CARSON McDOWELL

Complaints Procedure:
England & Wales

1. INTRODUCTION

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

Any complaint or dissatisfaction expressed will be investigated objectively and thoroughly and we will endeavour to deliver an outcome which is positive and timely.

The complaints procedure details how we will manage your complaint and the timescales we will apply. The procedure also provides contact information and resources for making complaints.

2. WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE SERVICE WHICH WE HAVE PROVIDED TO YOU?

2.1 If you have any concerns about the way in which work is being carried out by Carson McDowell, you should, in the first instance, contact the person within Carson McDowell who is principally dealing with your case or matter and/or his/her supervising partner.

2.2 If you do not wish to contact that person, or if having done so, you remain dissatisfied or concerned and wish to make a complaint, then you should contact the Managing Partner, Orlagh O'Neill, who is the person designated to handle complaints about the firm. The Managing Partner may, if she considers it appropriate, designate another partner within the firm to deal with your complaint and to ensure that it is dealt with thoroughly and speedily.

2.3 If you wish to make a complaint, you should write to the Managing Partner by e-mail or by post as follows:

E-mail: orlagh.oneill@carson-mcdowell.com
Post: Orlagh O'Neill
Managing Partner Carson McDowell LLP Murray House
4 Murray Street
Belfast
BT1 6DN

2.4 We are required to ask for client complaints to be in writing. Any information given over the telephone will, therefore, have to be confirmed by you in writing. If however, there are any circumstances which make it difficult for you to make a complaint in writing, please contact us on 028 9024 4951 and we will do all we can to assist you.

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2.5 Please note that any complaint should be made either, within 6 months of the date of the work for you being concluded or, if later, within 6 months of your discovery that the firm has done something that has caused you to be concerned.

2.6 We will ensure that any complaint about the service provided by Carson McDowell is carefully investigated and resolved as quickly as possible. To assist you in understanding the likely timescales, we would ask you to note as follows:

- An acknowledgement of any client complaint made in writing to the Managing Partner will be sent within 7 days of us receiving the written complaint. This letter will confirm the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint and detail what will happen next.

- You will receive a written response to your complaint within a reasonable period of time. We would anticipate that, in the ordinary course of events, this will be within one calendar month. If however, the subject matter of the complaint is complicated and/or we anticipate that it will take longer to examine and deal with your complaint, we will contact you as soon as practicable to give you an approximate timescale of when you can expect a substantive written response to your complaint.

- Should we consider that further information is required or would be helpful to us in the investigation of the complaint, we will contact you to request such information. Where practicable, such information should be provided to us in writing. A further acknowledgement letter will be sent to you within 7 days of you providing such further information.

- We may suggest a meeting or a telephone call with you, to discuss your complaint, where we consider that it would be helpful to do so, whether to understand the complaint, to agree an acceptable resolution of the complaint or otherwise. It is in the interests of both you and the firm that we try to work together to resolve any issues. Although you are not obliged to attend any such meeting, or to take part in any such telephone call, you are encouraged to consider any such request, as these are intended to ensure a positive outcome to the assessment of your complaint. Within 7 days of any such meeting or telephone call, we will write to you to confirm details of the discussions that took place and any suggestions/action points agreed with you in such meeting or telephone call.

- Within 7 days of the conclusion of our investigation of your complaint, we will send you a substantive written response addressing your complaint. Where appropriate, this response will include our suggestions for resolving the matter.

2.7 You will not be charged for the handling of your complaint.

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2.8 If after receiving our written response to your complaint you are not satisfied, you may, within 7 days of receiving our response, write to the Managing Partner again explaining your dissatisfaction and ask us to review our decision.

At the discretion of the Managing Partner, the review will be conducted in one of the following ways depending on the nature of the complaint and the initial outcome:

- The partner who dealt with the complaint may be asked to review his or her original decision, such review to be completed within 14 days of the partner being asked to review his or her original decision.

- We may arrange for another partner in the firm, who has not been involved in your complaint to review the complaint, such review to be completed within 14 days of the partner being asked to review the original decision.

- We may invite you to agree to independent mediation of your complaint. We will let you know how long this process is likely to take. We will let you know of the result of the review within 7 days of the end of the review. At this time, we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint, giving you an explanation of our reasons. Where appropriate, this response will include our suggestions for resolving the matter.

2.9 If after our investigation of your complaint you remain unhappy or dissatisfied, or if we are unable to resolve your complaint, you are entitled to refer the matter to the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint independently where it is about poor legal service (including costs).

The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within 1 year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within 1 year of you realising there was a concern. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of our final response to you.

The Ombudsman will not accept complaints where the act/omission/date of awareness was before 6th October 2010.

The Legal Ombudsman's contact details are:

- Telephone: 03005550333
- Website: https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk
- Post: Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH
- Email: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

2.10 We are obliged to point out to you that there are alternative complaints bodies, such as ProMediate (www.ProMediate.co.uk), who can deal with complaints about legal services where all the parties agree to use such a scheme. The firm submits to the jurisdiction of the Legal Ombudsman but does not agree to use ProMediate.

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2.11 Please note that we are required to record all written complaints made to us on our firm's Complaints Register which will include the date on which the complaint was raised, your name and address and other relevant details.

2.12 Please adopt the procedure above if you have a concern or complaint about a bill. In addition to this procedure, you have the right to object to a bill by applying to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. If you apply to the court, the Legal Ombudsman may decide not to deal with a complaint about the bill.

2.13 If your concerns relate to the misconduct or behaviour of a solicitor, or the firm as a whole (rather than a general service or billing dispute), you can raise your concerns directly with the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

CARSON McDOWELL

Legal500
TOP TIER FIRM
UNITED KINGDOM
2027
Carson McDowell

2027
Chambers
Top Ranked
UK
Carson McDowell

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