



Complaints procedure

2018-2019 edition

Introduction

SCJ Solicitors is a firm of solicitors based in Caernarfon, North Wales. We strive to offer our clients legal services that are unbeaten in terms of results, service levels and friendliness of approach.

This document outlines the process for submitting a complaint to us if you feel our service to you has not been to the expected standard or if you feel aggrieved by any issue that may have arisen in our relationship with you as a client, in accordance with SRA complaints transparency rules, as well as information about who will handle your complaint, how long it will take and any further redress should our handling of your complaint not be to your satisfaction.

Please note that if you are not a client of SCJ Solicitors and your complaint refers to a matter that has not arisen through a client and solicitor relationship, certain parts of this complaint's procedure will differ or not be available to you. You will be informed as such in the relevant sections.

SCJ Solicitors considers any complaint about our firm, our service to you, our staff or a complaint for any other reason to be a very serious matter, and as such you can be assured it will be dealt with seriously and as swiftly as possible.

Contact information

Address: SCJ Solicitors
38-40 High Street
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1RH

Phone number: 01286 400 680

Email address: enquiries@scjsolicitors.co.uk

Regulatory information

SCJ Solicitors is regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and its regulated number is 613541. You can find out more information about how we are regulated by visiting <http://www.sra.org.uk>.

SCJ Solicitors is a member of the Conveyancing Quality Scheme operated by the Law Society. This ensures that we handle your conveyancing matter according to industry best standards.

Submitting a complaint

SCJ Solicitors feels the best way to deal with complaints is informally. If a client feels aggrieved or let down by what they feel is poor service, very often a simple phone call or email can be enough to help us solve your problem and our staff will always endeavour to make our clients feel they are getting the best service possible. However the firm recognises this is not always possible, particularly if the complainant is not a client of the firm.

To submit a complaint to the firm, you must do so in writing either via email or via a letter submitted to our office using the contact details at the front of this document. To assist us with your complaint it would be helpful if you can provide us with as much information as possible. Information we will need will include:

- Your name, address and telephone number and any additional contact information such as an email address.
- Whether you are a client of the firm or not
- The nature of your complaint and who and what it is directed at
- How the cause for your complaint has aggrieved you and if it has caused you any hardship
- What you would like us to do in terms of remedy

Please note, except in the case where a complainant may be considered to be exposing corrupt information, persons or malpractice (Known as “Whistleblowing”) we are unable to accept complaints that are submitted anonymously.

Responding to a complaint

After initial receipt of your complaint the firm will respond to you with an acknowledgement letter or email within 7 days to confirm that we have received it. We may ask for further information to assist us in this letter or email. The firm will then open an investigation into the circumstances surrounding your complaint.

Persons responsible

The persons responsible for investigating your complaint will be as follows:

Samantha Jones, Principle Solicitor of the firm

Samantha will handle all complaints arising from a legal matter

Keith Harbridge, General Manager

Keith will handle all complaints that do not directly refer to a legal matter

Expected timeline

The firm will endeavour to respond to your complaint within 30 days of either:

- a) Providing our initial acknowledgement letter OR
- b) Receipt of any further information requested in our acknowledgement letter

If there are any delays to this process we will inform you as soon as possible.

Investigation and provision of any remedy

Our investigation will aim to determine the following:

- The events and history relating to the complaint
- The staff or persons at the firm involved
- The actions of those staff or persons
- The procedures that either were or were not in place to prevent the cause for the complaint
- Where any procedures, rules or guidance breached leading to the cause of the complaint
- Whether or not the complaint is justified in view of the determined facts
- If the complaint is justified whether there is a reasonable defence to the complaint
- The hardship imposed on the complainant

After determining these factors, the firm will decide whether or not the complaint is justified, and if so, how we will provide remedy to you. We will be guided by any requests or advice the complainant makes or provides in terms of how we might provide remedy to their complaint but ultimately the firm's decision will be final.

Remedy may take the form of a written apology at minimum and may also include an offer of compensation and/or disposal of our fee for services rendered or a combination of these.

Where the complainant is not a client we will endeavour to provide a remedy that is appropriate to the complaint.

Unjustified complaints

If, after investigating, the firm feels the complaint is not justified, the firm may decide not to offer any remedy and may choose to defend its position, actions and choices. The complainant will be given written notice including the reasoning for this decision, our appeals process and details for the Legal Ombudsman.

Appeals

In the event of an offered remedy to a complaint not being satisfactory, or where the firm has decided the complaint is unjustified, you may appeal the decision to the firm. You must do so in writing and provide reasons why you feel the decision, or any remedy offered is unacceptable. The firm will use this information to reinvestigate your complaint using an independent member of staff from the original investigation.

If the appeal finds that the original decision was incorrect, unwarranted or did not adequately provide remedy to your complaint, the firm will act on the new recommendations and adjust its response and remedy accordingly.

Please be aware that if you are not a client of SCJ Solicitors and if you have not received a legal service from us, the appeal is final. However if you are a client and you are still unhappy, you may now decide to refer the matter to the Legal Ombudsman.

Further action

If you have appealed and are still unhappy with the way we have dealt with your complaint or you feel our response is not adequate, you may refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman if your complaint refers to the service we have provided to you as our client.

Please be aware you must send your complaint to us first and exhaust our appeal process before you can seek remedy from the Legal Ombudsman as it will not consider your complaint in most cases unless you have given us a chance to respond to your complaint and offer our remedy first.

The Legal Ombudsman

The Legal Ombudsman is an independent service set up to investigate and provide remedy for complaints relating to legal services. They have the power to direct regulated firms to provide remediation in the event of dissatisfaction relating to poor service. The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman are as follows:

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Address: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

Website: <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk>