

# ESSENTIAL EMPLOMENT LAW SERVICES LIMITED

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

All legal cases referred to the Company are handled by one or other of its two directors, Mrs. Heather Cowan and Mr. Justin Lewars, both of whom are practising solicitors and whose contact details are as follows:-

**Address:** 27a Dreadnought Trading Estate, Magdalen Lane, Bridport, Dorset DT6 5BU

**Telephone:** 01308 459459

**E-mail:** [h.cowan@eels-law.co.uk](mailto:h.cowan@eels-law.co.uk) or [j.lewars@eels-law.co.uk](mailto:j.lewars@eels-law.co.uk)

We hope all our clients will be entirely satisfied with the service we offer, with the charges made for that service and with the way their cases are conducted on their behalf but it is perhaps inevitable that difficulties will arise from time to time in relations between the client and the solicitor handling a case.

Every client is encouraged in the first instance to raise any complaint about the quality, nature or cost of the Company's legal services with whichever of the Company's two solicitors has conduct of the case so that the issue can be addressed at the earliest opportunity by the lawyer who is familiar with the matter. If doing so fails to resolve the problem, however, or if for any reason the client is unwilling to broach the subject with the solicitor handling the case then the client may have the complaint investigated by his or her co-director under this formal Complaints Procedure.

The steps to be followed in raising and dealing with any complaint under this Procedure are set out below. Any time limit may be varied by agreement and references to the "co-director" denote the solicitor charged with investigating the complaint as distinct from the solicitor whose conduct of a case and/or fee has prompted its making.

1. As soon as we are informed that a formal complaint is being made, the client will be provided with a copy of this Procedure and asked to supply full written details of the complaint and originals or copies of any documents that are thought to be relevant.
2. Once the details of the complaint have been provided, the co-director will invite the client to discuss this at a meeting on Company premises at some mutually convenient time during normal office hours within the course of the next 14 days. In exceptional circumstances, however, it may be possible to discuss the matter by telephone and/or outside normal office hours.
3. The co-director will take all reasonable steps before, during and following this discussion to investigate the complaint. He or she will do so promptly, fairly and as efficiently as circumstances permit. Investigation is likely to involve an examination of all relevant documents, including electronically stored and transmitted documents

such as e-mails and their attachments, interviewing as appropriate the solicitor whose conduct has given rise to the complaint and liaising with any third party who may reasonably be expected to shed light on the issues to which the complaint gives rise.

4. If appropriate, the client may be invited to participate in such further discussions and to provide such further information as the co-director feels may help to establish the facts and resolve the complaint.
5. Within 28 days of the first discussion, the co-director will write to the client with his or her decision on the complaint.
6. If the complaint is upheld, the client may be invited to discuss with the co-director what redress might properly be offered.
7. No charge will be made for the time and effort devoted to investigating and attempting to resolve any complaint under this Procedure.
8. If we are unable to resolve a complaint then the client may refer this for independent consideration by the Legal Ombudsman, who investigates complaints about poor service from lawyers. The Legal Ombudsman will investigate any complaint about our service or the cost of our service provided the client has tried to resolve this with us first but having failed to do so has then referred the matter to him within following time limits:-
  - six months of receiving our final written response to the complaint and
  - within six years of the act or omission of which complaint is made or, if outside of this period, within three years of when the client ought reasonably to have known there was cause for complaint.
9. The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman are as follows:-

**Address:** PO Box 6806 Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ

**Telephone:** 0300 555 0333 between 9am and 5pm

**E-mail:** enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk