Complaints Procedure

BatesWells

If you do not feel that the service, we have provided met your expectations then it is important to us that you let us know. Please raise any concerns with the partner responsible for your matter, whether about the service itself or with any aspect of your bill. Their contact details were provided to you when you first instructed us. Our aim will always be to deal with your concerns as quickly as possible and without recourse to any formal complaints procedure if that is possible. If you are an organisation client, then we would also encourage you to raise your concerns with the partner who manages the relationship with your organisation.

If it is clear that you remain dissatisfied, then you will be sent a copy of this document setting out our formal complaints procedure.

'Our aim is to ensure you are entirely satisfied with our service. We welcome your feedback on what has gone well and what we could improve.'

Stage 1

You should write to our Compliance Officer for Legal Practice, Omar Yaqub, at o.yaqub@bateswells.co.uk who heads up our Risk & Compliance team. Please clearly mark your letter 'Formal Complaint' and outline the cause of your dissatisfaction and if possible, any action you would like us to take to remedy your concerns. If there are any circumstances which make it difficult for you to make a complaint in writing, please call our Risk & Compliance team on 020 7551 7777 who will do all they can to assist you.

Stage 2

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days and inform you of the name of the person who will look into your complaint. We take any form of complaint very seriously and as a result of our ongoing commitment to ensuring good client care and quality of service, we might outsource stage 2 of our complaints procedure to an Independent Complaints Handler. We believe that in some circumstances this can benefit our clients as it allows us to obtain an independent view on any complaints and gain constructive feedback on how our services can be improved. If your concerns are referred out to them, they will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days and undertake a detailed investigation.

Stage 3

The person investigating the complaint will have full access to all the information and personnel that they require to investigate your complaint properly. They may contact you directly to discuss and confirm your heads of complaints and request any further information from you to assist the investigation. For more information, please see our **Privacy Notice**.

We will ask the person investigating the complaint to recommend the action which they believe would be recommended by the Legal Ombudsman if the complaint was referred to the Legal Ombudsman.

Stage 4

The person investigating your complaint will provide you with an assessment report setting out their findings and any relevant recommendations in respect of the issues you raise. A copy of the report will first be forwarded to us. We will generally follow the recommendations made but if we think they are not appropriate we will explain our reasons to you.

We will investigate your complaint and provide our final response to you within 8 weeks of the date we receive it. We will not charge you for our time spent dealing with the complaint.

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will contact you to explain why.

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Legal Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with our final response, the next step is for you to contact the Legal Ombudsman (**http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/**) by one of the following methods:

— Telephone: 0300 555 0333

— Telephone outside the UK: +44 12245 3050

— Email: **enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk**

— By post: PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

The Ombudsman service is only available to members of the public, very small businesses, charities, clubs, and trusts. If you are unclear about your position, you should contact the Legal Ombudsman direct to clarify whether or not they can deal with your complaint. Alternatively, please refer to the Legal Ombudsman's scheme rules which are available by clicking on the following link: Scheme Rules | Legal Ombudsman

The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within one year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within one year of you realising there was a concern. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final response to you.

Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help you 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.

We would hope that any concerns of this nature would be raised with the partner in charge of your matter, but you can raise your concerns with the **Solicitors Regulation Authority**.

Alternative complaints bodies such as ProMediate (**http://www.promediate.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. Bates Wells does not agree to use ProMediate as we prefer the Legal Ombudsman's clear adjudication process.

Complaints about Fees

If you are dissatisfied with our bill, you also have the right to apply to the High Court for an assessment of our charges by an Officer of the Court under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. We hope that before making such an application you would first use our complaints procedure explained above.

The Legal Ombudsman may not consider a complaint about a bill if you have applied to the court for assessment of it. Interest may be payable on all or part of a bill if it is unpaid.

This document was last updated on 7 November 2025.