Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules

The Solicitors Complaints Committee make these Rules in exercise of the powers conferred by section 36 of The Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, after publication of the Rules in draft and after consultation with the Legal Services Oversight Commissioner in accordance with section 46 of that Act.

Citation and Commencement

1.0 These Rules may be cited as the Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules and shall come into operation on 15th September 2025.

Interpretation

2.1 The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 applies to these Rules as it applies to a Statutory Instrument.

2.2 In these Rules

"the Act" means the Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and a section referred to by number means the section so numbered in the Act;

"close relative" means a spouse, civil partner, or other partner in a long term personal relationship, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling;

"the Committee" means the Solicitors Complaints Committee;

"complaint" other than in Rules 8 and 9, means a complaint about the provision of professional services by a solicitor;

"complainant" means a complainant under the Act;

"hearing" means a hearing before the Committee, either on consideration of the papers submitted, or at which either or both the complainant and respondent may attend in person or by video link to present their case;

"professional conduct" means conduct in compliance with the duties and requirements placed on a solicitor by the Solicitors (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and any Regulations made under that Order;

"respondent" means a respondent under section 31 of the Act;

"respondent's complaints procedure" means the complaints procedure that a solicitor is required to maintain or (in the case of a sole principal) be registered for, in accordance with the Regulations of the Law Society of Northern Ireland.

2.3 In these Rules a Form referred to by number means the Form so numbered in the Schedule.

2.4 The Committee may amend, add, or remove such Forms as noted in the Schedule from time to time as it sees fit to fulfil its obligations under the Act.

Time Limit for Complaint

3.1 A complaint to the Committee must be made:

(a) within 3 months of the complainant being notified of the determination of their complaint under the respondent's complaints procedure; or

(b) within 4 months of the complaint being made under the respondent's complaints procedure if no response has been received.

3.2 Where Rule 4 applies a complaint must be made within 6 months of the complainant becoming aware of the matter in respect of which they wish to complain.

3.3 The time limits under Rules 3.1 and 3.2 may be extended by the Committee if it is satisfied that the complainant was unable to make the complaint within the time limit due to their serious ill health or that of a close relative or if, for reasons outside their control, they were outside Northern Ireland for a significant part of the time limit, or for such other exceptional circumstances where the Committee consider an extension to be appropriate.

Exceptions to section 32(1) of the Act

4. A complaint may be made to the Committee notwithstanding that the complainant has not first used the respondent's complaints procedure in accordance with section 32(1) where:

(a) the respondent

(i) has been struck from the Roll,

(ii) cannot be found,

(iii) has died,

(iv) is seriously ill,

(v) has retired from practice and there is no other solicitor practising in the relevant Firm or

(vi) has ceased to be a recognised body;

(b) the Council of the Law Society has passed a resolution in respect of the respondent under Article 36(1) of the Solicitors (Northern Ireland) Order 1976; or

(c) there is some particular urgency or risk of significant financial hardship which makes it impractical or unfair to await the determination of the respondent's complaints procedure and the complainant has made an exemption request.

Making a Complaint

5.1 A complaint to the Committee shall be made in Form 1 and shall be accompanied by any relevant information or documents including a copy of any complaint under the respondent's internal complaints procedure and any response to that complaint.

5.2 On receipt of a complaint, the Committee shall arrange for a copy and any associated information or documents, to be provided to the respondent and, if they are not a sole principal, to the firm in which they work by way of notification of the complaint.

Registration of Complaint

6.1 Upon receipt of a complaint, the Committee shall consider if:

(a) the complaint has been made within the relevant time limit prescribed in Rule 3 or if the time limit ought to be extended under Rule 3.3; and

(b) the complainant has first used the respondent's complaints procedure or, if one of the exceptions to section 32(1), as provided in Rule 4 applies

and accordingly determine if the complaint may be considered by the Committee.

6.2 Where the Committee is considering the extension of the time limit under Rule 3.3 or if an exception to section 32(1) as provided in Rule 4 applies, both the complainant and the respondent shall be given the opportunity to make written representations to the Committee before it makes a determination under Rule 6.1.

6.3 Where the Committee determines that it may consider a complaint it shall be registered in a Register to be maintained by the Committee.

