

GIVING US FEEDBACK

Want to give us a compliment or comment on any aspect of your dealings with us? Please email us:

sec@thesolicitorscharity.org

Want to make a complaint?

Wherever possible we will try to respond and resolve the situation at an informal level. If this is not possible, then formal complaints should be made via:

- **telephone:** 020 8675 6440
- **e-mail:** sec@thesolicitorscharity.org
- **post:** The Complaints Administrator, The Solicitors' Charity, 1 Jaggard Way, London SW12 8SG

The communication should give details of:

- What has happened, on what date and who it involved
- What the dissatisfaction or matter is about
- What the ideal resolution would be

We acknowledge that in certain instances a complainant may wish to remain anonymous. In such incidences we will review the nature of the complaint and decide on how best to protect anonymity.

OUR APPROACH TO COMPLAINTS

What happens when you make a complaint?

We aim, where possible, to address complaints within 20 working days with a written response.

- All complaints will be given an ID number, logged and acknowledged in writing.
- The CEO (or Chair if the complaint concerns the CEO) will review the complaint to consider whether further investigations are needed.

When investigating complaints, the CEO (or Chair or another Trustee) and relevant staff lead will ensure that:

- i) They fully understand the complaint – this may require them to meet with or talk to the complainant;
- ii) They understand the response of staff or the situation in which the problem arose. This may involve interviewing or speaking to staff and

volunteers, or reviewing any written information or data;

- iii) When interviewing complainants (in person or online), staff or volunteers, they should be offered the opportunity to bring someone with them/have someone with them.

As a result of the investigation actions may include:

- Specific improvements to service, processes and policies;
- Issuing an apology to the complainant;
- Bringing together parties to mediate a resolution to the dispute/cause of dissatisfaction;
- A dismissal of the complaint.

Appeals Process

What to do if you are not satisfied with the response received from The Solicitors' Charity.

The following appeals procedure applies where the complainant is not satisfied with the CEO's (or Chair's or Trustee's) response and the matter cannot be settled at this stage.

In cases where the complainant is dissatisfied, they are entitled to appeal the decision within seven days of receiving the response to: the Chair of Trustees or Chair of IFAC (if the main Board Chair has already been involved with the matter). A link to a webform for the appeal will be provided:

- **via email /webform**– details on request from The Solicitors' Charity

Appeals will be responded to within 20 working days in writing.

In all cases complaints will be recorded on the complaints register. These will then be included in the Board reports and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

If appropriate, if you do not feel the issue has been resolved satisfactorily, you can pursue the complaint via the Charity Commission: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

Time limits on making a complaint

Normally complaints should be made within three months of the event. Exceptions to this rule may be made by the CEO (or Chair) and considering reasons for the delay and the practicalities of investigating the matter after time has lapsed.

Confidentiality and data retention

All complaints are kept confidential to the parties concerned. However, where the issues raised are of a particularly serious nature, the details of the complaint will normally be made known to the CEO (or Chair) who will discuss the matter with the Board of Trustees where necessary. If the Charity takes professional or other legal advice about the nature of the complaint, then pertinent information may be shared with third parties outside of the organisation.

Complaints data, including any evidence gathered during an investigation, will be retained for 7 years.

Complaints regarding external or third-party service providers used by The Solicitors' Charity

Complaints (or expressions of dissatisfaction) regarding external service providers will be referred to their own complaint procedure, where appropriate, and monitored carefully by The Solicitors' Charity until a resolution is reached. This is because The Solicitors' Charity would want any client being referred to a third party to be assured that it is concerned if a supplier or partner is not delivering a service in a timely way or to an acceptable quality. Where appropriate, complainants will be informed of the complaint procedures of other professional or regulatory bodies.

Monitoring Systems

A quarterly report on all complaints received, along with the outcomes, is submitted to the Board of Trustees by the CEO. The CEO reviews all complaints, and how they are handled, on an on-going basis throughout the year.