

Although we may strive to provide the best service possible for all clients, some may be disappointed or dissatisfied with the service that we provide. How well we respond to such disappointment is an important element of our standard of service to clients.

It is in our interests to deal as effectively as possible with any problems as soon as they arise. Research suggests that a satisfied client may tell five people on average of their experience, whereas a dissatisfied client may tell 23 people on average. The importance of dealing with complaints is therefore obvious given that recommendation remains our most important source of new work.

Initially we hope that clients will raise any difficulties with the mediator at the time of the mediation, due to the nature of the work we do not expect everyone to be “pleased” with the outcome of a mediation. In most cases it should be possible to resolve problems or misunderstandings at this level. We never forget that saying ‘sorry’ does not mean that you are necessarily admitting fault or liability and will generally be all that the client required.

NWM staff know to do everything they can to show to the client that the matter is being addressed as they would wish and not to become defensive. If we are unable to satisfy the client at this initial, informal stage then the formal complaints procedure will be commenced.

Our Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. When something goes wrong please tell us about it. This will help to maintain and improve our standards.

Our Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint, please write to us with the details.

Who can complain?

If you are or have been a client, or are a qualifying third party (including representatives of parties or a party contacted for the purposes of establishing if you would be willing to mediate) you may make a complaint. NB as NWM works both under the Civil Mediation Council and Family Mediation Council how your complaint gets dealt with may differ slightly, in particular if you are a qualifying third party for family mediation and wish to complain about being contacted about agreeing to attend a MIAM this does not fall under the FMC’s rules for referral to FMSB, similarly if a MIAM form is signed without reference to you as the second party in a family dispute this is not dealt with by the FMSB.

Personal attacks, insults or discriminatory comments are not complaints and will be referred to the relevant authorities to investigate and where necessary prosecute.

Any complaint after 3 months of your last meeting will not be accepted.

What will happen when I complain?

1. We will send you an email acknowledging your complaint within 5 days and asking you to confirm or explain the details. We will also let you know who will be dealing with your complaint. You can expect to receive our letter within 5 working days of NWM receiving your complaint.
2. We will record your complaint in our central register and open a file for your complaint. We will do this within two days of receiving your complaint.

3. We will acknowledge your reply to my acknowledgement and confirm what will happen next. You can expect to hear from us within a day of your reply.
4. We will then start to investigate your complaint. This may involve one or more of the following:
 - If I, Ed Johnson, acted for you, I will consider your complaint again. I will then send you my detailed reply or invite you to a meeting to discuss the matter. I will do this within ten days;
 - If someone else acted for you, I will ask him/her to give me his/her reply to your complaint within five days. I will do this within a day;
 - I will then examine the reply and the information in your complaint file. I may also speak to the person who acted for you. I will do this within ten days of receiving the reply and the file.
 - We will ask another independent local mediator to investigate your complaint and report to us. We will do this within three days.
5. I will then email you inviting you to meet me and discuss and, I hope, resolve your complaint. I will do this within three days.
6. Within two days of the meeting I will email you to confirm what took place and any solutions I have agreed with you. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, I will send you a detailed reply to your complaint by email. This will include my suggestions for resolving the matter. I will do this within five days of completing my investigation, you may expect that mediation will be suggested.
7. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you can email me again. I will then arrange to review my decision. This may happen in one of the following ways:-
 - I will review the decision myself within five days;
 - I will arrange for someone who is not connected with the complaint to review my decision. I will do this within 10 days;
 - I will ask an independent mediator to review your complaint within 10 days. I will let you know how long this process will take;
 - I will invite you to agree to independent mediation within five days. I will let you know how long this is likely to take.
8. I will let you know the result of the review within five days of the end of the review. At this time I will email you confirming my final position on your complaint and explaining my reasons. If I have to change any of the timescales above, I will let you know and explain why.

In the event that you are still unsatisfied and relates to a civil mediation as your mediator is a member of the Civil Mediation Council you can refer to the CMC's own complaints resolution procedure.

In the event that you are unsatisfied and your complaint relates to a family mediation you may ask for the complaint to be submitted to the FMSB. Where you ask for the CMC or FMSB to deal with your complaint you are agreeing to that body receiving your contact details and any notes (if not destroyed) relating to the mediation from NWM.