

## **Office Complaints Procedure**

### **Article 1 definitions**

In this office complaints procedure the following definitions apply:

- *complaint*: any written expression of dissatisfaction by or on behalf of the client towards the lawyer or the persons working under their responsibility regarding the realization and the execution of an assignment agreement, the quality of the service or the amount of the invoice, not being a complaint as referred to in paragraph 4 of the Dutch Lawyers Act (Advocatenwet);
- *complainant*: the client or their representative who makes a complaint;
- *complaints officer*: the lawyer charged with handling the complaint;

### **Article 2 application range**

1. This office complaints procedure applies to every assignment agreement between Law Firm (Advocatenkantoor) Elbertse and the client.
2. The lawyer is responsible for handling complaints in accordance with this office complaints procedure.

### **Article 3**

This office complaints procedure aims to:

- a. establish a procedure to resolve client complaints within a reasonable period and in a constructive manner;
- b. establish a procedure to determine the causes of client complaints;
- c. maintain and improve existing relationships through good complaint handling;
- d. train employees in client-oriented responses to complaints;
- e. improve the quality of services through complaint handling and complaint analysis.

### **Article 4 information at the start of services**

1. This office complaints procedure has been made public. The lawyer mentions to the client before starting the assignment, that the office has an office complaints procedure and that it applies to the services provided.
2. The lawyer has included in the general terms and conditions at which independent party or authority a complaint that has not been resolved after treatment can be submitted for consideration of a binding ruling.
3. The general terms and conditions state that complaints that have not been resolved after treatment will be submitted to the court (if it concerns a civil claim) or to the Dutch Bar Association (NOvA) (if it concerns a disciplinary complaint about a lawyer). If the complaint concerns a mediation, then the complaint can also be submitted to the vFAS (Association of Family and Inheritance Law Lawyers and Divorce Mediators) or the MfN (Mediators Federation Netherlands).

### **Article 5**

1. If a client approaches the office with a complaint, the complaint will be forwarded to Mrs. L.E.M. Elbertse, who acts as complaints officer.
2. The complaints officer notifies the person about whom the complaint has been filed that the complaint has been submitted and gives the complainant and the person about whom the complaint has been filed the opportunity to provide an explanation of the complaint.
3. The person about whom has been complained will try to find a solution together with the client with or without the intervention of the complaints officer.

4. The complaints officer will handle the complaint within four weeks of receiving the complaint or will inform the complainant of any deviation from this period, stating the reasons, and stating the period within which an assessment of the complaint will be given.
5. The complaints officer will inform the complainant and the person about whom the complaint has been made in writing of the assessment of the merits of the complaint, with or without recommendations.
6. If the complaint has been handled satisfactorily, the complainant, the complaints officer and the person about whom the complaint has been made sign the assessment on the merits of the complaint.

#### **Article 6 confidentiality and free complaint handling**

1. The complaints officer and the person about whom the complaint has been made will observe confidentiality when handling the complaint.
2. The complainant is not obliged to pay any compensation for the costs of handling the complaint.

#### **Article 7 responsibilities**

1. The complaints officer is responsible for the timely handling of the complaint.
2. The person about whom the complaint has been made keeps the complaints officer informed about any contact and a possible solution.
3. The complaints officer keeps the complainant informed about the handling of the complaint.
4. The complaints officer maintains the complaint file.

#### **Article 8 complaint registration**

1. The complaints officer registers the complaint including the complaint subject.
2. A complaint can be divided into several topics.
3. After each completed complaint, there will be reflection within the office on the handling of the complaint, the prevention of new complaints and the improvement of the procedures.

#### **Office Complaints Procedure drawn up on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2023**