

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

At Matrix, we pride ourselves on the high quality of service that we provide to our clients. For that reason, we welcome all feedback in order to help us to improve. If you do feel that you have not received the level of service that you would expect, please contact us as soon as possible, and we will aim to resolve the issue.

Please note that we will only consider your complaint:

- If it concerns an issue that took place within the last 12 months, or
- If the issue took place more than 12 months ago, within 12 months from the date you could reasonably have known about the issue.

Making a complaint will not disadvantage you in any way. It will not result in any delay to the progress of your matter, nor will it affect the professional standards applied to your case. We are committed to acting in your best interests at all times regardless of any complaint you may raise.

Please note that complaints which are considered to be vexatious or frivolous fall outside the scope of this procedure. However, every complaint will be individually assessed on its own merits before any such determination is made. If we conclude that your complaint falls outside scope, we will write to explain our reasons and advise you of any other routes available to you.

Where a complaint includes elements relating to both service and professional misconduct or negligence, we will investigate the service element in accordance with this procedure. We are not able to investigate matters of professional misconduct, which may be referred to the BSB. If any aspect of your complaint falls outside the scope of this procedure, we will inform you of this in writing. Where a complaint raises an allegation of negligence, Matrix may be required to notify its professional indemnity insurer before making any proposals for resolution.

Where your complaint does not concern Matrix's client service, it may be more suited to consideration under the disciplinary processes of the Bar Standards Board (BSB).

ACCESSIBLE AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

We are committed to making our complaints process accessible to all clients, including those with disabilities, neurodivergent clients, and those who may require support due to temporary or permanent vulnerability. If you require information about our complaints process or wish to make a complaint in an alternative format, please contact us and we will do our best to accommodate your needs. Alternative formats may include:

- Written summary in plain English or large print
- Audio or video explanation of the complaints process
- Assistance by telephone or video call
- Any other format reasonably required to meet your individual needs.

When we open a complaint file, we will record your preferred method of communication and ensure that all correspondence is provided in a format suited to your needs.

COMPLAINTS MADE BY TELEPHONE

Many complaints are best resolved informally over the telephone, so if you would like to contact us in that way, please call +44 (0)20 7404 3447 and ask to speak to Rachel Holmes (CEO), who is the person nominated by Matrix to handle complaints. If the complaint is about the CEO, please ask to speak to Anthony Hudson KC.

The person you speak to will take a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. At the outset we will seek to understand the nature of your complaint, what outcome you are hoping for, and the scope of the investigation required. This will help us to manage expectations and avoid misunderstanding. If the matter is resolved s/he will record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with the outcome and record that you are satisfied. You may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing. If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone, you will be invited to write to us about it within 14 days so it can be formally investigated under this procedure.

If you would prefer to make your complaint by video call or in any other accessible format, please let us know and we will arrange this. Complaints may be made by any reasonable means.

COMPLAINTS MADE IN WRITING

Matrix has a complaints panel headed by Rachel Holmes (CEO) and made up of experienced members of Matrix, which considers any written complaint.

If you choose to make a complaint in writing, we ask you to include the following details, in order to help us investigate and resolve the complaint:

- Your name and address
- Which member(s) of Matrix staff and or/ member(s) you are complaining about
- The detail of the complaint
- What you would like done about it

You can write to us by post at Matrix, Griffin Building, Gray's Inn, London WC1R 5LN, or by email. Please direct your complaint to Rachel Holmes (CEO), or alternatively, if your complaint is about the CEO, Anthony Hudson KC. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

Within 14 days of your letter being received the head of the panel (or her deputy in her absence) or Anthony Hudson KC (if the complaint is about the CEO) will appoint a member of the panel to investigate it. If your complaint is against the head of the panel, the next most senior member of the panel will investigate it. In any case, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know they have been appointed and that they will respond to your complaint within 14 days. If they find that they are not going to be able to do so, they will set a new date and inform you. We will keep you regularly updated on the progress of the investigation throughout, and will notify you promptly if there is any delay or if further information is required before the investigation can proceed. Their reply will set out:

- The nature and scope of the investigation;
- Their conclusion on each complaint and the basis for their conclusion; and
- If they find that you are justified in your complaint, their proposals for resolving the complaint.

The outcome of the complaint will be communicated to you promptly. If a remedy is proposed and accepted by you, we will comply with that remedy promptly. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you will be provided with full information about your options, including your right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman and the time limits for doing so. If it would be appropriate in the circumstances, an apology will be offered.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent that is necessary. Disclosure may be to the Chair of Matrix's Management Committee, members of the Management Committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or staff member who you have complained about, the head or relevant senior member of the panel and the person who investigates the complaint. The Bar Standards Board is entitled to inspect the documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

OUR RECORDS AND DATA RETENTION POLICY

We will make a written record of any complaint and its investigation and Matrix's Compliance Officer will retain all documents and correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six years. All complaint data is processed in accordance with the UK GDPR and our Privacy Policy. Matrix's Management Committee inspects an anonymised record regularly with a view to improving services. For more information on the data we process, see Matrix's privacy policy (<https://www.matrixlaw.co.uk/privacy-policy/>)

Our complaints records are reviewed regularly for trends, patterns, and systemic issues in how complaints have been assessed and resolved. Where risks or issues are identified, measures will be implemented to address them, including by providing appropriate training. This review covers both individual complaints and any wider service issues that may be identified.

Matrix is required to collect and submit complaints data to the Bar Standards Board on an annual basis, in accordance with the BSB's First-tier Complaints Data Policy Statement. All such data is submitted on an anonymised basis.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation, alternative complaints bodies also exist that are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should you and the barrister wish to use such a scheme. One such body is ProMediate <https://www.promediate.co.uk/>. If you wish to use ProMediate, then please contact us to discuss this. Please also note that: (1) the time limit for contacting ProMediate is within 14 days of the response to the complaint being communicated to you, and (2) if mediation is used, neither you nor the barrister is required to accept the proposed resolution. If mediation does not resolve the complaint, you may still make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman (providing you fall within their jurisdiction and you do so within the time limit).

COMPLAINTS TO THE LEGAL OMBUDSMAN AND BSB

only complaints from a barrister's client are within their jurisdiction. Non-clients who are not satisfied with the outcome of this complaints process should contact the BSB instead.

Please note that the Legal Ombudsman has time limits in which a complaint must be raised with them. In particular, there is a six month time limit from the conclusion of the investigation by Matrix in which to raise your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within:

- one year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned, or;
- within one year of you realising there was a concern
- Within six months of the complaint receiving a final response from their lawyer, if that response complies with the requirements in rule 4.4 of the Scheme Rules (which requires the response to include prominently an explanation that the Legal Ombudsman was available if the complainant remained dissatisfied and the provision of full contact details for the Ombudsman and a warning complaint must be referred to them within six months).

We will inform you of your right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, and the relevant time limits, both at the start of your matter and at its conclusion. If you ask for this information at any point during the matter, or if you raise a complaint, we will provide it to you at that stage also.

You can write to them at:

Complaints Team

Legal Ombudsman

PO Box 6167

Slough

SL1 0EH

Tel: +44 (0)300 555 0333

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

If you are not a barrister's client and are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation, then please contact the BSB at:

Bar Standards Board

Contact and Assessment Team

289-293 High Holborn

WC1V 7JZ

Tel: +44 (0)207 611 1444

Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk