



**Alexander  
Harris**

solicitors

Our ref:  
Your ref:  
Please ask for:  
Direct dial:

Mr Charles Farthing

**Code A**

Ann Alexander  
**Code A**

26<sup>th</sup> September

Dear, Charles

Thank you for your time on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September, it was a pleasure to meet you.

I confirm that at this stage Alexander Harris are happy to investigate all issues arising from the death of your father. Once the preliminary investigations have been completed we will then be in a position to advise on how we can assist you further.

In accordance with Law Society guidelines there are a number of issues I need to explain to you formally.

Much of the preliminary work will be carried out by **Code A** a Trainee Solicitor and Lisa Elkin, a Paralegal. I will however provide them with full supervision. I am the Managing Partner of Alexander Harris.

We aim to offer all of our clients an efficient and effective service and I am confident that we will do so in this matter. However, should there be any aspect of our service with which you are unhappy, and which

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DX 19866 Altrincham 1. E-mail: info@alexanderharris.co.uk Web Site: www.alexanderharris.co.uk

Also at: 1 Dyers Buildings, London EC1N 2JT United Kingdom Telephone: +44(0)20 7430 5555 Facsimile: +44(0)20 7430 5500 DX 460 London Chancery Lane,  
Cheriton House, 51 Station Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 3RT Telephone: +44(0)121 711 5111 Facsimile: +44(0)121 711 5100 DX 720080 Solihull.

*Partners:* David N Harris LL.B., Ann Alexander LL.B (Hons) M.B.A (Managing Partner), Lesley Herbertson M.A (Cantab), Nicola Castle LL.B (Hons) LL.M., Richard Follis LL.B (Hons),  
Jenny Kennedy, Lindsay Wise B.A (Hons), Grainne Barton LL.B (Hons), Richard Barr, Christian Beadell LL.B (Hons), Auriana Griffiths LL.B (Hons)

*Consultant:* Prof. Daniel S Simons B.A (Hons) J.D (Member of the Florida Bar)

*Associates:* Yee Fon Sit LL.B (Hons), Douglas I. Silas LL.B (Hons), Susannah Read LL.B (Hons), Tim Annett LL.B (Hons), Kim Barrett B.A (Hons) LL.M., Jonathan Betts LL.B (Hons),  
Jo Masters LL.B (Hons), \*Sue Taylor, \*Debbie Murphy RGN, RM, Dip N, \*Kirsty R Richards, \*Kirsten Limb B.Sc (Hons), \*(not a practising solicitor)

Alexander Harris is a franchised firm and a member of the Community Legal Service  
Regulated by The Law Society

we cannot resolve between ourselves, you may raise the matter with Karen Pearman, Quality Control Manager.

In the event that your complaint cannot be resolved by Karen Pearman, then you may complain to the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors. I have enclosed copies of the following leaflets

1. Resolution forms.
2. Can we help? (The Office for the Supervision of Solicitors)

#### Our Charges

Whilst we conduct our preliminary investigations into the issues concerning your mother death, we will not charge for this work. The issue regarding costs will be reviewed in consultation with you once we decide on the next stages in this matter.

#### Statements

As discussed on Saturday, as a starting point, it is vital that we obtain a detailed witness statement from you. Claire Amos and Lisa Elkin are planning to spend a few days in the area taking statements from all those involved. They will be available from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October until Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October inclusive. I would be grateful if you could complete the attached chart, informing us of your availability over those 4 days. Claire and Lisa will arrange appointments with you on that basis. I enclose with this letter a SAE, as we should be grateful for your prompt response. Alternatively, please contact us by telephone or e-mail.

I also enclose the minutes of Saturday's meeting, for your information.

May I also take this opportunity to remind you that our Director of Marketing and Business Development, Emma Smith deals directly with all our press and media. If you are contacted by the press, please feel free to direct all calls to her on: Code A

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

5<sup>a</sup>

Yours sincerely

**Code A**

ANN ALEXANDER

ALEXANDER HARRIS

**Code A**

## NOTES FOR THE CLIENT

(Please read these notes before completing the form)

### When should you use this form?

- ♦ If you have a complaint about the way your solicitor is dealing with your case, you must first try to resolve the problem with the firm.
- ♦ Solicitors must have a procedure for dealing with complaints.
- ♦ This procedure is free of charge.
- ♦ This form is to help you put your complaint to your solicitor directly.
- ♦ It's a good idea to complain in writing, so that you and your solicitor both then have a record of your concerns.
- ♦ If you have a complaint about the amount of your solicitor's bill please speak to our Helpline as very short time limits apply for challenging your bill.

### SECTION A: Where to send this form

- ♦ When you first went to the solicitor they should have told you who to contact if you have a complaint. Please address this form to that person.
- ♦ If you have not been given a name, send the form to the Complaints Handling Partner.
- ♦ Mark the envelope "Private and Confidential".

### SECTION B: How to set out your complaint

- ♦ Set out the details of your complaint in Section B.
- ♦ Make your complaint short and to the point.
- ♦ Give examples of the problem.
- ♦ Give dates where possible.
- ♦ If you have more than one complaint, list them and give them numbers so that it is easy for the solicitor to reply.

### SECTION C: How your complaint is dealt with

Tick the box in Section C so the solicitor will know if you are happy to receive a written reply or if you would prefer a meeting. If the solicitor suggests a meeting, we would encourage you to take up the offer.

### How long should you wait for a reply?

You should normally get a reply within 14 days, but please be patient, especially if your case is complicated.

If you do not hear from the solicitor after 14 days send a brief reminder letter - and keep a copy for yourself.

What should you do if you cannot resolve the complaint?

#### If you

- a) do not receive a detailed response from your solicitor after a reasonable time (say 28 days) **or**
- b) find that you cannot resolve the problems directly with your solicitor

you might want to make a complaint to the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors.

Please make sure that you contact us within **six months** after trying to sort things out with your solicitor. If not, we may decide not to investigate your complaint.

### How to make your complaint to the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors

To make a complaint to the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors you will need a Complaint Form. You can get a Complaint Form by writing to:-

The Office for the Supervision of Solicitors  
Victoria Court  
8 Dormer Place  
Leamington Spa  
Warwickshire  
CV32 5AE

Or you can telephone our Helpline

The Helpline is open Monday - Friday  
9.00 - 5.00

**0845 608 6565**

(Calls are charged at a local rate)

For Minicom facility phone

**0845 601 1682**

When making your complaint to us please include the green copy of this form. (Please keep the blue copy for your records.)

# RESOLUTION FORM

Before completing this form, please read "Notes for the Client" on the reverse of the blue/green copy.

Pink Copy - please send to solicitor.  
Blue Copy - please keep for your records.  
Green Copy - spare copy.

PLEASE WRITE FIRMLY WITH A BALLPOINT PEN

**A**

## To the complaints handling partner

Please use name if known \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Firm \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Solicitors Ref. \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone number (work) \_\_\_\_\_  
(home) \_\_\_\_\_

**B**

## I wish to make a complaint about the service I have received from your firm

The person dealing with my case is/was:- \_\_\_\_\_

I am complaining that:-

A A A  
A A A  
N/A  
A - Available  
N/A - not available

**C**

Please tick as appropriate:-  I am happy for you to deal with my complaint in writing.  
 I would prefer you to arrange a meeting to discuss my complaint.

What I would like you to do to resolve my complaint -  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## TO THE SOLICITOR

- 1 This form has been designed by the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors to help you to deal with a complaint under Rule 15.
- 2 Please reply to your client within 14 days of receiving the form.
- 3 Please read the notes on the back of this form before answering the complaint.
- 4 There is no need for you to correspond with the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors.

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(Please read these notes before completing the form)

### When should you use this form?

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### SECTION B: How to set out your complaint

- ♦ Set out the details of your complaint in Section B.
- ♦ Make your complaint short and to the point.
- ♦ Give examples of the problem.
- ♦ Give dates where possible.
- ♦ If you have more than one complaint, list them and give them numbers so that it is easy for the solicitor to reply.

### SECTION C: How your complaint is dealt with

Tick the box in Section C so the solicitor will know if you are happy to receive a written reply or if you would prefer a meeting. If the solicitor suggests a meeting, we would encourage you to take up the offer.

### How long should you wait for a reply?

You should normally get a reply within 14 days, but please be patient, especially if your case is complicated.

If you do not hear from the solicitor after 14 days send a brief reminder letter - and keep a copy for yourself.

What should you do if you cannot resolve the complaint?

#### If you

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**or**
- b) find that you cannot resolve the problems directly with your solicitor

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Please make sure that you contact us within **six months** after trying to sort things out with your solicitor. If not, we may decide not to investigate your complaint.

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For Minicom facility phone

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Green Copy - spare copy.

PLEASE WRITE FIRMLY WITH A BALLPOINT PEN

**A**

## To the complaints handling partner

Please use name if known _____	Your Name _____
Name of Firm _____	Address _____
Address _____	_____
_____	_____
_____ Postcode _____	_____ Postcode _____
Solicitors Ref. _____	Telephone number (work) _____
	(home) _____

**B**

## I wish to make a complaint about the service I have received from your firm

The person dealing with my case is/was:- \_\_\_\_\_

I am complaining that:-

A	A	A
A	A	A
N/A	→	

A = Available  
N/A = not available

**C**

Please tick as appropriate:-

I am happy for you to deal with my complaint in writing.

I would prefer you to arrange a meeting to discuss my complaint.

What I would like you to do to resolve my complaint -

until late Nov.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## TO THE SOLICITOR

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- 2 Please reply to your client within 14 days of receiving the form.
- 3 Please read the notes on the back of this form before answering the complaint.
- 4 There is no need for you to correspond with the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors.

## NOTES FOR THE SOLICITOR

### **What you should do on receipt of this form**

- ♦ Acknowledge receipt immediately.
- ♦ Tell your client how the complaint will be dealt with and by whom, and what the timescale is likely to be.
- ♦ Keep your client informed of progress.
- ♦ The form requires a response within 14 days but if you find that this is not possible, write to your client saying why and indicating when they might expect a response.
- ♦ Make sure you comply with that deadline.
- ♦ Note the client's expectations and consider whether they are reasonable. It is important to deal with the complaint as objectively as possible.
- ♦ If the client has asked for a meeting, respect that preference and try to arrange one.
- ♦ It is recommended that you open a complaint file and keep a record of every step taken towards resolution of the complaint.
- ♦ Keep in mind that a quick solution to a complaint is inevitably the most satisfactory and cost effective solution for you.

### **This complaint should be dealt with between you and your client under Rule 15**

- ♦ It is not, at this stage, registered at the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors and it is hoped that you and your client will be able to resolve matters and avoid that happening.

### **What will happen if you do not reply promptly or fail to resolve the complaint?**

Your client may lodge a formal complaint with the Office if:-

- ♦ You have not attempted to deal with the matter within 28 days without acknowledgement or explanation, or
- ♦ You fail to resolve the complaint directly with your client.

The Office recognises that not all complaints can be resolved satisfactorily between solicitor and client. If the matter is referred to us, however, we expect to find that you have made reasonable efforts to find a solution.

### **1. Resolving a complaint**

- ♦ Explain what is happening to the client at every stage.
- ♦ Give reasons for any delay.
- ♦ Apologise if you have caused a problem.
- ♦ Agree what action you will take with your client and carry it out.
- ♦ If appropriate, make a reduction in any bill delivered or a concession on any future bill.
- ♦ Offer compensation if appropriate.

### **2. If you are not at fault**

- ♦ Give a full explanation of the matter.
- ♦ Address each issue that has been raised.
- ♦ Keep your explanations objective and don't make the client feel that they shouldn't have raised their complaint. Clients may simply have misunderstood something or been confused. **That, in itself, it is a communications issue that you need to address and to which this complaint has alerted you.**
- ♦ Respond in writing, even after a meeting.

### **Advantages for you in Rule 15**

- ♦ Resolving complaints benefits everyone.
- ♦ You are likely to preserve good will, and have a satisfied client again.
- ♦ It is the cheapest and quickest way to solve problems.
- ♦ It reduces the likelihood of a referral to the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors.
- ♦ Learning from complaints will help to improve your business.

### **How the Office can help you at this stage:-**

- ♦ **If you would like the opportunity to discuss the complaint prior to replying to your client, phone LAWYER LINE on 0870 606 2588, between 9.30 to 12.30 and 2.30 to 4.30 Monday to Friday.**
- ♦ **For assistance with Rule 15 compliance contact the Compliance Officer on 01926 822155.**



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Please use name if known \_\_\_\_\_ Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Firm \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
 Solicitors Ref. \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number (work) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (home) \_\_\_\_\_

**B** I wish to make a complaint about the service I have received from your firm

The person dealing with my case is/was:- \_\_\_\_\_  
 I am complaining that:- \_\_\_\_\_

**C** Please tick as appropriate:-  I am happy for you to deal with my complaint in writing.  
 I would prefer you to arrange a meeting to discuss my complaint.

What I would like you to do to resolve my complaint - \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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