

**BRIEF GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT UNDER  
SECTION 75B OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT  
AGAINST A LAWYER FOR INADEQUATE  
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

**By  
The Law Society of Singapore  
January 2023**

# **MAKING A COMPLAINT OF INADEQUATE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGAINST YOUR LAWYER**

## **1. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT OF INADEQUATE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

You can make a complaint of inadequate professional services under Section 75B of the Legal Profession Act 1966 (“the Act”) if –

- (a) You are a client and are making a complaint against your lawyer; and
- (b) You believe your lawyer had failed to provide you with adequate professional service by not meeting one or more of the standards prescribed in the Legal Profession (Professional Conduct) Rules 2015. Adequate professional service is similar to good customer care.
- (c) Three (3) years has not passed since the conduct complained of occurred.
- (d) You have made attempts or an attempt to try and resolve the matter directly with your lawyer and have not been successful in doing so.

## **2. STANDARDS OF ADEQUATE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

The standards can be described as follows:

- a) to provide diligent legal service to client;
- b) to ensure as a lawyer he is competent to represent his client;
- c) to complete work within a reasonable time;
- d) to keep the client informed on the progress of the case;
- e) to promptly acknowledging receipt of client’s money or securities;
- f) to promptly providing statement of accounts to the client;
- g) to promptly respond to client’s calls or keep appointments made with client;
- h) to explain to the client important developments in his case, such as offers of settlements;
- i) to explain to the client the manner in which he (the lawyer) would charge for services, explain to the client payments required to be made, provide an estimate of fees and deliver bills of costs to the client at regular intervals; and
- j) to discuss with the client the possible risks or expenses of proceedings arising from the case.

## **3. MANAGING A COMPLAINT OF INADEQUATE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Upon receiving the complaint and supporting documents, you will receive an acknowledgement from the Society. The Society will write to request for more information if required and will inform you of the date at which the Council will consider your complaint.

Your complaint will be referred to the Council of the Law Society of Singapore, which is the governing body of the Law Society. The Council may require further necessary information with your written complaint and will require that you support your complaint with a Statutory Declaration.

#### 4. TO MAKE A COMPLAINT OF INADEQUATE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

**Your letter of complaint should comprise the following [Refer to “Sample Letter” for example]:**

- a) Caption your letter “Complaint under Section 75B of the Legal Profession Act”.
- b) State your full name and address as in your NRIC/Passport. If you are making a complaint on behalf of a Company, LLP or MCST, you must be the authorized representative of the entity. You must also furnish a Letter of Authority stating that you are authorized to make the complaint on behalf of the entity.
- c) State the name of the lawyer you are making the complaint against and the Singapore law practice where the lawyer works. Under the Act, you cannot make a complaint against a law practice, it must be against a lawyer. Please note that you cannot complain of a lawyer’s conduct if the conduct occurred more than 3 years from the date of your complaint letter being received by the Society.
- d) Provide complete details of attempts you have made to try and resolve this matter directly with the lawyer. All efforts made by you should be recorded or documented and all replies from the lawyer should together be provided as part of your complaint letter.
- e) Identify the standard(s) of adequate professional service not met by your lawyer.
- f) For each standard identified describe how the lawyer failed to meet that standard when he had acted for you by describing in detail how you believe the lawyer had failed to provide you adequate professional service. Describe each standard’s alleged failure as a heading and below that header provide the particulars requested in this paragraph.
- g) Provide copies of all necessary documents to support your complaint. Do not send originals.
- h) State the following at the end of your letter:-

**“I/We, \_\_\_\_\_(name of Complainant{s}) confirm that the conduct complained of did not occur more than 3 years from the date of this complaint letter.**

**I/We, \_\_\_\_\_(name of Complainant{s}) hereby declare and confirm that all the information that I/we have given above are true and accurate and I/we understand and accept that there may be serious legal consequences if the information provided is false.**

**I/We \_\_\_\_\_(name of Complainant{s}) agree to provide a Statutory Declaration in support of the complaint as may be required by the Council of the Law Society.**

**I/We \_\_\_\_\_(name of Complainant{s}) agree to provide a certified translation of all documents that are not in English in support of the complaint as may be required by the Council of the Law Society.”**

- i) The complaint must be addressed to the “Director, Regulatory Department” and sent to the Law Society together with the supporting documents.
- j) The Law Society is able to accept complaints by way of email to [regulatory@lawsoc.org.sg](mailto:regulatory@lawsoc.org.sg) provided that the letter of complaint is signed and in PDF format. No hard copy of the letter is required if you have emailed us. In the alternative, you may send the requisite documents to “The Law Society of Singapore, 28 Maxwell Road, #01-03 Maxwell Chambers Suites Singapore 069120” by mail or by hand.
- k) The Law Society cannot provide advice on the merits or success of your complaint or provide legal advice before or after a complaint is made.

