

EQ Solicitors Complaints Procedure

1.0 Purpose Statement

1.1 EQ Solicitors is committed to providing the best possible service to our clients and customers. We recognise that feedback is important to service improvement.

1.2 While we strive to get things right first time, all of the time, we acknowledge that sometimes things can go wrong, and in these cases it is necessary to have a clear complaints procedure. If customers are not happy, we need to know, so we can either put things right or make changes to stop it happening again.

1.3 When a complaint is made, we will try to deal with it quickly and effectively.

1.4 This document details the process and administrative arrangements for receiving, investigating and handling complaints.

1.5 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure:

- That complaints are recorded
- That complainants are kept informed throughout the process
- That complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly and fairly, and confidentially when appropriate; and that there is a provision for review
- That where the service has fallen below an acceptable standard, redress can be made and mistakes learned
- Any patterns are identified and actions taken to address performance in those areas.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This document applies to complaints about service from EQ Solicitors and covers complaints made about our staff, whether fee-earning or non fee-earning, as well as agents appointed to carry out work on our behalf.

3.0 Procedure

Informal resolution

3.1 EQ Solicitors aims to resolve complaints simply and quickly wherever possible.

3.2 Where an individual or organisation is unhappy with the service they have received, they should in the first instance contact the member of staff they have been dealing with. It would be useful if the complainant could provide a summary of what has happened and what outcome they seek in order to resolve the matter.

3.3 Where input from other staff is required in order to achieve a resolution, this will be sought at the earliest opportunity.

3.4 Once the necessary steps have been taken to achieve resolution, a representative from EQ Solicitors will contact the person making the complaint to ensure that they are satisfied with this.

3.5 If no resolution can be reached informally, or if the matter is too serious to be dealt with informally, then the formal resolution procedure will be invoked.

Formal Resolution

Recording and initial handling

3.6 Formal complaints can be raised in writing via email to mail@eqsols.co.uk or by post to EQ Solicitors, 67 High Street, Rhymney, NP22 5LP. The template complaint form provided in Appendix I may be used, although this is not compulsory.

3.7 Any complaints received will, in the first instance, be passed to the Complaint Co-ordinator, where it will be centrally logged. The Complaint Co-ordinator will identify the nature of the complaint and notify the Senior Partner.

3.8 The Complaint Co-ordinator will acknowledge the complaint in writing (letter or email) within five working days of receipt. This acknowledgement will advise the complainant that their complaint has been received, who will be dealing with it and what will happen next.

3.9 The complaint will then be investigated by the Senior Partner.

Investigation and Resolution

3.10 The Senior Partner should investigate the complaint as soon as possible. In normal circumstances this will involve as a minimum talking to the complainant and the employee(s) concerned, and reviewing any relevant paperwork.

3.11 It would ordinarily be expected that a complainant should be informed of the outcome within twenty working days of receiving the complaint.

3.12 If the early stages of the investigation suggest that it will take longer than twenty working days, the Complaint Co-ordinator should send a holding response setting out a revised timetable.

3.13 When the investigation is complete, the Senior Partner will write to the complainant setting out their findings.

3.14 Where complaints are substantiated, wholly or in part, the letter from the Senior Partner must also set out an apology, and indicate what EQ Solicitors will do to put things right, and/or ensure that the same problem doesn't happen again.

3.15 All electronic documentation relating to the complaint must be saved in the "Complaints" file and hard copy documentation must be saved in the "Complaints" box file.

Review

3.16 If the complainant is unhappy with this response, s/he must advise the Complaint Co-ordinator, within ten working days of the receipt of the response, that they would like the outcome decision reviewed.

3.17 The Complaint Co-ordinator will acknowledge the review request within five working days of receipt.

3.18 The Senior Partner will review all of the action taken so far and may then:-

- confirm the original findings and action proposed
- confirm the original findings, but propose a different response
- require a further investigation

3.19 The Senior Partner will write to the complainant within twenty working days of receipt of the request for review, setting out the outcome of the review.

3.20 If a further investigation should be required, the process reverts back to the beginning of the Formal Resolution procedure and the same timescales apply for corresponding with the complainant.

3.21 All electronic documentation relating to the complaint must be saved in the "Complaints" file and hard copy documentation must be saved in the "Complaints" box file.

3.22 Once the complaint has been resolved, the Senior Partner and the member of staff involved will review the case in full in order to consider any potential lessons for the future.

4 Legal Ombudsman

4.1 In the event that Complainants are not satisfied with the resolution of their complaint, they will be advised by the Complaints Co-ordinator to contact the Legal Ombudsman.

5 Persistent or Vexatious Complaints

5.1 A very small number of individuals may raise “persistent” or “vexatious” complaints. Examples might include repeatedly making the same complaint, or complaints with minor differences; persistently seeking an unrealistic outcome relative to the issue raised; or failing to accept the outcome of an investigation into a complaint. EQ Solicitors is under no obligation to address persistent or vexatious complaints.

Appendix 1: EQ Solicitors Complaint Form

Your details

Your name	
Your address	
Your email	
Your telephone number	

Details of your complaint

Name of individual (if known)	
Date of incident	

Please provide a summary of what happened:

What action would you like to see following your complaint?

Declaration

I understand that by signing and dating this form I:

- a) declare that that contents of this form are true and;
- b) give EQ Solicitors permission to contact the person complained about and show them the contents of this form and any supporting evidence and;
- c) give EQ Solicitors permission to contact anyone else necessary in order to consider my complaint

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please send this form for the attention of the Complaint Co-ordinator via email to mail@eqsols.co.uk or via post to EQ Solicitors, 67 High Street, Rhymney, NP22 5LP.