COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE – ENGLAND AND WALES

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This policy explains how to complain to us, how we will investigate and respond, and the external remedies available if you remain dissatisfied. Our internal process is free and does not restrict your legal rights.

1. Scope and access

You may complain about our legal services, fees, communication, delays, staff conduct or handling of personal information.

Clients, authorised representatives, and instructing solicitors or other professional clients may use this procedure. We also consider concerns from non-clients where we can do so consistently with confidentiality and the rights of those involved.

The external routes below apply where the lawyer, entity and services concerned fall within the relevant England and Wales scheme. Your engagement letter should identify your service provider and professional regulator. The location of your case or your choice of language does not, by itself, establish regulatory jurisdiction.

Separate arrangements may apply to financial services, notarial work or services regulated elsewhere. We will explain the relevant route and continue addressing issues within this procedure. The professionals practising under our name may have different regulatory statuses.

2. First step: email your complaint

In the first instance, before external escalation, please send your complaint to:

Email: info@godfrayabryjommersbach.com
Subject: “Complaint England and Wales”
For the attention of the partner responsible for complaints

For help contacting us or to use an alternative method:

Telephone: +44 7496 212623
Postal address: Dr Kane Abry, University of Roehampton, Roehampton Lane, SW15 5PH, UK.

You may also use the correspondence address in your engagement letter.

Email is our preferred first contact. If you cannot use email, we also accept complaints by letter, telephone, an arranged video call or another suitable accessible format. Please tell us about communication needs or reasonable adjustments. We can record an oral complaint and send you a summary to check.

Please provide your contact details, matter reference, the person concerned, the events and relevant dates, key documents and the outcome you seek. If acting for someone else, provide evidence of your authority.

We will record your complaint even if further information is needed. You do not need a solicitor to complain, although you may appoint a representative at your own expense.

This first step does not require you to delay an immediately available external remedy or miss a deadline.

3. Timing and protection of your rights

Please complain as soon as reasonably possible. We do not impose an absolute one-year cut-off on internal complaints. Delay may affect the evidence available, but we will consider the circumstances and explain any limitation on our investigation.

External time limits are separate. An internal complaint, review or discussion does not automatically stop or extend a court, ombudsman, or regulatory deadline.

Do not wait for us if a deadline is approaching. References to days mean calendar days unless working days are expressly stated.

4. Acknowledgement, independent partner review, and response

We aim to acknowledge your complaint within **two working days** and identify the person managing it.

We will aim to arrange review by an **independent partner** who was not involved in the events complained about and has no conflict of interest.

The reviewer may be a partner from outside our firm, with the **client's prior informed consent**. Before seeking consent, we will explain the proposed partner's identity, role, and the information to be shared. Complaint information will not be shared with that external partner before consent and appropriate confidentiality and data protection arrangements are in place.

If the proposed partner is the subject of the complaint, we will seek another independent partner. If suitable arrangements cannot be made immediately, we will explain the proposed next steps. Your external rights remain unaffected.

We aim to appoint the reviewing partner within **five working days of receipt**. They will review the file and relevant communications, obtain the accounts of those involved, and invite you to clarify disputed points.

We aim to provide a reasoned response within **fourteen days of the partner's appointment**. If this is not possible, we will explain why, give a revised date, and provide progress updates.

We aim to issue our final response within **eight weeks of the original complaint**. Any extension we request does not affect an eligible complainant's right to approach the Legal Ombudsman after eight weeks.

Our response will address each complaint with reasons and identify any remedy and implementation date. Remedies may include an explanation, apology, corrective action, reduction or refund of fees, or another appropriate measure.

A final response will clearly identify itself as final and prominently state the relevant external route, full contact details, and applicable referral deadline.

Raising a complaint will not disadvantage you or your matter. We will not reject service concerns simply because they also raise possible negligence or misconduct. We will investigate service issues and explain the role of insurers, regulators, or courts where relevant. We cannot provide independent legal advice on a claim against us.

5. Optional internal review

You may request a review using the same contact details, preferably within **fourteen days of our response**, identifying disputed findings or new evidence.

This is a suggested period, not a forfeiture of your rights. We aim to arrange review by a different independent partner. An external partner may be involved only with the client's prior informed consent.

We aim to respond within fourteen days or explain any further time required.

A review is optional. You need not complete it before referring an eligible complaint to the Legal Ombudsman once a final response has been issued or eight weeks have elapsed. It does not restart the six-month referral period.

6. Confidentiality and records

Complaint information is restricted to those who need it to investigate, respond, meet legal or regulatory obligations, or protect legal rights. This may include the person complained about, the reviewing partner, relevant partners, insurers, and competent regulators.

Professional confidentiality and data protection obligations continue to apply. The consent requirements in section 4 apply to an external partner's involvement.

