

The logo for Vanderpump & Sykes Solicitors is displayed within a dark red rectangular box. The text 'VANDERPUMP & SYKES' is written in a large, white, serif font, with the ampersand being a stylized, decorative element. Below this, the word 'SOLICITORS' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.The title 'CLIENT COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURES AND TIMESCALES' is centered within a grey rectangular box with a thin black border. The text is in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

### **The Firm's Complaints Policy & Procedures**

Vanderpump & Sykes is committed to high quality legal advice and client care. If you are unhappy about any aspect of the service you have received, or you wish to query the bill, please contact the person dealing with your matter or alternatively, the Head of Department. We will do our utmost to investigate your concerns as quickly as possible. Please find attached our Client Complaints Policy and Procedures which detail the actions that we will take and the timescales for such action.

We have eight weeks to consider your complaint and if you are not satisfied with our handling of your complaint you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider your case. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman by email at [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk) or by telephone on 0300 555 0333 (Minicom 0300 555 1777), or by post at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ. Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint.

The overall timeframes for making a complaint are either six years from the date of the act or omission, or three years from when you should reasonably have known that there were grounds for complaint. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman will not consider cases emanating from businesses (other than "micro businesses"), charities or clubs with an annual income of more than £1m., or trustees of trusts with assets with a value of more than £ 1m. However, these organisations may still complain to us and/or have their bills assessed by a Court.

Please note that the Legal Ombudsman will only consider your case after you have contacted us for a resolution that you are not happy with. The Legal Ombudsman will not consider any enquiries or concerns that have not been made to our firm in the first instance, nor after 6 months from our final response.

You have the right to object to our bill by contacting the Legal Ombudsman (as above) and/or applying to the Court for an assessment of the bill under Part 111 of the Solicitors Act 1974.

## What is a complaint?

**We consider a complaint to be any expression of dissatisfaction.** You may make a complaint initially either informally, for example by phoning to say that a minor matter has not been dealt with within a stated timescale, or formally by letter or email (depending on your preference).

We will endeavour to solve your complaint informally if that is possible. If not we will set out what action we intend to take to solve your complaint as soon as possible. In any event we will always act within the following timescales:

### Complaints handling timescales

*If we have to change any of the timescales below we will notify you and give you a reason why.*

What will happen?	Timescale
1. We will send you a letter (or email if you prefer) acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain the details set out. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint.	You can expect to receive our initial response within two days of us receiving your complaint.
2. We will record your complaint in our central register and open a separate file for your complaint.	We will do this within a day of receiving your complaint.
3. We will acknowledge your reply to our acknowledgement letter and confirm what will happen next.	You can expect to hear from us within a day of your reply.
4. We will then start to investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps: a. we will pass your complaint to our client care partner b. he/she will ask the member of staff who acted for you to reply to your complaint c. he/she will then examine the reply and the information in your complaint file. If necessary, he may also speak to them	within three days  within five days  this will take upto five days from receipt of file
5. Our client care partner will then invite you to meet him/her and discuss and, we hope, resolve your complaint.	He/she will do this within three days.
6. a. the client care partner will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he/she has agreed with you. b. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, the client care partner will send you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include his/her suggestions for resolving the matter.	Within two days of the meeting  Will be done within five days of completing his/her investigation.

<p>7. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied you can write to us again. We will then arrange to review our decision. This will happen in one of the following ways:</p> <p>a. another partner of the firm will review the client care partner's decision</p> <p>b. we will invite you to agree to independent mediation. We will let you know how long this process will take.</p>	<p>within 10 days</p> <p>within five days</p>
<p>8. We will let you know the result of the review. At this time we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons. We will also give you the name and the address of the Legal Ombudsman. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact them about your complaint.</p>	<p>within five days of the end of the review</p>

Our policy on Complaints is also available on our website under "ABOUT US".

