

# Guidance on Completing the Complaint Forms



The Scottish Legal Complaints Commission (SLCC) is an independent body set up to investigate complaints about services provided by legal practitioners (solicitors and advocates) in Scotland and to act as the first point of contact and 'gateway' for all complaints about the legal profession.

## Contact Details

The SLCC can be contacted at the following address:

Scottish Legal Complaints Commission  
The Stamp Office  
10 - 14 Waterloo Place  
EDINBURGH  
EH1 3EG

Phone: 0131 528 5111

Fax: 0131 528 5110

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

We are open from 9am until 5pm, Monday to Friday, apart from Tuesday when we close for staff training from 10am to 11am.

Further information is also available via the website  
[www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk)

## Types of legal complaint

The SLCC acts as the Gateway for complaints about:

- the service provided by a solicitor or advocate
- the conduct of a solicitor or advocate
- the way the Law Society of Scotland or Faculty of Advocates deals with complaints about the conduct of a solicitor or advocate (referred to as handling complaints).

The SLCC will investigate:

- All 'service' complaints
- All 'handling' complaints about the way the Law Society of Scotland or Faculty of Advocates has investigated complaints about the conduct of a solicitor or advocate.

The SLCC will **not** investigate complaints about the professional conduct of practitioners. The SLCC will receive and register these complaints, assess whether they can be accepted and if so send them to the relevant professional body, being the Law Society of Scotland, Faculty of Advocates or the Association of Commercial Attorneys.

## How to make a complaint

Complaints forms are available on request or by downloading from the website. There are separate forms for:

- Complaints about the service provided by a solicitor or advocate and/or the conduct of a solicitor or advocate; and
- 'Handling' complaints which are complaints about the way the Law Society of Scotland or the Faculty of Advocates dealt with your complaint to them.

Complaints must be made on a complaint forms which must be signed by you. If writing is difficult please telephone or call in for help. Your signature is important as it both confirms you wish to make a complaint and gives us permission to obtain information.

If you contact us by letter, fax, e-mail or telephone with a complaint, we will ask you to complete and sign the relevant form before progressing your complaint further.

It is important that complaints forms give us details of your complaint in your own words, how this has affected you and how you would like your complaint to be resolved.

## Completing the Complaint Form

### Section 1 - About You

This must be completed by the person making the complaint and should give relevant contact details including contact telephone number(s) and your preferred method of contact e.g. post, email, fax or phone.

If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, then you need to highlight that in this section and also complete Section 4.

### Section 2 - About Your Complaint

In this section we are looking for details about the practitioner and/or firm you are complaining about.

We are also looking for:

**What you are complaining about**, what has gone wrong and when it happened. Be as precise as you can. Where possible gives us dates and times issues occurred and details of anyone else who witnessed them. If there are several issues, try to summarise them as separate points or paragraphs and send us copies of letters or documents you think will help us to understand your complaint properly.

**How this has affected you**. Please tell us about how the actions of the practitioner affected you. Tell us how you felt about what went wrong and about any costs or losses you incurred. If you had to pay for things as a result of the practitioner's actions, tell us how much you had to pay and where you have receipts, send us copies. The costs/losses should be things that you would not have had to pay for if the practitioner's actions had been different.

**What would help to resolve the problem?** Tell us how you would like your complaint to be resolved and why. This may include an apology, a reduction in fees, compensation or other actions the practitioner might take.

We will discuss this with you soon after you contact us and discuss with you what we may or may not be able to do.

**Time limit**

The SLCC can only investigate service/conduct complaints within 12 months of when the service ended or the conduct incident occurred, or within 12 months of when you could reasonably have been made aware of the matter. The time limit can only be relaxed in exceptional circumstances.

**Section 4 - Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else**

**Only** complete this section if you are complaining on behalf of someone else. Please note we will contact them to seek their agreement to pursue the complaint. It is helpful if they can sign the form but not essential.

**Section 5 - Declaration**

We **cannot** investigate your complaint if you do not sign and date the form. We also ask in this section whether you consent to the form being copied to the individual or organisation involved in the complaint. Without your signature we cannot make enquiries into your complaint and seek copies of documents, files or papers related to your complaint. This limits severely our ability to look into the matters you raise.

**Equal Opportunities (detachable part of the form)**

The SLCC wishes to ensure that we reach the widest possible audience and is keen to use the information in this detachable part of the form, anonymously, to improve our service. Your assistance in completing this part of the form is appreciated.

**Completing the Handling Complaint Form**

Please state whether you are complaining about the Law Society of Scotland, Faculty of Advocates or the Association of Commercial Attorneys and provide us with their reference number.

**Time limit**

Please also tell us the date of the final decision letter from the professional body and, where possible, enclose a copy of this letter. This is because we will normally only be able to accept a handling complaint for investigation within 6 months of the date of the decision letter.