6.4 Notice of a determination to register or dismiss a complaint under this Rule shall be given in Form 2 and issued in accordance with section 37(2).

6.5 Where a complaint has been registered the respondent shall within 20 working days of being so notified provide to the Committee:

(a) their written response to the complaint including whether they request an attended hearing if the complaint is not dismissed under Rule 7 or referred under Rule 8;

(b) a chronology of the file in relation to the professional services which are the subject of the complaint and;

(c) any other relevant information or documents.

6.6 Upon receipt of any documents from the respondent under Rule 6.5 the Committee shall give a copy to the complainant.

Initial Review

7.1 Where a complaint has been registered and the respondent's written response under Rule 6.5 has been received, the Committee shall determine if the complaint should be dismissed on the grounds that:

(a) the complaint or part of the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or totally without merit;

(b) the complaint or part of the complaint would be better dealt with by arbitration or legal proceedings;

(c) that the matter which is the subject of the complaint or part of the complaint has previously dealt with by the Committee or by legal proceedings;

(d) there has been undue delay in making the complaint or part of the complaint or the provision of evidence to support it, or

(e) there are other compelling reasons why it is inappropriate for the complaint or part of the complaint to be dealt with by the Committee.

7.2 Where the Committee is minded to dismiss a complaint under Rule 7.1, the complainant and respondent shall be given the opportunity to make written representations before the Committee makes its final determination.

7.3 Notice of the Committee's final determination on an initial review under this Rule shall be given in Form 3 and in accordance with section 37(2).

Referral to Professional Conduct Committee

8.1 Where it appears that a complaint raises a matter of professional conduct the Committee shall inform the complainant that it cannot deal with such matter and ask for the complainant's consent to refer the matter to the Law Society.

8.2 Where, with the consent of the complainant, a complaint is referred to the Law Society notice shall be given in Form 3 in accordance with section 37(2).

Hybrid Complaints

9. If a complaint raises a matter of professional conduct and professional services the Committee shall, as far as practicable, determine only those aspects of the complaint that relate to professional services.

Pre-Hearing

10.1 Where a complaint has been registered under Rule 6 and not dismissed or referred under Rule 7 or 8, the Committee shall determine the complaint on the papers submitted and without the attendance of the parties to present their case unless:

(a) it considers that an attended hearing is required; or

(b) the complainant or respondent has requested an attended hearing and the Committee consider an attended hearing to be appropriate in the circumstance of the case, in which case an attended hearing will be arranged.

10.2 The Committee shall arrange for the complainant and respondent to be given at least 40 working days' notice of the venue and the date and time fixed for any hearing.

10.3 The Committee may give such directions as it considers necessary for the fair and efficient disposal of the case.

10.4 The Committee may adjourn any date fixed for a hearing if it considers there is good reason to adjourn the matter.

10.5 Where the Committee adjourns a matter under Rule 10.4 the complainant and respondent shall be notified of the new date and time fixed for the hearing.

Additional Documents & Information

11.1 If at any stage after a complaint has been received, the Committee requires further information or documents under section 41 it shall issue a notice in Form 4 to the party believed to be in possession of the information or documents and a copy of the Notice shall be given to the other party.

11.2 The complainant or the respondent may apply to the Committee in writing requesting the issue of a notice under Form 4 for the production of specified documents or information believed to be in the possession of the other party.

11.3 Any documents or information produced to the Committee under section 41 shall be provided by the Committee to any party who is not already in possession.

11.4 A report by the Committee to the Law Society under section 42(2) shall be provided to the Law Society within 15 working days of the respondent unreasonably failing to comply with the terms of any notice under Form 4.

11.5 Any failure by the complainant to comply with the terms of any notice under Form 4 may be considered by the Committee as abandonment of the complaint and Rule 20 shall apply accordingly.

Beneficiary Complaints

12. Where the complainant is a beneficiary of an estate and there is an executor or personal representative, other than the respondent, then the Committee may make such written inquiries, as it thinks necessary for the resolution of the complaint, from that executor or personal representative and any responses received shall be shared with the complainant and respondent.

