

SMITH RODDAM SOLICITORS
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Practice Offices:

*18 Church Street
Shildon
Co Durham
DL4 1DX
Tel: 01388 772661*

*56 North Bondgate
Bishop Auckland
Co Durham
DL14 7PG
Tel: 01388 603073*

*Corner Chambers
Crook
Co Durham
DL15 8NE
Tel: 01388 762564*

Our complaints policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards.

Our complaints procedure

If you have a complaint, contact us with the details.

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain the details set out. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. You can expect to receive our letter within five working days of us receiving your complaint.
2. We will record your complaint in our central register and open a separate file for your complaint. We will do this within two working days of receiving your complaint.
3. We will then start to investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps:
4.
 - We will pass your complaint to Mr. Neil Thompson our client care partner, within three working days.
 - He will ask the member of staff who acted for you to reply to your complaint within five working days.
 - He will then examine their reply and the information in your complaint file. And, if necessary he may also speak to them. This will take up to three working days from receiving their reply and the file.

5. Mr. Thompson will then invite you to a meeting and discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. He will do this within three working days from conclusion of the steps set out in point number four above.
6. Within two days of the meeting Mr Thompson will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he has agreed with you. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, Mr. Thompson will send you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include his suggestions for resolving the matter. He will do this within five working days of completing the investigation.
7. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied you can contact us again. We will then arrange to review our decision. This will happen in one of the following ways.
 - Another partner of the firm will review Mr. Thompson's decision within ten working days.
 - We will ask our local Law Society or another local firm of Solicitors to review your complaint within five working days. We will let you know how long this process will take.
 - We will invite you to agree to independent mediation within five working days. We will let you know how long this process will take.
8. We will let you know the result of the review within five working days of the end of the review. At this time we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact The Legal Ombudsman about your complaint. The Legal Ombudsman maybe contacted in any of the following ways:

The Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ
Telephone 0300 555 0333
Email : enquires@legalombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

However please note there is normally a time limit for making a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman which is normally up to six months.

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

If you have any questions about the Complaints Procedure please do not hesitate to contact initially the member of staff who acts for you or

alternatively Mr. Thompson. Mr. Thompson can be contacted at the Shildon office details of which are given above.

9. 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.

You can raise your concerns with the Solicitors Regulation Authority.