

Legal Ombudsman Complaint form

Legal Ombudsman

PO Box 6806

Wolverhampton

WV1 9WJ

T 0300 555 0333

www.legalombudsman.org.uk

What kind of legal complaints do we deal with?

We can resolve complaints about the service provided by lawyers – things that customers think their lawyers either have not done very well or have failed to do at all.

A complaint might be something to do with the way a lawyer has handled a house purchase, a divorce or a patent application – anything that depends on the services of a lawyer. We can also look into the same sorts of complaints against lawyers in criminal cases.

Who can we accept a complaint about?

We deal with a broad cross section of lawyers– we take complaints about many different kinds of legal professional. For a complete list please visit us at www.legalombudsman.org.uk.

Who can complain to us?

- Any individual whose lawyer is registered in England or Wales can use the Legal Ombudsman.
- Very small businesses, charities, clubs and trusts can also use our service.

If you would like to bring your complaint to us, please phone us on 0300 555 0333. Calls are charged at a local rate.

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

For Minicom call 0300 555 1777


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Legal Ombudsman Complaint form

We find it can be easier to talk through your complaint over the phone. This way we can make sure we have everything we need to consider your complaint. Please think about calling us to speak with one of our team. Calls may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes. If you are worried about cost, we can call you back.

If you choose to complete our form, please read the following information to make sure we are the right organisation to deal with your complaint and that it is the right time to bring your complaint to us. Please write as clearly as you can, as it will help us understand your complaint.

When can you bring your complaint to us?

If you *haven't* complained to the lawyer or law firm yet, you should do so straight away. You might be able to sort it out with them directly. You can contact us if you are not happy with their response. You need to give them up to eight weeks to get back to you with a final offer (that's eight weeks from when you first complained).

You should come to us as soon as you can after trying to sort things out with your lawyer yourself. So don't delay. If you are not happy with their final response you have up to 6 months to bring your complaint to us. Your complaint should also be brought to us no later than 12 months from when the problem occurred or from when you should reasonably have become aware of the problem.

Submitting your complaint

Having filled out this form, you can either phone us on 0300 555 0333 to talk through your complaint, or post the completed form to:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

or email it to us at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Legal Ombudsman

Your complaint

There is no need to send us any documents at this stage.

When we ask you for documents, please only send copies. We will scan any documents you send us to make computer copies and then destroy the originals. So please **make copies** of any important papers relating to your complaint – such as letters, statements, official documents or certificates. If we ask for any of these later, only send us copies.

You should keep the originals yourself.

If you want to know more about us and what we do, please visit us at www.legalombudsman.org.uk

About you...

How would you like us to address you?

(Mr/Mrs/Ms/Doctor/Professor/other):

Your first name:

Your last name:

Your full address:

Your email address:

Your daytime telephone number:

Your home telephone number:

Your mobile telephone number:

Legal Ombudsman

Your complaint

About you...continued

We prefer to do as much as possible over the phone, but this might not suit everyone. How would you like us to contact you in the future?

By phone By email By post

If by phone, what time of day is best for you?

If you would like any kind of help to use our service or communicate with us, please tell us what you need. We can offer large print, Braille, audio CD and translations. More details are on the website.

Are you making a complaint on behalf of someone else? If you are:

What is their full name?

What is their full postal address?

What is their telephone number?

What is your relationship to the person who wants to complain?

Have they agreed to you making this complaint on their behalf?

Legal Ombudsman

Your complaint

About you...continued

We may ask you to provide evidence that you can complain on their behalf.

If you are raising the complaint on behalf of someone else, please ask them to sign and date this form in the space below if they are able to do so.

Signed

Dated

If they have not agreed, please go back and make sure they want you to complain on their behalf. You might even suggest they get in touch with us themselves.

Our service is free to use and you don't need any special skills to make a complaint.

You might decide to pay someone else to help you make your complaint. We will only cover the cost of this if your personal circumstances mean that you are unable to complain on your own behalf without professional help.

About your complaint...

Who are you complaining about?

Name of the lawyer – please provide their full name if possible

Name of the law firm

Full postal address of the law firm

Continued on next page...

