BLACKS LEGAL

CLIENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE

1.1 Blackslegal Ltd, trading as Blacks Legal, Solutions4Startups and LeaseExtensionsDirect (the Firm), of 88 Cromer Street, London WC1H 8DG, is committed to a high standard of service. If you are unhappy with our service or our charges, we want to know so that we can put it right.

1.2 This procedure explains how to complain, what we will do and when, and what you can do if you are not satisfied with our response. Making a complaint is free of charge, and it will not affect the way we handle your matter.

1.3 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with our service or charges, whether made orally or in writing, where you say you have suffered, or may suffer, financial loss, distress, inconvenience or other detriment. You do not need to use the word "complaint".

1.4 The Firm is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA number 649766). We are required to have this procedure, to deal with complaints promptly, fairly and free of charge, and to tell you about your right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman.

2. HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

2.1 Many concerns can be resolved quickly by speaking to the person handling your matter or their supervisor, and we encourage you to do that first. You do not have to, and you can go straight to our Complaints Officer at any time.

2.2 Our Complaints Officer is **Francis Okeke, Director**. You can complain:

- by email to info@blackslegal.co.uk, marked for the attention of Francis Okeke, Complaints Officer;
- by post to Francis Okeke, Complaints Officer, Blacks Legal, 88 Cromer Street, London WC1H 8DG; or
- by telephone or in person, in which case we will write to you to confirm our understanding of your complaint.

2.3 If your complaint is about Francis Okeke, it will be handled by **Kas Hussain, Director**. Please mark it for his attention, using the same contact details.

2.4 It helps us if you tell us your name, the matter it concerns, what went wrong and what you would like us to do to put it right. If you need any adjustment to make a complaint, for example because of a disability, please tell us and we will help.

2.5 If your complaint is about how we have used your personal data, please mark it for the attention of Kas Hussain, our Data Protection Lead. Our Privacy Policy explains how those complaints are handled and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

3. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

3.1 **Acknowledgement:** Within 3 working days of receiving your complaint we will write to you to:

(a) confirm what we understand your complaint to be and what outcome you are looking for;

(b) tell you who is handling it and how to contact them;

(c) give you a target date for our final response; and

(d) send you a copy of this procedure.

3.2 **Investigation:** The person handling your complaint will review the file and speak to the people involved. They may contact you to discuss the complaint or ask for more information, and may suggest a call or meeting if that would help.

3.3 **Keeping you informed:** We will update you on progress at least every two weeks until we send our final response, and sooner if anything changes. If we cannot meet the target date, we will tell you why and give you a new one.

3.4 **Final response:** We will send you a written final response as soon as we can, and in any event within eight weeks of receiving your complaint. It will explain what we found, our decision on each point you raised and the reasons for it, and what we propose to do to put things right, if anything. It will also tell you about your right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman and the time limit for doing so.

3.5 **Complaints about a bill:** You may complain to us about the amount of a bill. You may also have the right to apply to the court for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974. Strict time limits apply to that right, so if you are considering it you may wish to take independent advice promptly.

3.6 **Your matter:** Making a complaint will not of itself stop us acting for you. If the relationship has broken down, either of us may end the retainer as set out in our terms of business, and we will help with handing your matter over.

4. IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED: THE LEGAL OMBUDSMAN

4.1 If you are not satisfied with our final response, or we have not resolved your complaint within eight weeks, you may be able to ask the Legal Ombudsman to look at it. The Legal Ombudsman is independent and free to use. It will not normally consider a complaint until you have first given us the chance to resolve it.

4.2 You must normally refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- within **six months** of the date of our final response; and
- within **one year** of the act or omission you are complaining about, or within one year of when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

4.3 Not everyone can use the Legal Ombudsman. Individuals can, and so can some small businesses, charities, clubs and trusts. The Legal Ombudsman can tell you whether you are eligible.

4.4 Contact details for the Legal Ombudsman:

- Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk
- Telephone: 0300 555 0333 (Relay UK: 18001 0300 555 0333)
- Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
- Post: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough SL1 0EH

5. CONCERNS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

5.1 The Legal Ombudsman deals with complaints about the service you received. If you are concerned about the behaviour or professional conduct of the Firm or anyone working for it, for example dishonesty, taking or losing your money, or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or another characteristic, you can raise it with the Solicitors Regulation Authority: www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.

5.2 You can do this whether or not you have also complained to us.