



<p>DEXTER MONTAGUE LLP</p> <p>COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE</p>
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We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to sort out any mistakes or misunderstandings, and to improve our standards.

In most cases, an informal chat with the lawyer responsible for your matter will resolve your concerns.

If it does not, you can formalise your complaint and raise the matter with our client care partner, Stephanie Alderwick. She can record everything you are unhappy about and recommend the best solution for you. You can contact Stephanie Alderwick at stephanie.alderwick@dextermontague.co.uk.

Please be assured that your complaint will be dealt with promptly, fairly and free of charge.

What will happen next?

1. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within three working days of receiving it.
2. We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve our client care partner reviewing your file and speaking to the member of staff who acted for you. We may contact you at this stage if there are aspects of your concerns that we need to clarify with you.
3. We will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including our suggestions for resolving the matter, within 42 days of sending you the written acknowledgement of your complaint referred to in paragraph 1 above.
4. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange for another partner to review the decision.
5. We 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.
6. If we have to change any of these timescales we will let you know and explain why.

What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint

7. If you have exhausted our internal complaints procedure yet remain dissatisfied you are entitled to refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman will look at the complaint independently and any investigation by them will not affect how we handle your case.
8. Before accepting a complaint the Legal Ombudsman will check;
 - You have tried to resolve the complaint with us in the first instance and
 - You have suffered significant financial loss, distress, inconvenience or detriment which deems it proportionate for them to investigate.

We will always be happy to discuss your issues further, prior to going down this route, if you wish to do so.

9. For complaints about our service, including billing issues, you may contact the Legal Ombudsman via one of the methods below:
 - Phone: 0300 5550333
 - Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
 - Post: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH.
10. Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must usually be made within **six months** of the date of our final written response to your complaint. You should also be aware that the Ombudsman will consider your complaint if you refer it on to them within either of the following:
 - **One year** from the date of the act or omission being complained about
 - OR**
 - **One year** from the date when you should reasonably have known that there was a cause for complaint.

The Ombudsman has discretion to extend the one year time limit for specific customers if, on the evidence, it is fair and reasonable to do so.

11. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman service cannot be used by businesses or most other organisations, unless they are below certain size limits. Further details are available from the [Legal Ombudsman's website](#)
12. It is worth considering that, whilst it is open to you to submit a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, they apply strict criteria to determine whether they will ultimately accept a complaint for a full investigation. They have the discretion to dismiss or discontinue all or part of a complaint if they believe:
 - a) It does not have any reasonable prospects of success.

- b) You have not suffered (and are unlikely to suffer) significant financial loss, distress, inconvenience or detriment.
- c) It is frivolous, vexatious, lacks merit or where there is compelling reason not to accept it.
- d) The likely impact, size, complexity, scope, volume of evidence or your conduct render it disproportionate/unreasonable/impossible for the complaint to be investigated.
- e) You have previously complained about the same issue to them, unless you provide material evidence that is likely to affect the outcome which only became available to you after you submitted the original complaint.
- f) There has been undue delay in the complaint being raised.

Please also note:

- a) If, during the course of an ongoing investigation by the Ombudsman, a revised/increased offer is made by us which is deemed to be fair and reasonable redress and you decide to reject that offer, the Ombudsman has the discretion to dismiss or discontinue all or part of your complaint.
- b) If you have already accepted an offer to settle your complaint made by us during our internal complaint handling process, which is deemed to be fair and reasonable redress, unless there has been some significant intervening act, you will not be able to have that agreement overturned in the hope of securing a preferential outcome by pursuing your complaint via the Ombudsman.

For more information on the Legal Ombudsman's rules and requirements, please see their [Scheme Rules](#) dated April 2023.

What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour

- 13. The Solicitors Regulation Authority ("SRA") can help if you are concerned about our behaviour. 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.
- 14. Visit ["Reporting an individual or firm"](#) page of their website to see how you can raise your concerns with the SRA.