Legal Ombudsman

Your complaint

About your complaint...continued

What kind of legal work is involved in the complaint? For example, it could be to do with buying or selling a house or business premises, family matters, a personal injury, or drawing up a contract or a will.

What are you complaining about? Please provide a list describing briefly what the lawyer did (or did not do) that made you unhappy with the service you received. Please also tell us the date that you first became aware of each problem.

Problem	Date you first became aware (dd/mm/yyyy)

Continued on next page...

Legal Ombudsman

Your complaint

About your complaint...continued

What effect has this had on you? This could be anything from feeling upset or embarrassed through to missing out on something important to you, or even losing money.

Have you complained about this to the lawyer or law firm involved? Remember, we can only become involved if you have already complained to the lawyer or law firm and you have allowed them at least eight weeks to respond.

When did you complain to the lawyer or law firm?

Please provide the full date or dates.

When did the lawyer or law firm respond to your complaint?

Please provide the full date or dates.

What response have you had to your complaint? Please describe what the lawyer involved has said or done about your complaint since you made it to them.

Continued on next page...

Legal Ombudsman

Your complaint

About your complaint...continued

What would put things right for you...

What would you like the Legal Ombudsman to do to resolve your complaint?

If we do think there has been a problem with the service you have received from your lawyer, then our aim is to help put things right. It could be as simple as an apology, the return of files or completing the work. In other cases, we might decide that some compensation from the lawyer will help to put things right. We have no powers to discipline or fine a lawyer. Our job is to resolve complaints.

Have you made a complaint before to us or anyone else about this matter?

If you have:

When did you complain before? Please provide the full date or dates.

Who did you complain to before?

Continued on next page...

Legal Ombudsman

What we do with the information you provide...

For us to consider your complaint properly, you need to know what we do with the information you provide.

Data protection

We will need to handle personal details about you if we are going to deal with your complaint effectively. This could include sensitive information. We might also need to exchange information about your complaint with the lawyer or law firm involved and other relevant organisations.

Some information is 'restricted', which means we cannot share this with others. We will always tell you what information is being shared, and who with, beforehand.

We will carry out customer surveys

From time to time, we will ask our customers –the people who make a complaint and their lawyers – to comment on the service we provide. So we might ask you to fill in a questionnaire or answer a few questions over the phone at some point. You do not have to answer.

Please put a cross in the box if you do *not* wish to be contacted to comment on our service

Remember to make copies of any documents you send us

We will scan any documents you send us to make computer copies and then destroy the originals. So please make copies of any important papers relating to your complaint – such as letters, statements, official documents or certificates - and send us only the copies. You should keep the originals yourself.

There is no need to send us any documents or other evidence at this stage.

And finally...

How did you hear about us? For example, did you see one of our leaflets, read an article about us or did someone tell you about us?

Continued on next page...

Legal Ombudsman

And finally...continued

Declaration

I declare that:

1. To the best of my knowledge, everything I have reported to you is correct.
2. The Legal Ombudsman has my permission to contact the lawyer or law firm involved.
3. I understand that the Legal Ombudsman will share information provided by me with others who are directly involved in the investigation of my complaint, on a confidential basis, including the lawyer or law firm involved and regulators, such as the Solicitors Regulation Authority or Bar Standards Board.
4. I will treat any information provided to me by the Legal Ombudsman during the investigation of my complaint as confidential and will not pass this on to anyone else.
5. I agree to cooperate fully with staff from the Legal Ombudsman during their investigation of my complaint.

If you do not agree to any of the above five statements, we will not be able to investigate your complaint.

Before sending this form to us, please make sure you have completed all areas, and then signed and dated the form here.

Signed

Dated

Thank you for filling in this form.

We would prefer you to email the form to us as it means we can deal with your complaint quicker than if it came to us by post. Save the form to your computer and then email it to us at: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Sending us documents

If you plan to send us documents, please note that we can't accept or access documents from online stores such as Microsoft SkyDrive, Xdrive and Livedrive. Please make sure you upload any documents to your email as an attachment. Alternatively, you can send documents to us by post.