Witnesses

13.1 If the complainant or respondent wishes to give oral evidence at an attended hearing or to call other witnesses, they shall notify the Committee at least 20 working days before the hearing.

13.2 No witness shall give oral evidence at an attended hearing unless the Committee reasonably believes it is necessary for the fair disposal of the complaint and in which case the Committee shall give notice to any such witness (other than the complainant or respondent) that their attendance is required.

13.3 The Committee may direct that any witness evidence is only to be given by way of written statement.

13.4 A copy of any witness statement on which a party intends to rely shall be provided to the Committee and to the other party at least 15 working days before the date fixed for hearing.

13.5 Any witness required to attend the hearing may be awarded their reasonable expenses by the Committee to be met by such party as the Committee directs.

13.6 Any witness at the hearing may be subject to questioning by the other party and by the Committee.

13.7 Any question over whether a question should be put to a witness shall be determined by the Committee.

Procedure at Hearing

14.1 Subject to these Rules the procedure at the hearing of a complaint shall be determined by the Committee.

14.2 Subject to paragraphs Rule 14.3 a hearing is to be held in private.

14.3 The Committee may permit any properly interested person to attend a hearing as an observer.

14.4 If the complainant has been directed and fails, without good reason, to appear at the hearing of their complaint it shall be treated as having been abandoned.

14.5 A hearing may proceed in the absence of the respondent if the Committee thinks it just and proper to do so.

14.6 The complainant shall address the Committee first.

14.7 Where before the conclusion of a hearing:

(a) the Committee considers that the complaint raises a matter of professional conduct which should be referred to the Law Society it shall, with the consent of the complainant, so direct.

(b) the complainant and respondent jointly request an adjournment with a view to settling the complaint then the Committee may exercise their discretion to so direct, and the hearing shall stand adjourned until such new date as may be fixed by the Committee.

Minuting

15.1 The Committee shall ensure that an accurate minute is recorded for all Committee hearings.

15.2 A copy of such Minutes:

(a) shall be provided to the complainant or respondent on request subject to an undertaking that no part of it shall be made public without the leave of the Committee, unless it is for the purpose of an appeal,

(b) may be provided to any other person with the leave of the Committee and subject to an undertaking that no part of it shall be made public without the leave of the Committee.

Provisional Determination

16.1 The Committee shall reach a provisional determination of the complaint and shall issue to the complainant and respondent a written statement including any proposed directions under section 38 as soon as practical after the hearing.

16.2 Within 10 working days of the issue of the Committee's written statement of its provisional determination the complainant and the respondent may make a written request to the Committee to further consider its provisional determination and stating the grounds for doing so.

16.3 A provisional determination may only be further considered on the grounds that:

(a) there is new evidence that could not reasonably have been considered by the Committee at the original hearing which could have materially affected the determination of the Committee;

(b) the determination was wrongly made as a result of an administrative error;

(c) there has been fraud; or

(d) there has been a fundamental mistake of fact.

16.4 Upon receipt of a request for further consideration the Committee shall notify the other party and afford them reasonable time to make written representations before the Committee makes its final determination.

16.5 Where no request for further consideration of a provisional determination is received within the prescribed 10 working day period the Committee shall proceed to make its final determination.

16.5 Determinations under Rule 6 or 7 or a referral under Rule 8 are not subject to provisional determination and are to be made as a final determination.

Final Determination

17.1 The Committee shall issue a final determination without a hearing as soon as practicable.

17.2 The Committee's written statement of its final determination, including any directions under section 38, and its reasons, shall be issued as soon as practicable after the final determination being made and copies given in accordance with section 37(4).

Making of Determinations

18.1 The Committee shall reach all determinations on the balance of probabilities.

18.2 Any determination by the Committee shall be reached by simple majority but shall not indicate if it was unanimous or by majority.

Costs

18.1 The Committee may award costs against the complainant or respondent in favour of the other party or in favour of the Committee.

18.2 Any award of costs may only be made against the complainant if in the opinion of the Committee, the complainant acted so unreasonably in relation to the complaint that it is appropriate in all the circumstances of the case to make such an award.

18.3 Any award of costs in favour of the Committee may only be made for the purpose of contributing to the resources deployed in dealing with the complaint.

18.4 Any award of costs may include an order for interest at the rate prescribed in the Rules of the Court of Judicature (Northern Ireland) 1980.

18.5 An award of costs may be made notwithstanding that a complaint has been withdrawn or abandoned.

18.6 Failure on the part of any party to discharge costs directed by the Committee shall be enforceable as a debt against that party in accordance with section 36(9).

Continuation of Complaint

19. Where a complaint has been made and:

(a) the complainant dies before it is determined, then pursuit of the complaint may be continued by the complainant's executor, administrator or next of kin; or

(b) the complainant becomes mentally incapacitated, then pursuit of the complaint may be continued by the complainant's Attorney, Controller or Deputy under the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2005 and references to the complainant shall be construed accordingly.

Withdrawal or Abandonment of Complaint

20.1 The complainant may at any time withdraw their complaint by notifying the Committee in writing.

20.2 The Committee may treat a complaint as abandoned where a complainant has:

(a) failed without good reason to respond to correspondence from the Committee,
(b) failed to otherwise communicate with the Committee in reasonable time, or
(c) where Rule 14.4 applies.

20.3 Where a complaint has been withdrawn or treated as abandoned the Committee shall give notice in Form 5 in accordance with section 37(2).

Composition of sub-Committees

21. Where in exercise of its powers under Schedule 3, the Committee determines to establish a sub-Committee to deal with a complaint at least one member of the sub-Committee shall be a solicitor and any hearing before the sub-Committee shall be chaired by a solicitor.

Signed

Chair of Solicitors Complaints Committee

Dated 15 September 2025

Schedule

Rule 2.3

Form 1 (Rule 5)

Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules 2025

Complaint to the Solicitors Complaints Committee

Complainant: (*insert name, address, and e-mail address*)

Respondent: (*the solicitor in respect of whose professional services you wish to complain): (insert name and business address)*

To the Solicitors Complaints Committee

I the above-named complainant request the Solicitors Complaints Committee to consider and make a determination in respect of the abovenamed respondent's provision of professional services to me in accordance with the Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and the Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules 2025

[1.I have used the respondent's / Law Society internal complaints process and the determination under which is attached and dated *]

[2. I have not used the respondent's/ Law Society's internal complaints process for the following reasons *.

The matter complained of came to my attention on (*insert date)**]

[3. I am requesting the Committee to extend the time limit for making the complaint for the following reasons* (*insert*)]

4.The details of the professional services complained of and the background to this complaint are set out below and relevant documents and information are attached.

5. If my complaint is registered and not dismissed, I request the Committee determine my complaint:

[with a hearing at which I may attend to present my case] or

[I am content for the matter to be determined by the Committee on the papers submitted without an attended Hearing being required.]* (*delete as appropriate)*

Signed

Dated

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*Form 1 Notes **

*A complaint to the Committee **must be made** within 3 months of a determination under the respondent's internal complaints process (including the Law Society's process), or if no response has been received to the internal complaints process, within 4 months of the complainant becoming aware of the matter in respect of which they wish to complain and raising this concern with the firm. The Committee **may** extend that time limit for making a complaint if the complainant was unable to meet the time limit due to their serious ill health or that of a close relative or if they were outside Northern Ireland during the time limit for reasons beyond their control.*

*A complaint **may only** be considered under the Act if the complainant has first used the respondent's internal complaints process **unless** the respondent has been struck from the Roll, cannot be found, has died, is seriously ill, has retired from practice and there is no one else at the Firm, has ceased to be a recognised body or the Council of the Law Society has passed a resolution in respect of the respondent under Article 36(1) of the Solicitors (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 or there is some other particular urgency or significant financial risk which makes it impractical or unfair to await the determination of the respondent's internal complaints process.*

A copy of this complaint and the documents you have provided will be provided by the Committee to the Respondent.

The Committee will be in contact in due course in respect of whether the complaint can be considered.

If the Committee decides that the complaint can be registered for its consideration it will reach its determination on the papers submitted by the parties and without the attendance of the parties to present their case at hearing unless it considers an attended hearing is required or if either of the parties requests an attended hearing.

