nature of the complaint, which will include a review of the complaint by a partner designated by us to investigate non-client complaints. That partner will contact you usually within 14 days of receipt of your complaint to confirm our position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

If you are still dissatisfied, the Legal Ombudsman may be prepared to investigate your complaint if you satisfy the relevant criteria (please see further details in section E above). You may at any time make a report to the SRA (please see further details in section G above).