

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Law Society of Northern Ireland (“the Society”) aims to deliver to a high standard when we engage with our members, the public and others who interact with our work.
- 1.2 As in every organisation, and despite our best efforts, things sometimes can and do go wrong. We want to know when we have not provided the kind of service we aim for. That way, we can try to put things right, learn from any mistakes and take action to improve our service for the future.
- 1.3 This policy tells you how to give feedback or make a complaint if you consider that we have not met this standard. It describes our approach to managing complaints, sets out the responsibilities of our staff in dealing with the complaints and outlines the timescales.
- 1.4 Similarly, we welcome feedback on what we are doing well. We also welcome ideas, suggestions and more general comments about our work.

2. What we can deal with

- 2.1 Anyone who comes into contact with the Society can provide feedback or make a complaint. This policy applies to general complaints about the Society, our standards of service and the actions and behaviours of our staff and others working on our behalf.
- 2.2 There are some issues that we **cannot** deal with as complaints under this policy, including:
 - Complaints about a solicitor or a firm of solicitors (*if you want to make a complaint about a solicitor or firm please refer to this [guidance](#)*).

- Complaints about Council or Committee members, which are handled under a separate policy.
- Complaints that have been considered previously.
- Situations where you have a statutory right of appeal.
- Situations where you need independent legal advice.

3. Accessibility and other requests

- 3.1 We will consider accessibility requests and try to help you as best we can. Please tell us if you have any particular needs or reasonable adjustment requests when making your complaint. You can read our Reasonable Adjustments policy on our website [here](#).
- 3.2 You can also use a representative such as a family member or friend to make a complaint for you. We'll ask you to confirm that you're happy for that person to represent you and will deal with them directly until the conclusion of your complaint. You can tell us at any stage if you no longer want that person to support you.

4. How to give feedback or make a complaint

- 4.1 If you have already engaged with a Law Society staff member, the first step is to contact them and explain your concerns or complaint. They will make sure your complaint is referred to the right person.
- 4.2 If you do not know the relevant team or staff member, please send your complaint to enquiry@lawsoc-ni.org or telephone us on **028 9023 1614**.

5. How we respond to complaints

Acknowledgement

- 5.1 We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days of receipt.
- 5.2 We may redirect your complaint at this stage if we are not able to deal with it under this policy **or** the matter could be better addressed in different way – for example, if you are simply seeking further clarity or information about an issue.
- 5.3 We may ask you to confirm any aspect which we are unclear about and/or provide further details.

Informal Resolution

- 5.4 We always try to resolve complaints **informally in the first instance** and where possible. However, we realise that some complaints require more detailed investigation. In such circumstances, the complaint will be considered under **Stage 1** below.

Stage 1: Investigation

- 5.5 The relevant Head of Department (or delegated person) will investigate your complaint and respond within 20 working days of the acknowledgement.
- 5.6 Some complaints may take longer to process. We will keep you informed of progress and provide reasons for any delay.

Stage 2: Review

- 5.7 If you are not happy with our response to your complaint you can ask for it to be reviewed.
- 5.8 To request a review, please contact the Head of Department (or delegated person) who initially replied to your complaint and provide the reasons for your request.
- 5.9 If a review is required, it will be carried out by a senior member of staff who was not involved in the handling of your complaint at Stage 1.
- 5.10 We will only conduct a review if sufficient reasons are provided. For example, if there are new facts that were not considered during the first stage, or factors which suggest the response was not appropriate or reasonable.
- 5.11 We may also decline your review request if:
- we consider that we have taken your complaint as far as possible.
 - a different outcome is unlikely based on the information you have provided.
- 5.12 We will acknowledge the review and respond using the same timescales as above. As with Stage 1, we will tell you if additional time is required.

Stage 3: Final decision

- 5.13 If you consider the review decision is still unsatisfactory **and** you have additional evidence to support your complaint, you may escalate the matter to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will independently evaluate the case, considering all relevant details, and determine whether the decision should be upheld or modified. The Chief Executive's decision will be final.
- 5.14 If the nature of the complaint makes it inappropriate for the Chief Executive to deal with it, then the role of the Chief Executive in conducting the review will be undertaken by an Office Bearer.

6. Complaints about the Chief Executive

- 6.1 Complaints about the Chief Executive are dealt with by the Chair of the Personnel Committee. Please mark your complaint 'Personal – Service Delivery Complaint' and send it to the Head of Governance & Corporate Services, using the email chiefexecutivepa@lawsoc-ni.org.
- 6.2 If the nature of the complaint makes it inappropriate for the Chair of the Personnel Committee to deal with it, then it will be dealt with by another Office Bearer.
- 6.3 If you are not happy with response, you can ask that your complaint is reviewed. The review will be carried out by an Officer Bearer, who was not involved in the original decision on the complaint.
- 6.4 The Chair of the Personnel Committee and other Office Bearers may seek external or independent support or advice as required when considering or reviewing complaints about the Chief Executive.

7. What you can expect from us

- 7.1 We aim to resolve complaints fairly, proportionately and confidentially. We also learn from feedback and complaints so that we can continuously improve our service.
- 7.2 Equally, we expect any person who contacts us to treat our staff with respect. In some cases, we need to limit or control our contact with someone or withdraw our services in the interests of our staff, other people who use our services and/or the individual

themselves. Where relevant, we will deal with such matters in line with our 'Unacceptable Behaviour Policy', available on our website [here](#).

- 7.3 Information that you give us will be treated sensitively. Any personal data will be processed in accordance with the GDPR.

8. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 All complaints dealt with under this policy and the associated outcomes should be logged with the Head of Governance & Corporate Services. This enables the Society to track and monitor any themes or issues and supports continuous improvement in our services.

3 December 2025

[ENDS]