



1 putting you  
st

Guide to the Office  
of the Legal Services  
Complaints Commissioner



Legal Services  
Complaints  
Commissioner

# How to contact us

## **Our Consumer Helpline, 0845 456 51 50**

is open from 10.00am to 4.00pm from Monday to Friday excluding public holidays.

## **Our office switchboard, 0113 2615 420**

is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm from Monday to Thursday and from 9.00am to 4.30pm from Fridays, excluding public holidays.

**Our email address** is [info@olscc.gov.uk](mailto:info@olscc.gov.uk)

## **Information on the Internet**

You can get information and publications from our website [www.olscc.gov.uk](http://www.olscc.gov.uk) and also complete an online questionnaire.

We are keen for people to contact us with their experiences so we can promote improvements to the service provided to consumers of legal services.

We do not investigate individual complaints, but your feedback can help us identify areas for improvement in service standards.

If you have a complaint about our service please contact the Head of Corporate Services at the address below.

The Office of the Legal Services Complaints  
Commissioner  
19th Floor, West Riding House  
Albion Street  
Leeds LS1 5AA

# Who we are and why we were set up

**The Office of the Legal Services Complaints Commissioner works with consumers, solicitors and the Law Society of England and Wales.**

When people access the services of a solicitor, in most cases, the service provided will be of a high standard. Where it is not, it is currently the responsibility of the Law Society to manage complaints about solicitors in England and Wales. Unfortunately, there have been problems with the level of service being provided by the Law Society in managing these complaints.

In February 2004, the Government appointed a Legal Services Complaints Commissioner, Zahida Manzoor CBE. The Commissioner is an independent regulator and is also independent of Government.

The Commissioner has the powers to:

- require the Law Society to provide information or make reports about the handling of complaints about its members
- make recommendations in relation to the handling of complaints about its members
- set targets in relation to the handling of complaints about its members
- require a professional body to submit to the Commissioner a plan for the handling of complaints about its members.

The Commissioner also has the power to levy a penalty of up to £1 million pounds if the Law Society fails to provide a plan, or a plan is not adequate, or if the Law Society fails to act in accordance with a plan.

# What we do

The Office of the Legal Services Complaints Commissioner works on behalf of consumers to help the Law Society reach a level of service for complaints handling that is impartial, clear, easy to understand and efficient.

Whilst we do not investigate individual complaints, to improve complaints handling for consumers we will:

- set performance targets for the Law Society aimed at improving the service to a level consumers can expect
- ensure the Law Society makes the changes needed for consumers, by requiring it to produce for our approval, formal plans setting out how it is going to improve things
- make recommendations to the Law Society about areas that need improving
- investigate the Law Society's service to help us understand the problems being experienced by consumers.

# What you can expect from us

The Office of the Legal Services Complaints Commissioner wants to be a regulator that provides the highest quality and best value in our service to others.

## **We will**

- treat you with respect and as an individual
- meet appointment times punctually
- listen to what you say
- be fair and helpful
- give clear explanations and information.

## **When you phone us**

- We aim to answer your call within 5 rings
- An answerphone service will operate out of office hours
- We aim to reply to all calls left on answering machines on the next working day and within 1 hour of the office opening.

## **When you write to us**

- We aim to acknowledge all letters, emails or complaints about our service within 2 working days
- We aim to send you a full reply within 10 working days of getting your letter, email or complaint. If we cannot give you a full reply within that time, we will tell you why and how long it will be before we can give you a full answer
- We aim to acknowledge all requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, within 5 working days and send a full reply within 20 working days.

# Other useful contacts

These organisations may be helpful if you are not happy with the service you have received from a solicitor, in England and Wales and wish to take your complaint further.

**The Law Society  
Consumer Complaints Service  
Victoria Court, 8 Dormer Place,  
Leamington Spa, CV32 5AE.**

Helpline: **0845 608 6565**

Email: **[enquiries@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lawsociety.org.uk)**

Website: **[www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)**

**Office of the Legal Services Ombudsman  
3rd Floor, Sunlight House, Quay Street,  
Manchester, M3 3JZ.**

Tel: **0845 601 0794**

(calls charged at local rate)

Email: **[lso@olso.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:lso@olso.gsi.gov.uk)**

Website: **[www.olso.org.uk](http://www.olso.org.uk)**



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Impartiality,  
transparency,  
efficiency &  
effective remedy