



# Sousa Law

## **COMPLAINTS HANDLING – POLICY & PROCEDURE**

### **Our complaints policy**

At Sousa law we are committed to providing a high quality legal service to all of our clients. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it as soon as possible to enable us to do our best to resolve the problem. In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns, and we will do our best to resolve any issues.

### **Our complaints procedure**

Making a complaint will not affect how we handle your case, and you will not be charged for our investigation of your complaint. In the event that you would like to make a formal complaint about our service, or a bill please contact our Complaints Officer, Catherine Sousa, with full details of your complaint, using the contact details below:

Catherine Sousa  
Sousa Law  
16 College Place  
Southampton  
SO15 2FE

Tel: 023 8071 3060

Email: [csousa@sousalaw.co.uk](mailto:csousa@sousalaw.co.uk)

- **Within 2 working days of receiving your complaint**, we will send you a letter or email acknowledging your complaint and will request any additional information required for us to fully investigate. We will also record your complaint in our central register and open a separate file for your complaint.
- **Within 21 days of acknowledgement**, we will review your file and complaint and provide you with a written update, if appropriate, you may be invited to discuss your complaint in a telephone call or meeting.
- **Within 7 days of any telephone call, meeting or conclusion of our investigation**, we will write to you with a full response to your complaint, which will include any solutions proposed to resolve your complaint.

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you should contact us again to request a review. Your complaint and outcome will then be reviewed by a member of staff who was not involved in the investigation of your initial complaint, and we will write to you within 14 days of receiving a request for review, confirming our final position on your complaint.

Sometimes we may ask for more time to investigate, depending on the nature of the complaint. If we must change any of the timescales listed, we will let you know and explain why.

### **What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint**

We hope that we will be able to resolve any complaint internally, however if matters are still not resolved, then you can refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman or other relevant regulatory body. Details as to the relevant regulators are as follows:

#### **Legal Ombudsman:**

The Legal Ombudsman can help you if we are unable to resolve your complaint ourselves. They will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your case. Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint.  
**and**
- No more than one year from the date of the act or omission being complained about; or
- No more than one year from the date when you should have realised that there was cause for complaint;

If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, please contact them:

Visit: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 10am to 4pm.

Relay UK: 18001 0300 555 0333

Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

Post: Legal Ombudsman PO BOX 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

### **If your complaint is about:**

#### **Collaborative, Resolution Together or any other lawyer led matter:**

All solicitors at Sousa Law are members of Resolution and Resolution deal with complaints about their members who do not comply with their code of conduct. Further details can be found on their website: [Resolution - Make a Complaint](#).

#### **Mediation:**

The Family Mediation Council and Family Mediation Standards Board deals with complaints about mediators that are registered with them. Further details, including who can make a complaint, can be found on their website: [Family Mediation Council - Complaints About Mediators](#)

#### **Arbitration:**

Further information on making a complaint about Arbitration can be found [CI Arb - Complaints](#)

#### **Data Protection:**

The Information Commissioner's Office handle complaints relating to how we handle your data or personal information and information on complaints can be found on the ICO website: [Information Commissioner's Office](#)

#### **Our Fees:**

If your complaint is in relation to our fees, you may be able to ask the Court to review our charges under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. Further details can be found: [Gov.uk - Challenge a Solicitors Bill](#)

#### **Misconduct:**

The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help 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. Further details can be found on their website: [SRA - Report a Solicitor](#)

### **Professional Accreditations and Affiliations**

Sousa Law comprises of solicitors, mediators and arbitrators and are recognised and accredited family law specialists. We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA number: 628788) and are subject to the regulations and rules for the professional bodies which we belong to. Further information of these can be found on the following links:

Solicitors Regulation Authority: [SRA | Solicitors Regulation Authority | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)

Family Mediation Council: [Home - Family Mediation Council](#)

Resolution: [Resolution | Resolution](#)

Chartered Institute of Arbitrators: [CI Arb | Home](#)

