

Complaints

How to complain to the Legal Services Commission



legal services

COMMISSION

November 2008

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About this leaflet

The Legal Services Commission is committed to providing the best possible service for all our customers. Our aim is to get it right first time, but we are aware that mistakes sometimes happen. We welcome your feedback as it shows us if things are going wrong and where we need to make improvements. This leaflet explains how you can complain if you feel something has gone wrong.

1. How to complain

If something goes wrong we aim to put things right as soon as possible. In order to do this we have made it as simple as we can for you to let us know. Initially you should complain to the office dealing with your case and this can be done in the following ways:

- By letter
- By fax
- By telephone
- By e-mail through the "Contact Us" page of our website at www.legalservices.gov.uk
- By using the attached form.

The details of our offices are at the back of this leaflet. To help us respond to your complaint as quickly and fully as possible please:

- Mark your letter "complaint"
- Include your full name and any relevant case reference numbers, which can be found on any correspondence you receive from the Legal Services Commission (LSC)
- Explain what you think we should do to put things right.

A telephone number where we might contact you would also be helpful.

2. How we will deal with your complaint

Staff with the right experience, knowledge and authority will investigate and respond to your complaint as quickly and fully as possible.

We aim to:

- Take into account what you think we should do to put things right
- Provide a full response to your Complaint either in writing or over the telephone within 3 working days of its receipt.

If it is not possible to respond within 3 working days, we will let you know why and explain when you can expect to hear from us.

3. What to do if you wish to claim compensation

In circumstances where an error or failure to act on our part has caused you financial loss, you may be entitled to compensation. To make a claim for compensation you should write to the office dealing with your case. Please set out the details of the error or failure, why it led to a direct financial loss and a breakdown of the amount you wish to claim.

4. What to do if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint

As we said before, our aim is that your complaint should be resolved as quickly as possible by staff who have the right experience, knowledge and authority. However, there may be times when unfortunately our response to your complaint does not fully satisfy you. If this happens, you should contact the office that dealt with your complaint to raise your further concerns.

You may also request that another office within the LSC carries out an independent review of your complaint.

If your complaint is about a regional office this will be reviewed by another regional office. If it is about another department the central customer services unit will investigate and respond to your complaint.

We aim to complete this review and send a response to you within 5 working days. If the office carrying out the review is unable to respond to you in full within 5 working days from receipt of your further complaint, they will let you know why and when you can expect to hear from them.

If you are unhappy with the independent review carried out by a regional office, you may request a final internal review to be carried out by the central customer services unit.

5. What happens if we can't reach an agreement – the Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Ombudsman can investigate the way that you have been treated by the LSC. This is a free service and the Ombudsman can recommend that we put right anything they think we have done wrong.

If you wish to make a complaint to the Ombudsman it must be referred via your Member of Parliament. The Ombudsman will normally expect you to have been through our complaints procedure before referring your complaint. The details of the Ombudsman are at the back of this leaflet.

6. What to do if you think legal aid should not have been granted to someone

If we have given funding to someone you think is not entitled to it, please write to the local regional office, clearly marking your letter "Representation". Please make sure you provide us with as much information as possible and confirm if you are happy for the legally aided person and their solicitor to see your letter.

Full details of our procedure can be found in our Representations leaflet.

This is available from our website at www.legalservices.gov.uk, or by telephoning either a regional office or the LSC leaflet line on 0845 3000 343.

7. What to do if you are unhappy that your legal aid has been refused or stopped

If you are unhappy about our decision to refuse or stop your legal aid, you can request a review of our decision. The letter we have used to notify you of our decision will tell you the steps you need to take. Another member of staff, who has the authority to overturn the original decision, will carry out the review. If that member of staff agrees with the original decision, the matter may be referred to an Independent Adjudicator to consider further.

8. What to do if you wish to complain about your solicitor or barrister

Complaints about the service your solicitor is providing should in the first instance be directed to the solicitor's firm. If you are unable to resolve your concerns with the firm, then the Law Society's Legal Complaints Service may be able to help.

The Complaints Commissioner of the General Council of the Bar investigates complaints about barristers.

Full contact details for both are at the back of this leaflet. You may also wish to send a copy of your complaint to your regional office, marked for the attention of the Contracts Manager.

9. How you can help us to help you

We are always pleased to receive suggestions to help us to improve our services. We are taking action to improve areas where our customers have told us our service could be better.

If you have any comments or suggestions about how you think we could improve our services, please write to the Customer Service Manager at the office which is dealing with your case.

