Apex Lawyers Complaints Handling Procedure

## Our Complaints Policy

Our clients come first. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to maintain the highest standards. We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). We are committed to high quality legal advice and client care and aim to offer all our clients an efficient and effective service. However, if our clients would like to discuss how the service to them could be improved, the level of their bill, or should there be any aspect of our service with which they are not satisfied, we ask them to please contact the person in our firm responsible for complaints.

## Our Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint, please contact the firm’s Client Care Director, who is Shabir Mirza by phoning 0116 299 1999, emailing contactus@apexlawyersltd.com or by post to Apex Lawyers Ltd, Suite 205, 106 New Walk, Leicester, LE1 7EA. If your complaint is about Shabir Mirza, please contact Prakash Morar.

## What Will Happen Next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain any details. If it seems appropriate, we will suggest a meeting at this stage.
2. We will then record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint. We will also investigate your complaint by examining the file of your instructions.
3. If appropriate we will then invite you to meet the Client Care Director to discuss your complaint. We would hope to be in a position to meet with you in this way no longer than 14 days after first receiving your complaint. If you would prefer not to meet, or if we cannot arrange this within an agreeable timescale, we will write fully to you setting out our views on the situation and any redress.
4. Within 2 days of any meeting, we will write to you to confirm what took place and any suggestions that we have agreed with you.
5. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied you can write to us again. We will then arrange to review our decision. We would generally aim to do this within 10 days. This will happen in one of the following ways:
	* The Client Care Director will review their own decision.
	* Another Director of the firm who has not been involved in your complaint will review it.
	* An independent Senior Partner will review your complaint.
	* Invite you to independent mediation.
6. We will let you know the result of the review within 5 days of the end of the review. This will be in writing and will confirm our final position on your complaint and explain our reasons.
* Any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman should usually only be made after we have issued our formal written response to your complaint or we have already had eight weeks to resolve it.
* Any complaint must be referred to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of the date of our formal written response to your complaint.
* The problem must have happened on or after 6 October 2010 or, if the problem happened earlier than that, you must not have been aware of it before 6 October 2010.
* The complaint must be made no later than six years from the act/omission or three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.
1. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Legal Ombudsman about your complaint. We very much hope that this will not be necessary.

The time limit for referring a complaint to LeO will be not later than one year from the date:

* of the act or omission being complained about; or
* when the complainant should have realised that there was cause for complaint

LeO will have discretion to accept out-of-time complaints in circumstances where it deems it fair and reasonable to do so. You should contact the Legal Ombudsman at the above address or on 0300 555 0333 or at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

You can contact LeO by the following means;

* + - Visit: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)
		- Call: 0300 555 0333 between 8.30am to 5.30pm
		- For minicom call 0300 555 1777
		- By email to enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk; or
		- In writing to Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167,Slough,SL1 0EH
		- Do not send original documents to the Legal Ombudsman. They will scan any documents you send them to make computer copies and then destroy the originals.
1. Solicitors Regulation Authority

If someone thinks a solicitor might be dishonest or you have concerns about their ethics or integrity, they have the right to notify our regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). There are no time limits for making a report but there are limits on what the SRA will consider. Please note that the SRA is not able to deal with issues of poor service (complaints of this nature should instead be referred to the Legal Ombudsman). For further information about the SRA’s role, please contact the SRA or visit:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page#report>

1. Information Commissioners’ Office

To the extent that your complaint relates to a breach of Personal Data or it is evident that you are exercising your Rights as a Data Subject under data and information rights legislation (including, but not limited to the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018), there may be aspects of the compliant that we may have to deal with and/or respond to differently in light of our obligations as a Data Controller. It may be that aspects of your complaint will need to be passed to our Data Protection Officer Mr Shabir Mirza to assess and respond to in accordance with our **Data and Privacy Notice which is available on our website** or available on request. Our standard complaint handling timescales noted above may also not be appropriate and we will advise you if we have to escalate the timeframe for responding.

In the event of an allegation of a breach of Personal Data and/or any concern that our firm has not handled your personal information properly, we will consider whether a report needs to be made to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). Not all breaches are reportable and we will advise you of the results of our assessment.

Should it be clear that you are exercising your rights under data and information rights legislation, please be assured that we will handle that aspect of your complaint in accordance with our regulatory obligations. For instance, we will aim to provide a full response to a Personal Data request within one month but if we cannot respond within that timescale, we will let you know when will be able to respond. You can find guidance on our obligations under data and information rights legislation on the ICO’s website (www.ico.org.uk) as well as information on their regulatory powers and the action they can take. You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the ICO provided that you have first allowed us the opportunity to attempt to resolve it ourselves. For further information or to contact the ICO please visit www.ico.org.uk/concerns or call 0303 123 1113.

Your rights to refer the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman and SRA (as set out above) may still be available to you in addition to your Personal Data rights.]