We maintain a complaint record and normally retain the complaint file for **six years after closure**, subject to any different legal requirement or justified need to retain it for a claim. We review retention and delete or anonymise information no longer needed.

Partners review complaints annually to improve services. We provide regulatory information where required, using anonymised information where appropriate.

7. The Legal Ombudsman

The Legal Ombudsman independently considers eligible complaints about legal services, including service and costs. Its service is free to complainants.

Eligibility includes individuals and certain smaller businesses, charities, associations, trusts and estate-related complainants, subject to the Scheme Rules. An instructing solicitor who procured services for another person cannot complain in their own right about those services, but may act with authority for an eligible client. The Ombudsman determines jurisdiction.

You should first raise the complaint with us. If you are unhappy with our final response, or it remains unresolved after **eight weeks**, you may refer it to the Ombudsman. Its rules permit earlier consideration in certain circumstances.

Ordinarily, you must refer the complaint:

- No later than **one year from the act or omission**, or **one year from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint**; and
- Within **six months of the date of our written final response**, where that response contains the required prominent signposting, full contact details and six-month warning.

The Ombudsman may extend its time limits where it considers that fair and reasonable.

Contact:
Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH
Telephone: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
How to complain

Keep copies of your complaint and our responses.

8. Challenging an Ombudsman outcome

If you disagree with the investigator's case decision, respond within the period specified, normally **fourteen days**, explaining any factual or legal error or relevant new evidence. A further ombudsman determination is not automatic in every case; the Ombudsman considers the request under its process.

If an ombudsman issues a final determination and you accept it within the specified period, it becomes binding and final for both parties. Neither party can then start or continue legal proceedings about the subject matter of that complaint.

If you do not accept it, it is not binding. Any otherwise available court claim remains subject to its own requirements and time limits.

There is **no ordinary appeal** against an ombudsman's final decision. Judicial review may be available on recognised public law grounds. It is not a rehearing of the merits. A claim must generally be brought promptly and no later than **three months after the grounds first arose**.

Obtain independent advice urgently if considering this route. A complaint about the Ombudsman's customer service is separate and does not overturn the decision.

9. Professional conduct and regulatory review

For a BSB-regulated barrister or entity, conduct concerns may be reported to the **Bar Standards Board** through its reporting page or on 020 7611 1444.

For an SRA-regulated solicitor or firm, use the **Solicitors Regulation Authority's** reporting procedure.

The correct regulator depends on the professional concerned. You do not need to finish our procedure before reporting serious conduct concerns. These regulators are distinct from the Ombudsman's service-redress process.

A complainant does not acquire a general right to appeal a regulatory outcome. The BSB may review a decision for a material factual, legal or procedural error or relevant new evidence under its review policy.

For an SRA report, ask the team dealing with it to consider review if the decision is materially flawed or new information affects the outcome. Follow the decision letter and the regulator's specific process promptly. Appeal rights belonging to the regulated professional are distinct from a complainant's rights.

10. Data protection complaints

Use the contact details in section 2 if you believe we have breached data protection law when handling your personal information, or information of someone you are authorised to represent.

We aim to acknowledge the complaint within **two working days** and will meet the statutory acknowledgement deadline of **thirty days**. We will investigate, keep you informed, and explain the outcome without undue delay. Requests to exercise data rights follow their separate statutory requirements.

If you remain dissatisfied after giving us a reasonable opportunity to respond, you may complain to the **Information Commissioner's Office**:

Make a complaint to the ICO
Telephone: 0303 123 1113.

The ICO suggests referral within **three months of the organisation's final response**. This is separate from the Legal Ombudsman timetable. The ICO cannot award compensation; a court claim is a separate route.

If dissatisfied with the ICO's handling, use its complaints and review process promptly, normally **within three months** of receiving its service. This is not a general merits appeal. Any tribunal or court remedy depends on the decision or failure concerned and the applicable statutory conditions. Follow the notification and seek independent advice on deadlines.

11. Court proceedings and other dispute resolution

You may seek independent advice about negligence, contractual claims, or challenging a solicitor's bill through the courts. Court assessment of a bill has separate, potentially short time limits. Do not assume that Ombudsman deadlines apply.

An accepted settlement or binding ombudsman determination may affect further proceedings.

We will consider a request for appropriate mediation or other alternative dispute resolution and explain whether we agree to participate and on what terms. Voluntary discussions do not, by themselves, suspend time limits or remove an eligible right to use the Legal Ombudsman.

Official sources and contact routes

- Legal Ombudsman Scheme Rules
- Legal Ombudsman: investigating your complaint
- Civil Procedure Rules: Part 54, judicial review
- BSB: reporting a concern
- SRA: reporting a solicitor or firm
- SRA: complaints policy and regulatory review
- ICO: making a data protection complaint
- ICO: service standards