

**Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure for Clients**

1. We are committed to providing a high quality legal service and to dealing with all our clients fairly. We acknowledge that we may not always get it right so if something has gone wrong, including in relation to the bill, we need you to tell us.
2. How do I make a complaint?
	1. You can contact us in writing (by letter or email) or by speaking with our complaints handling lawyer, Stephen Clegg, whose contact details are:

Email: stephen.clegg@everys.co.uk

Tel: 01404 540958

Address: The Laurels, 46 New Street, Honiton, Devon, EX14 1BY

* 1. To help us to understand your complaint, and in order that we do not miss anything, please tell us:
		1. your full name and contact details
		2. what you think we have done wrong
		3. what you hope to achieve as a result of your complaint, and
		4. your file reference number (if you have it)
	2. If you require any help in making your complaint we will try to assist you.
1. How will you deal with my complaint?
	1. We will record your complaint centrally.
	2. We will write to you within five working days, acknowledging your complaint and enclosing a copy of this policy.
	3. We will investigate your complaint. This will usually involve:
		1. reviewing your complaint
		2. reviewing your file(s) and other relevant documents, and
		3. seeking input from the person who dealt with your matter or their head of department.
	4. We may also need to ask you for further information or documents. If so, we will ask you to provide the information within a specific period of time.
	5. We may also, if we consider it appropriate, invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. You do not have to attend if you do not wish to or if you are unable to. We will be happy to discuss the matter with you on the telephone.
	6. We will write to you at the end of our investigation to tell you what we have done and what we propose to do to resolve your complaint. We normally aim to do this within 28days of receiving all necessary information, but circumstances or the complexity of the matter may dictate that more time or indeed a quicker response is needed. We will notify you if more time is required, however, except in the most exceptional of cases, we expect to be able to respond within 2 months.
2. What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?
	1. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our complaints handling procedure please first let us know. You can do this in writing or request a meeting with Stephen Clegg or speak with him over the telephone. Our aim is to achieve a satisfactory resolution wherever possible.
	2. If we have not resolved your complaint to your satisfaction within 8 weeks of its being made to us or if the Ombudsman considers that there are exceptional reasons to consider the complaint sooner, or without it having been made to us first, or if the Ombudsman considers that in house resolution is not possible due to irretrievable breakdown in the relationship between us, you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to look into your complaint. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman:
		1. by post at PO Box 6167, Slough SL1 0EH
		2. by telephone: 0300 555 0333, or
		3. by email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
	3. **There is a time limit on your right to refer a complaint to the Ombudsman. Failure to comply with the time limit will cause you to lose that right. You must usually refer your complaint to the Ombudsman within six months of our final written response to your complaint. Furthermore, your referral of your complaint to the Ombudsman must be within one year of the act or omission about which you are complaining occurring or within one year of the date when you should reasonably have known there was a cause for complaint). Further details are available on the website:** [**www.legalombudsman.org.uk**](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)**.**
	4. You should note there are restrictions on who can use the Legal Ombudsman service, which is primarily for private individuals, and small organisations (businesses, charities and clubs with an annual income of less than £1million), trustees of a trust with an asset value of less than £1 million and personal representatives or beneficiaries of an estate . Please contact the Legal Ombudsman for further information.
	5. Alternative complaints bodies (such as Small Claims Mediation ([www.small-claims-mediation.co.uk](http://www.small-claims-mediation.co.uk)) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and our firm wish to use such a scheme. We have, however, chosen not to adopt an ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) process. If, therefore, you wish to complain further, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman.
3. What will it cost?
	1. We will not charge you for handling your complaint.
	2. Please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on the matter, and all or some of the bill is not paid, we may be entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding.
	3. The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.