Our guarantee to you:

- We will treat your complaint seriously and keep it confidential
- We won't treat you differently from other people just because you have made a complaint
- We won't discriminate against you for any reason

10. Useful Contacts

LSC contacts:

Central Customer Services Unit

11th Floor
Legal Services Commission
Exchange Tower
2 Harbour Exchange Square
London E14 9GE
Tel: 020 7718 8025
Fax: 020 7718 8021

NORTH WEST REGION

Liverpool Office

2nd Floor Cavern Court
8 Mathew Street
Liverpool L2 6RE
Tel: 0151 242 5200
Fax: 0151 242 5394

Manchester Office

2nd Floor, Lee House
90 Great Bridgewater Street
Manchester M1 5JW
Tel: 0161 244 5000
Fax: 0161 244 5196

Chester Processing Centre

2nd Floor
Pepper House
Pepper Row
Chester CH1 1DW
Tel: 01244 404500
Fax: 01244 404691

NORTH EAST REGION

Newcastle Office

2-8 Star House
Fenkle Street
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE1 5RU
Tel: 0191 244 5800
Fax: 0191 244 5998

Leeds Office

Harcourt House
Chancellor Court,
21 The Calls
Leeds LS2 7EH
Tel: 0113 390 7300
Fax: 0113 390 7484

MIDLANDS REGION

Nottingham Office

1st Floor
Fothergill House
16 King Street
Nottingham NG1 2AS
Tel: 01159 084 200
Fax: 01159 084 397

Birmingham Office

Centre City Podium
5 Hill Street
Birmingham B5 4UD
Tel: 0121 665 4700
Fax: 0121 665 4899

Cambridge Office

62-68 Hills Road
Cambridge CB2 1LA
Tel: 01223 417 800
Fax: 01223 417 982

WALES

Cardiff Office

Marland House
Central Square
Cardiff CF10 1PF
Tel: 0845 608 7070
Fax: 02920 647 173

Welsh language service line:

0845 609 9989

SOUTH & WEST REGION

Bristol Office

33-35 Queen Square
Bristol BS1 4LU
Tel: 0117 302 3000
Fax: 0117 302 3198

Reading Office

80 King's Road
Reading RG1 3BJ
Tel: 01189 558 600
Fax: 01189 558 780

LONDON & SOUTH EAST REGION

London Office

12th Floor
Legal Services Commission
Exchange Tower
2 Harbour Exchange
Square
London E14 9GE
Tel: 0845 602 1400

Brighton Office

3rd/4th Floor Invicta
House
Trafalgar Place, Cheapside
Brighton BN1 4FR
Tel: 01273 878800
Fax: 01273 878991

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS:

Legal Complaints Service

The Law Society

Victoria Court
8 Dorner Place
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire CV32 5AE
Helpline: 0845 608 6565
Fax: 01926 431 435
www.legalcomplaints.org.uk

The Complaints Commissioner

General Council of the Bar
4th Floor,
289-293 High Holborn
London WC1V 7HZ
Tel: 020 7242 0082
Fax: 020 7831 9217
www.barcouncil.org.uk

Parliamentary Ombudsman

Millbank Tower, Millbank
London SW1P 4QP
Tel: 0845 015 4033
Fax: 020 7217 4160
www.ombudsman.org.uk

Community Legal Service Direct provides free information, help and advice direct to the public on a range of common legal issues:
Call 0845 345 4 345
Click www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Complaint

Please tell us which Department/Office of the Legal Services Commission your complaint is about:

If you are not sure which Department/Office, please leave blank

I believe there has been:

An incorrect decision

Poor communication

Delay

Please provide details of your complaint

Please provide details of how you think we can put your complaint right

Name:

Date of Birth (this will help us trace your case reference if you are the legally aided client/applicant):

Postal Address:

Certificate Reference:

or Account Number:

If you are happy for us to contact you by telephone, fax or e-mail, please provide details:

Tel:

Fax:

E-mail:

COMPLAINTS

Freepost RSAE-BZKA-SGUY
Central Customer Services Unit 11th Floor
Legal Services Commission
2 Harbour Exchange Square
LONDON
E14 9GE



Legal Services Commission
4 Abbey Orchard Street
London SW1P 2BS
www.legalservices.gov.uk
tel: 020 7783 7000

LSCIL5E

To order copies of LSC leaflets contact the LSC Leafletline:

LSCleaflets@ecgroup.co.uk

tel: 0845 3000 343

fax: 020 8867 3225

The Legal Services Commission produces the following leaflets:

A Step-by-Step Guide to Legal Aid

A Practical Guide to Criminal Defence Services

Criminal Defence Services at the Police Station and in Court

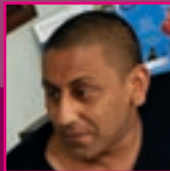
Paying For Your Legal Aid

Complaints

Representations

Special Investigations Unit

Access to Information



legal services

COMMISSION