Costs may be awarded for and against either party in respect of this application.
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Complaints Form

Complaints Checklist

Before submitting your complaint, please complete the checklist below:

1. Have you written directly to your solicitor or sent them a completed in-house complaint form to make them aware of your complaint?

Yes

No

Confirm date:

Month Day Year

2. Have you complained in writing to your solicitor within 6 months of your business concluding or within 6 months of discovering the difficulty? (Further information on time limits can be found on our website and complaints booklet)

Yes

No

Confirm date:

Month Day Year

If you have answered "No" to question 2 above and you are requesting an exemption from the Solicitors Complaints Committee, please detail the reasons for your exemption request in the box below:

3. Are you lodging your complaint form with the Solicitors Complaints Committee within three months of the in-house complaint procedures being concluded, or within four months of lodging your in-house complaint and no response was received from the solicitor? (Further information on time limits can be found on our website and complaints booklet)

Yes

No

If you have answered "No" to question 3 above and you are requesting an extension from the Solicitors Complaints Committee, please detail the reasons for your extension request in the box below:

4. Have you enclosed a copy of your letter of complaint or in-house complaint form to the solicitor as well as a copy of the solicitor's response and terms of business letter?

Yes

No

If you do not answer or have answered NO to any of the above questions, then the Solicitors Complaints Committee may not be able to investigate your complaint.

Solicitors Complaints Committee
Northern Ireland

Completing the form

Please complete ALL sections of the form in full where relevant. By providing as much information as possible, this will help us deal with the complaint you are raising about the solicitor. If you need help to complete the form or require the form in an alternative format, please contact us at **enquiries@scc-ni.org** with your query.

You must use a separate form for each solicitor you wish to raise a complaint about.

You must complete ALL sections of the form, otherwise it may be returned to you for query which will delay the process.

To submit your form

You can submit your complaint, along with any relevant documentation, using the online form found at www.scc-ni.org. This is our preferred method of delivery.

If you are unable to complete the online form, please email **enquiries@scc-ni.org** and we will provide a copy you may print and send by post to:

Solicitors Complaints Committee,

Solicitor Complaints Office,

Law Society House,

96 Victoria Street,

Belfast,

BT1 3GN

Please ensure you have applied the correct postage, otherwise we may not receive it.

What happens next?

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint documentation and a full copy will be provided to the Solicitor as soon as practicable. Further information on the process can be found on our website.

Solicitors Complaints Committee Northern Ireland

Section 1: About you

This section must be completed by each person making the complaint.

First complainant

Title

Name

First Name

Last Name

Address

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

City/Town County

Postcode

Phone Number

Please enter a valid phone number.

Email

example@example.com

We will usually correspond with you via email, however if you have difficulty with this or would prefer that we contact you in another way, please indicate your preferred method(s) of communication:

Email Post

Phone Other

Please let us know of any additional needs we should be aware of when contacting you where applicable.

Would you like to add a second complainant?

Yes

No

Second complainant

Solicitors Complaints Committee Northern Ireland

Title

Name

First Name

Last Name

Address

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

City/Town County

Postcode

Phone Number

Please enter a valid phone number.

Email

example@example.com

We will usually correspond with you via email, however if you have difficulty with this or would prefer that we contact you in another way, please indicate your preferred method(s) of communication:

Email Post

Phone Other

Please let us know of any additional needs we should be aware of when contacting you where applicable.

Section 2: Complaining on behalf of someone else

Are you complaining on behalf of someone else?

Yes

No

I am making this complaint on behalf of:

Title

Name

First Name

Last Name

Address

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

City/Town County

Postcode

Phone Number

Please enter a valid phone number.

Email

example@example.com

Have they agreed to you making this complaint on their behalf?

NOTE - the SCC may not investigate a complaint raised on behalf of someone else without receipt of their authority.

Yes

No

If answering "No", please ensure you provide a copy of any authority you may have to make the complaint such as a signed form of authority, power of attorney or grant of representation.

Solicitors Complaints Committee Northern Ireland

Section 3: In-House Complaint

Normally we can only look at a complaint if you have complained to the Firm/Solicitor first, unless an exemption or extension request is being made.

You must first complain to the Firm/Solicitor in writing and give them 28 days to respond and retain a copy of any complaint submitted and any response received.

Have you complained to the Firm/Solicitor first?

Yes

No

If you have answered "No" to the question above and are requesting an exemption from the Committee, please give any reasons why you feel you cannot complain directly to the firm/legal practitioner in the box below:

Did you receive a response?

Yes

No

When did you first complain?

Month Day Year

Please provide:

A copy of your complaint to the Firm/Solicitor

A copy of any response(s) received from them.

A copy of any retainer letter or terms of engagement letter Photocopies or clear photographs of documents are fine.

NOTE - If you do not provide us with the requested documents your complaint may be returned for query, which will delay the process.

Section 4: Time Limits

Time limits will apply to your complaint. We may not be able to deal with your complaint unless you answer these questions.

When did you ask the Firm/Solicitor to START working for you (for the problem you are complaining about)?

Month Day Year

When did you ask the Firm/Solicitor to STOP working for you (for the problem you are complaining about)?

Month Day Year

If you were not the client, when did the problem(s) you are complaining about occur?

Month Day Year

Please ensure you provide:

A copy of any terms of business, or retainer letter confirming commencement of instructions to act. If you did not receive one, please advise us.

A copy of any final correspondence received from the Firm/Solicitor, including any response to the in-house complaint.

If you are unable to provide the aforementioned evidence, please use the box below to provide further detail:

Section 5: About Your Complaint

Who are you complaining about?

A solicitor

A firm of solicitors

Name of solicitor:

First Name Last Name

Name of firm:

Firm address

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

City/Town County

Postcode

Are you a client of the Firm/Solicitor?

Note - If you are not a client of the Firm, the Solicitors Complaints Committee may not be able to assist you further with your complaint.

Yes

No

Are you an executor, personal representative, or beneficiary entitled under an Estate that the Firm/Solicitor is acting in?

Note - If you are neither a client, executor, personal representative or beneficiary, the Solicitors Complaints Committee may not be able to assist you further with your complaint.

Yes

No

Name of the person who has died:

First Name Last Name

Date of their death:

Month Day Year

Are you the Executor or Administrator?

Yes

No

Is the Solicitor an Executor?

Yes

No

Are you a Beneficiary?

Yes

No

Please indicate below the names of the executors or administrators (include yourself if you are one):

Note - You must include a copy of the subject Will or Grant of Representation to confirm you are an executor, personal representative, or beneficiary.

Please describe what kind of legal work is involved?

How are you paying for the work (for example, privately or through Legal Aid, legal expenses insurance, trade union funding or not known)?

Privately

Legal Aid

Other

Have you paid money to your solicitor?

Yes

No

Date

Month Day Year

Amount paid:

Amount due to pay:

Solicitors Complaints Committee Northern Ireland

Briefly list the main points of your complaint and the date you first became aware of each problem.

Complaint issue 1

Short description of issue:

When did you first become aware of this issue?

Month Day Year

Further details:

Complaint issue 2

Short description of issue:

When did you first become aware of this issue?

Month Day Year

Further details:

Complaint issue 3

Short description of issue:

When did you first become aware of this issue?

Month Day Year

Further details:

What would help to resolve the problem(s)? Tell us how you would like your complaint to be resolved and why. This may include an apology, a reduction in fees, compensation, or other actions which the Firm/Solicitor might take:

If your complaint is registered and not dismissed, please indicate your preferred option for the Committee to determine your complaint:

Note - If the Committee decides that the complaint can be registered for its consideration it will reach its determination on the papers submitted by the parties and without the attendance of the parties to present their case unless it considers an attended Hearing is required or if either of the parties requests an attended Hearing (whether in-person, remote or hybrid).

With a Hearing at which I may attend to present my case.

OR

I am content for the matter to be determined by the Committee on the papers submitted without an attended Hearing being required.

Solicitors Complaints Committee
Northern Ireland

Part 6 - Your Declaration

I declare that to the best of my knowledge, the information I have provided is accurate.

I understand that the Solicitors Complaints Committee will send a copy of my complaint form and related documentation to the solicitor for their comments.

I understand that the Solicitors Complaints Committee will use the information I provide for the purposes of investigating and determining my complaint.

I understand that the Solicitors Complaints Committee may also use my complaint information to compile statistics and undertake research and analysis. I appreciate that any statistical information is completely anonymised.

I understand that the Solicitors Complaints Committee may share information about my complaint, including personal data, with relevant professional organisations in order to comply with their statutory obligations. I accept that these may include the Law Society of Northern Ireland, the Legal Services Oversight Commissioner, the Legal Services Agency and others. The Solicitors Complaints Committee may also need to provide information to their legal advisors in the case of any appeal against their decisions.

I understand that the Solicitors Complaints Committee has the power to grant costs against me and/or in my favour in such limited circumstances as set out in the Act.

I confirm that I have reviewed the Complaint Procedures Information Notice attached to this form.

I understand that if I have not already received a copy of the Privacy Notice explaining how my personal data will be managed during the investigation I can request a copy from the Solicitors Complaints Committee or can access a copy on the Solicitors Complaints Committee's website.

****YOU MUST SIGN THIS FORM AND SUBMIT. A COPY OF THIS FORM WILL BE SENT TO THE EMAIL ADDRESSES OF ALL COMPLAINANTS NAMED IN SECTION 1****

The Law Society of Northern Ireland is the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data supplied by you will be processed for the purposes of undertaking our statutory duties in respect of practising solicitors. The data may be disclosed to the solicitor or partner, or other statutory or regulatory bodies as appropriate.

Checklist

I have completed ALL relevant sections of the form (Note - if all relevant sections have not been completed your complaint may be returned):

Yes

No

I have signed and dated the form:

Yes

No

I have attached additional information and/or supporting documents:

Yes

No

Note - Please list each document below to assist us in checking that we have received all documents sent by you:

Form 2 (Rule 6.4)

Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules 2025

[Registration of Complaint or

Dismissal of Complaint]

Complainant:

Respondent:

Ref No:

The Solicitors Complaints Committee has considered the above complaint dated and [following receipt of representations] has determined:

[To register it for consideration by the Committee in accordance with the Act and the Rules]

or

[That it is not to be registered for the Committee's consideration and is therefore dismissed]

[The reason the complaint is dismissed is as follows:]

(*delete as appropriate.)

The Committee's reasons for this determination are outlined below:

[insert reasons]

Signed:

Dated:

FORM 3 (Rule 7.3)

Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules 2025

[Provisional/Final] Determination on Initial Review

Complainant:

Respondent:

Ref No

The Solicitors Complaints Committee has considered the above complaint made on (*date*) and registered for the Committee's consideration on (*date*) and [having received representations] has determined that the complaint:

[should be dismissed without further consideration by the Committee under the Act and Rules for the following reason] or,

[is with the consent of the complainant referred to the Law Society as raising a matter of professional conduct] or,

[will be subject to consideration and determination by the Committee on a date to be fixed]

[at a hearing at which the Solicitor and Complainant must attend] or,

[at a hearing on the on the papers submitted with no attendance being required by the Solicitor or Complainant]
(*delete as appropriate.)

The Committee's reasons for this determination are outlined below:

[insert reasons]

Signed:

Dated:

Form 4 (Rule 11.1)

Section 41 Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules 2025

Notice Requiring Information or Documents

Complainant:

Respondent:

Ref No

To:

The Committee requires you to provide the documents or information specified below in accordance with section 41 of the Act by (date)[insert date] being X working days from deemed receipt of this correspondence:

[insert details of information or documents requested as directed by the Committee]

Signed:

Dated:

Solicitors Complaints Committee
Northern Ireland

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*Notes**

No person may be compelled to provide information or documents which they could not be compelled to provide in civil proceedings before the High Court

If a Solicitor fails to provide the requested information, such failure to respond shall be considered a failure to provide information or produce documents and will be dealt with in accordance with sections 42 and 43 of The Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 whereby a report will be issued to the Law Society to consider such failure to respond as a matter of professional conduct.

If a Complainant fails to provide the requested information, the complaint will be considered to be abandoned in accordance with Rule 20.2 of the Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules and the Solicitors Complaints Committee will consider the dismissal of the complaint as abandoned at their next meeting.
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Form 5 (Rule 20.3)

Section 41 Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules 2025

[WITHDRAWAL/ABANDONMENT OF COMPLAINT]

Complainant:

Respondent:

Ref No

This is to notify you that the above complaint made on (date) and registered on (*date)*
[Has been withdrawn by the Complainant by notice dated (*date*)] or,
[Is treated by the Committee as abandoned as the Complainant has failed to respond to correspondence from the Committee or to otherwise communicate with the Committee in reasonable time]
(*delete as appropriate.)

The Committee's reasons for this determination are outlined below:

[insert reasons]

Signed:
Dated:

Form 6 (Rule 16)

Section 37(3) and Section 38 Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules 2025

Written Statement of Provisional Determination

Complainant:

Respondent:

Ref No

This is to notify you that the above complaint made (date) and registered on (date) was considered by the Solicitors Complaints Committee by way of [an attended hearing/a hearing on paper submissions only] ***delete as appropriate** on (date).

The Committee has determined to:

[Uphold the complaint
Partially uphold the complaint
Dismiss the complaint
Refer the complaint to the Law Society of Northern Ireland for professional conduct considerations]
(*delete as appropriate)

The Committee's reasons for this determination are outlined below:

[insert reasons]

[The Committee has made the following directions in accordance with the powers afforded to them under Section 38 of The Legal Complaints and Regulations Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:

(insert directions)]
(*delete as appropriate.)

Signed:
Dated:

Solicitors Complaints Committee Northern Ireland

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Notes

In accordance with Rule 16.2 any party may make a written request to the Committee to further consider its provisional determination within 10 working days of issue of this decision. Receipt is deemed to be next working day.

If you wish to make a written request for further consideration of the Committee's provisional determination, you must state the grounds for doing so.

16.3 A provisional determination may only be further considered on the grounds that:

(a) there is new evidence that could not reasonably have been considered by the Committee at the original hearing which could have materially affected the determination of the Committee;
(b) the determination was wrongly made as a result of an administrative error;
(c) there has been fraud; or
(d) there has been a fundamental mistake of fact.

16.4 Upon receipt of a request for further consideration the Committee shall notify the other party and afford them reasonable time to make written representations before the Committee makes its final determination.

16.5 Where no request for further consideration of a provisional determination is received within the prescribed 10 working day period the Committee shall proceed to make its final determination and both parties will be notified accordingly.
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Form 7 (Rule 16)

Section 37(3) and Section 38 Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Solicitors Complaints Committee Rules 2025

Written Statement of Final Determination

Complainant:

Respondent:

Ref No

This is to notify you that the above complaint made on (date) and registered on (date) was considered by the Solicitors Complaints Committee by way of [an attended hearing/a hearing on paper submissions only] ***delete as appropriate** on (date).

[In accordance with Rule 16.4 after receiving and considering a written request for the Committee to further consider its provisional determination by the [Complainant/Solicitor], and

After (receiving written representations/ no written representations having been received) from the [Complainant/Solicitor]

OR

[In accordance with Rule 16.5 having received no written request for the Committee to further consider its provisional determination by the either the Complainant or Solicitor]

The Committee has determined to:

[Uphold the complaint
Partially uphold the complaint
Dismiss the complaint
Refer the complaint to the Law Society of Northern Ireland for professional conduct considerations]

(*delete as appropriate)

The Committee's reasons for this determination are outlined below:

[insert reasons]

[The Committee has made the following directions in accordance with the powers afforded to them under Section 38 of The Legal Complaints and Regulations Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:

(insert reasons)]

(*delete as appropriate.)

Signed:

Dated:

Solicitors Complaints Committee
Northern Ireland

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Notes

In accordance with Rule 17 this statement constitutes the Final Determination of the Solicitors Complaints Committee.

There is no further right to a review of the Final Determination.

If you wish to appeal the determination of the Committee, please note that this is a Court process before the High Court of Judicature in Northern Ireland. You must follow the procedures which are set out in the Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, (Appeal Regulations) 2025 and Order 55 of the Rules of the Court of Judicature. An appeal may be lodged by either party.
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