

1 May 2020

## Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

### 1 Our Aim

Lawstop is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our clients and stakeholders, and by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- making a compliment or complaint is as easy as possible
- we welcome compliments, feedback and suggestions
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- we respond in the right way; for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly
- keep matters low-key
- enable media on between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred

This policy ensures that we welcome compliments and provide guidelines for dealing with complaints about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

### 2 Definitions

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction about the standard of service we provide.

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction however it is

expressed. This would include complaints expressed face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email or any other method. All staff have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an "expression of dissatisfaction" even when the word "complain" or "complaint" is not used.

### 3 Purpose

We are always glad to hear from people who are satisfied with the services we offer. All compliments are recorded, acknowledged, and a copy is sent to the relevant line manager to provide feedback to the member of staff.

### 4 Complaints

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and, wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

### 5 Responsibilities

Lawstop's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- act where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to Lawstop's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in Lawstop;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow Lawstop a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Lawstop's control.

### 6 Confidentiality:

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Lawstop maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

### 7 Complaints Procedure:

Written records must be made by Lawstop at each stage of the procedure.

#### Stage 1

In the first instance, staff member(s) must establish the seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved, but if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

#### Stage 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should be advised that a formal complaint may be made and the complaint's procedure should be explained to them. It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff, preferably a member of the senior team, to make this explanation.

If the complainant feels the need to raise an issue formally, then we would request that they put this in writing and address it to Joanne Bennett, 174 Hammersmith Road, London, W6 7JP, joanneb@lawstop.co.uk, or telephone 020 8150 2588.

Your complaint will be formally acknowledged and the full procedure in dealing with your complaint will be followed. Your complaint will be dealt with promptly, fairly, openly and effectively. As mentioned, we have eight weeks to consider your complaint.

### Stage 3

If the complainant has exhausted the company's complaints procedure, they are also entitled to seek a review of the complaint by the Legal Ombudsman, an independent complaints body. 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, and that either the issue happened within the last six years or you became aware of it within the last three years.

The contact details of the Legal Ombudsman are: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ. Website: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk). Tel: 030 0555 0333. Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk).

Alternatively, if you consider that we have breached a regulatory obligation, you may refer the matter directly to the SRA [here](#).

The postal address is: Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham B1 1RN. You may also telephone them: 037 0606 2555, or email them: [report@sra.org.uk](mailto:report@sra.org.uk).