

## **ATHERTON KNOWLES COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY**

WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY SERVICE AND EXCEPTIONAL CLIENT CARE. SOMETIMES, HOWEVER, THINGS CAN GO WRONG. THIS POLICY SETS OUT HOW WE WILL HANDLE ANY COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS OR PROBLEMS YOU HAVE.

If you are unhappy about *any* aspect of the service you have received, please let us know about it promptly. Often, misunderstandings or complaints of a minor nature can be dealt with and resolved to your satisfaction informally over the telephone or by email.

However, if you feel that we have not resolved a misunderstanding or a complaint of a minor nature, or your complaint is more serious, please set it out in writing and send it to James Knowles at our registered office.

If you do write to us, we will follow the following procedure:

1. We will make every attempt to acknowledge receipt of your complaint, by letter, within three (3) days of receiving your complaint. We will enclose, with our letter, a copy of this Policy.
2. We will investigate all the circumstances of your complaint.
3. We will write to you as soon as possible to try and make arrangements to handle and resolve the complaint. At this stage, we will give you the option of meeting with us to discuss the matter, or if you would prefer not to have a meeting or if it is not possible to arrange one promptly, of handling the matter in writing.
4. If you wish to discuss the matter in a meeting, we will make every effort to arrange a meeting as soon as possible. This will usually be within fourteen (14) days of stage (3), above. Within five (5) days of the meeting, we will write to you setting out a summary of the meeting and any solutions you and we have agreed in order to resolve the complaint.
5. If you would prefer not to have a meeting or if it is not possible to arrange one promptly, we will make every effort to write to you with a detailed reply to your complaint within a reasonable time, usually twenty-eight (28) days. We will include within our detailed reply suggestions to resolve the complaint.

6. If you remain dissatisfied, we may offer to involve an independent mediator to help to resolve the matter.

7. If you are still dissatisfied after this procedure, we will remind you that you have the right to contact the appropriate regulatory body. The appropriate regulatory body for alleged misconduct on the part of UK Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys is the Intellectual Property Regulation Board (IPReg). The appropriate regulatory body for alleged poor service is the Legal Ombudsman. We will help you to contact the appropriate regulatory body. We will, of course, cooperate fully in any investigation by a regulatory body.

You can contact the Legal Ombudsman([www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)) by telephone on (0300) 555 0333, by email [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk), or by post to PO Box 15870, Birmingham B30 9EB. The Legal Ombudsman usually *only* handles complaints by individuals, very small businesses, charities, trusts, clubs and associations.

Please note that, usually, you *must* refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within: one (1) year from the act and/or omission complained of; or one (1) year from when the complainant (i.e. you) should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint without taking advice from a third party; whichever is later; and usually within six (6) months of our response. We will tell you the relevant deadline in our response to a complaint made to us.

You can contact the Intellectual Property Regulation Board (IPReg) about your complaint. The staff of IPReg ([www.ipreg.org.uk](http://www.ipreg.org.uk)) are generally very helpful. Contact IPReg by telephone on (020) 7353 4373, by email [ipreg@ipreg.org.uk](mailto:ipreg@ipreg.org.uk), or by post to Intellectual Property Regulation Board (IPReg), 5th Floor, The Outer Temple, 222-225 Strand, London, WC2R 1BA.

Please note that, usually, complaints to IPReg *must* be made within twelve (12) months of the date of the alleged misconduct or of the date when you discovered the alleged misconduct.

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