



Equal Justice Solicitors

Equal Justice Ltd
MFG House
15 Cambridge Court
210 Shepherds Bush Road
Hammersmith
W6 7NJ

Tel: 020 7603 3200
Fax: 020 7603 3260
DX: 46763 Hammersmith 3
www.equaljustice.co.uk

Complaints Procedures

We want to give you the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service, we have provided then you should inform us immediately, so that we can do our best to resolve the problem.

In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues. If you would like to make a formal complaint, then you can read our full complaints procedure (please see below). Making a complaint will not affect how we handle your case.

What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint

The Legal Ombudsman can help you if we are unable to resolve your complaint ourselves. They will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your case.

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 must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint

and

- No more than six years from the date of act/omission; or
- No more than three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, please contact them.

Contact details

Visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 9.00 to 17.00.

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ



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What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour

The Solicitors Regulation Authority 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.

Visit their website to see how you can raise your concerns with the at <https://www.sra.org.uk>

Complaints Procedure

Equal Justice Ltd solicitor's (EJ) full complaints handling procedure is as follows:

STAGE 1: EJ will send a letter within a reasonable period of time (3 working days) to the (former) Client making the complaint ("the complainant") acknowledging the complaint and asking for confirmation or explanation of the details (where necessary).

This letter will specify the name of the person dealing with the complaint and how the procedure works and how long it is likely to take.

EJ acknowledges that the complainant has an entitlement to complain.

THE NEXT STAGE DEPENDS ON WHICH MEMBER OF STAFF THE COMPLAINT IS MADE AGAINST.

WHERE THE COMPLAINT IS MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF OTHER THAN THE DIRECTOR, MR DAVIES, STAGE 2 WILL APPLY.

WHERE THE COMPLAINT IS MADE AGAINST THE DIRECTOR, MR DAVIES, STAGE 2A WILL APPLY.

STAGE 2: If the complaint relates to any member of staff other than the Director, Mr Davies, it will be investigated by the Director and concluded within 21 days of the Stage 1 acknowledgement letter, unless in exceptional



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circumstances, it is not possible to do so. If such circumstances apply, the complainant will be informed of the same as soon as possible, what the circumstances are and by when the decision will be issued.

Save as stated above, the Director will respond to the complainant with a written decision within that 21 day period. The decision letter will set out what (if any) remedial action will be taken as a result of those findings. It will also state that, if the complainant is still dissatisfied, further to that outcome, EJ will offer mediation. EJ will also provide the complainant with details of the Legal Ombudsman and notify the complainant that they have 6 months from the complaint decision date to make a further complaint to the Ombudsman should they wish to do so.

STAGE 2A: If the complaint relates to the Director, Mr Davies, it will be investigated by another solicitor of the law firm. That investigating solicitor will investigate and conclude the complaint within 21 days of the Stage 1 acknowledgement letter, unless in exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to do so. If such circumstances apply, the complainant will be informed of the same as soon as possible, what the circumstances are and by when the decision will be issued.

Save as stated above, the investigating solicitor will respond to the complainant with a written decision within that 21 day period. The decision letter will set out what (if any) remedial action will be taken as a result of those findings. It will also state that, if the complainant is still dissatisfied, further to that outcome, EJ will offer mediation. EJ will also provide the complainant with details of the Legal Ombudsman and notify the complainant that they have 6 months from the complaint decision date to make a further complaint to the Ombudsman should they wish to do so.

COVID-19

In order to safeguard the health and safety of our staff, the above procedure has been modified due to the impact on the law firm of the Covid-19 pandemic.



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Where the Director under Stage 2, or investigating solicitor, under Stage 2A, will need to access the complainant's (archived) client file to reach a determination on a complaint, such complaint will be concluded by written decision within 21 days of the Director/investigating solicitor having access to the office/storage depot where files are archived.

*At present, it is intended that the law firm office will re-open when the Employment Tribunal re-opens to lawyers and the public **on Monday 6 September 2021**. However, access to the office (whether before this date or after), will be dependent on the updated government guidelines (at the relevant time) and provided the firm reasonably believes that attendance at the office will not present a health and safety risk to its staff at the time of their attendance.*

Legal Ombudsman

For the avoidance of doubt, if you are not satisfied with our handling of your complaint, you are then entitled to complain direct to the Legal Ombudsmen at that time or at the end of our complaints process. The normal timeframe for complaining to the Legal Ombudsman is **(1) within 6 months from the date of our written decision concerning your complaint or (2) within 12 months of when the problem occurred or from when you should reasonably have become aware of the problem.**

The contact details for the Ombudsman are: The Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ

Telephone - 0300-555 0333

Website - www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Email – enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

The Ombudsman can consider complaints from clients who are individuals, charities, small businesses, clubs and trust among others. Hence, most clients do have that right. If you are unsure whether or not the Ombudsman may have jurisdiction to consider your complaint, please contact them direct to confirm that point.



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Other matters

If your complaint relates to a bill, you may also object to the bill using this same process and/or by applying to the County Court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974.

We may not charge you for the handling of your complaint.

We are also obliged to inform you that if all or any part of our bill remains unpaid at the expiry of the payment period (28 days after it is rendered) we may be entitled to charge interest on that bill.

The complaints process is **confidential** and must be kept confidential by the complainant.

If the complainant makes defamatory comment about EJ outside of the complaints process to any third party (that is to a party who is not the law firm or the Legal Ombudsman or as required by law), the firm reserves its rights to protect itself from such defamatory or harassing conduct and/or its continuation by commencing legal proceedings against the complainant and/or any third party to protect its reputation and/or that of its staff.

Where the complaints procedure is reasonably believed by the investigator and/or firm to be being maliciously used by a complainant to unlawfully harass, threaten or blackmail staff and/or which is reasonably believed to be a form of criminal conduct, or designed to cover up a criminal offence (eg: such as a contempt of court or Data Protection Act breach by the complainant or third party), such conduct by the complainant will be reported to the police by the firm, where the firm is required by law or professional obligation to do so.