



FORMAL COMPLAINTS

SH&P's HANDLING POLICY AND FIRST-TIER FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We are committed to providing high-quality intellectual property services to our clients. If something goes wrong, or if you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, we want to know about it. We operate a formal complaints procedure to ensure that such complaints are handled promptly, fairly, transparently and free of charge. Our formal complaints procedure is intended to be clear, accessible and easy to use.

If you require this policy in an alternative format or require assistance in making a formal complaint, please let us know.

How we will handle your formal complaint

If you have raised concerns informally with your primary contact within SH&P, your Client Relationship Partner if you have a nominated one, or a Partner of the firm and the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you can raise a formal complaint as described below.

All formal complaints will be documented; SH&P will keep records of complaints so that we can monitor themes, outcomes and service improvements.

1. Raising your formal complaint

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you may do so in writing by email to complaints@shandp.com. A copy of this policy is attached to our Terms of Business, is available on [our website](#) and will be provided on request or on receipt of a complaint.

Your complaint will be passed on to SH&P's Managing Partner (or an alternative Partner where more appropriate – the Complaints Manager), who will supervise the handling of the complaint and ensure that this procedure is applied consistently.

2. First response

Often it will be possible to resolve a complaint immediately. If your complaint cannot be resolved immediately, we will investigate it under this procedure. We will endeavour to send you, within **three (3) working days**, a written acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint, together with confirmation of the next steps, the person dealing with your complaint, and when you can expect to hear further from us.

3. Initial investigation

The initial investigation will usually involve the details of your complaint, together with any additional relevant information, being reviewed by the Partner responsible for the relevant department, or by another appropriate person nominated for that purpose. The Partner responsible for reviewing your complaint (or someone authorised by them) will consider the complaint objectively and will provide you with a written response setting out the outcome of the initial investigation and any proposed resolution.

4. Outcome

We will endeavour to do this **within fifteen (15) working days** of sending the initial acknowledgement. If further information is required from you, or if additional time is needed to complete the investigation, we will keep you informed of progress and explain why additional time is required. Possible outcomes may include an explanation, an apology, clarification of what has happened, confirmation of any corrective action, or any other appropriate resolution.

5. Further review

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation, you may ask us to review both the handling of the complaint and the outcome reached.

- We will endeavour to acknowledge receipt of your request for review within **three (3) working days**.
- We will then arrange for the Complaints Manager to review the complaint, the investigation and its outcome. If the Complaints Manager is already connected with the matter, the review will be carried out by another Partner who has until then not been directly involved in the matter.
- We will endeavour to write to you within **fifteen (15) working days** of acknowledging your request for review, confirming our final position on your complaint, the reasons for that position, and any final proposed resolution.

We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and normally within **eight (8) weeks** of receipt. If we are unable to do so, we will explain why and keep you updated. We may use feedback from complaints to improve our services and internal processes.

6. Legal Ombudsman

If we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction and your complaint relates to the service we have provided, you may be able to refer it to the Legal Ombudsman. You may normally refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman after receiving our final written response or if we have not resolved your complaint within eight weeks of receiving it.

Please note:

- The Legal Ombudsman generally deals with complaints from individuals, microenterprises, charities, trusts, clubs and associations falling within its jurisdiction.
- In our final written response, we will mention that you may be able to refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman and provide the applicable time limits and the Legal Ombudsman's full contact details.
- A complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must normally be made within six months of the date of our final written response. Other time limits under the Legal Ombudsman Scheme also apply.
- You can contact the Legal Ombudsman at:



Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk
Telephone: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

7. Intellectual Property Regulation Board

If your complaint relates to *professional misconduct or an alleged breach of the applicable professional rules*, you may also have the right to complain to the Intellectual Property Regulation Board (“IPReg”):

- We will identify this in our final written response where relevant.
- IPReg deals with complaints about regulated persons or firms where there is evidence of a breach of IPReg’s regulatory arrangements.
- Information about making a complaint to IPReg can be found on the IPReg complaints page.
- In some cases involving European Patent Attorneys, a complaint may fall within the remit of the European Patent Institute (EPI).
