

Stapleton & Son – Complaints Policy

The first thing to say is that all regulated Solicitors firms are **required** to have a complaints policy.

If you ever need to complain your complaint will be dealt with, without charge, and without affecting the way we continue with your legal work.

We will always try to make sure you do not have cause to complain but if you ever feel the need to complain please read the following FIRST:

We will **LISTEN** to you:

1. We always try to identify when a complaint is being made. We are aware that when a client is unhappy with the service they receive, there could be factors that could prevent them from making a formal complaint. They might feel intimidated or concerned that their complaint will affect their case. Or they may have special needs or requirements, which need to be accommodated in order to make our complaints process accessible and fair for them.
2. We try to understand the reason for the complaint. Good practice takes into consideration the type of complaint that's being made. We try to spot the signs and 'softer' cues to establish early on what type of complaint is being made. For instance, although they may not mention the word 'complaint', a client may indicate they're unhappy with our costs or that they're confused about the length of time a case is taking to proceed. It may also be helpful to think about any underlying reasons for a complaint.
3. If you are anxious about the progress of your case, or if you don't understand the legal process or if you are working on a limited budget and becoming worried about costs, we would rather hear from you earlier than later. If we can deal with your issues *before* you have a cause for complaint this will always be better than any formal policy.

We will **INFORM** you:

1. We will acknowledge your complaint **within two working days** of receipt. [Contact us by **any** of our contact details, telephone, email, fax but do please try and make sure we **receive** what you send]. It is usually best if you raise any concerns with the principal fee-earner who is handling your case first but all complaints will be reviewed by the partners.
2. We will ask for your help We need to make sure we have correctly identified the cause of any complaint and will then ask you to help us work out what is the best thing we can do to resolve it. If you want to we will be happy to arrange for you to meet one of the partners to go through your concerns and, if necessary, to put things right. We may need you to set out any complex issues in writing for us.
3. **We will not charge you for investigating a complaint nor will we let dealing with your complaint affect your case** (unless of course you do not want us to continue acting for you). You need to be aware that investigating a complaint is not always easy and may take up to eight weeks if complex issues are involved.
4. We will always try to be clear and use language comprehensible to you. Please help us – if we say or write something to you which you do not understand, tell us, so we can explain.

We will **RESPOND** to you:

1. Once we have finished our investigation of your complaint, we will share our findings and conclusions with you. We will include as much detail as is necessary for you to understand how and why we reached the decision we share with you.
2. If we find that we provided service less than you were entitled to expect from us we will acknowledge what went wrong and seek to agree with you an appropriate remedy, along with a full explanation.

3. Any remedy will be proportionate to the identified level of poor service. For example, if we made a small administrative error that didn't adversely impact your case but which caused minor inconvenience, an apology might be most appropriate. If, on the other hand, we've overcharged you then we would expect to apologise, refund the amount of any over charge, and perhaps pay a small amount of compensation.
4. If we decide we offered you a reasonable service we will provide a full and clear explanation about how we reached that decision and show evidence where possible.
5. When we finish our internal complaint's handling procedure if we have not agreed on a resolution to a complaint we are required to signpost you to the Legal Ombudsman.

How to contact the Legal Ombudsman:

Call them on **0300 555 0333** (Calls to the legal Ombudsman cost the same as a normal 01 or 02 landline number, even from a mobile phone, and are recorded for training and monitoring purposes).

They are open Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5.30pm.

If you are calling from overseas, please dial +44 121 245 3050.

For the Legal Ombudsman's minicom dial 0300 555 1777.

You can also email them at
enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

If you want to find out more about the Legal Ombudsman Service and what they do, please visit
www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Write: If you prefer, you can write to them at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806
WOLVERHAMPTON
WV1 9WJ