- l) Your letter of complaint may be in a language other than English. However, an English version must be provided to the Law Society. The English version shall be taken to be an accurate interpretation of your letter. You may subsequently be required to provide an English version of your letter that is translated by a certified individual.
- m) Copies of all necessary documents that support your complaint must be in English. If they are not written in English, you are required to provide an interpretation in English which shall be taken to be an accurate interpretation of the document. You may subsequently be required to provide an English version of the necessary document that is translated by a certified individual.
- n) For voice recordings, you are required to provide a transcription in English. You may subsequently be required to provide a transcription done by a certified individual.
- o) Please refer to the Law Society's website <https://www.lawsociety.org.sg> for further information on lodging a complaint.

**SAMPLE LETTER**

(Date)

Director of the Regulatory Department  
Law Society of Singapore  
28 Maxwell Road  
#01-03 Maxwell Chambers Suites  
Singapore 069120

Dear Sir/Madam,

**MAKING A COMPLAINT AGAINST MR ABC OF MESSRS ABC & CO UNDER SECTION 75B OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT**

1. The following are my particulars:  
Name:  
Address:  
Contact No.:
2. The lawyer I wish to make a complaint against:  
Name:  
Singapore law practice:
3. I have previously attempted to contact the solicitor with a view to resolving the matter and the lawyer [please state your reasons for not being able to resolve this matter directly with the lawyer e.g. the lawyer ignored my attempts to resolve the matter amicably with him/has discussed the matter with me but I am not agreeable to the terms he has suggested/is no longer contactable, etc...]. Attached are the complete details of my attempts to resolve this matter directly with the lawyer and his response (please attach all correspondence from the lawyer in relation to this matter).
4. As my attempts to resolve the matter with the lawyer has not been successful, I am laying a complaint against the lawyer for:
  - (a) Failure to provide diligent legal service
  - (b) Failure to ensure as a lawyer he was competent to represent his client
  - (c) Failure to complete work within a reasonable time, etc
5. Particulars of the complaints are as follows:
  - (a) Failure to provide diligent legal service**  
[Provide particulars specific to his alleged complaint, e.g. – “on 20/01/12, during a meeting with the lawyer I instructed him to ... ..”]  
  
[Attach copies of the documents mentioned in your particulars, e.g. Warrant to Act, Order of Court, other documents prepared by lawyer, invoices, receipts, letters, faxes, emails etc]
  - (b) Failure to ensure as a lawyer he was competent to represent his client**  
[Provide particulars specific to his alleged failure + copies of supporting documents]
  - (c) Failure to complete work within a reasonable time**  
[Provide particulars specific to his alleged failure + copies of supporting documents]
6. I/We, \_\_\_\_\_(name of Complainant{s}) confirm that the conduct complained of did not occur more than 3 years from the date of this complaint letter.
7. I/We \_\_\_\_\_(name of Complainant{s}) hereby declare and confirm that all the information that I/we have given above are true and accurate and I/we understand and accept that there may be serious legal consequences if the information provided is false.
8. I/We \_\_\_\_\_(name of Complainant{s}) agree to provide a Statutory Declaration in support of the complaint as may be required by the Council of the Law Society.

9. I/We \_\_\_\_\_(name of Complainant{s}) agree to provide a certified translation/transcription of all documents that are not in English in support of the complaint as may be required by the Council of the Law Society.”

Yours faithfully,

**Signature(s)**

[All complainants must sign the letter. Where the complaint is on behalf of a Company, LLP or MCST, a Letter of Authority must be furnished and the authorized Representative must sign the letter.]

(To be used for declarations by individual persons)

**STATUTORY DECLARATION UNDER THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS ACT 2000**  
***in support of a complaint against an advocate and solicitor made under Section 75B of***  
***the Legal Profession Act 1966***

I, ..... (name), a ..... (occupation)  
residing at ..... (address) do  
solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:-

- 1) all the statements made by me in my letter of complaint dated the ..... day of ..... 20..... to the Council of the Law Society of Singapore (hereinafter called "**my Letter of Complaint**") are true on every point material to the complaint and there are no other particulars or additional information relevant to my complaint;
- 2) the conduct complained of in my Letter of Complaint did not occur more than three (3) years prior to the date of my Letter of Complaint<sup>1</sup>;
- 3) I have/have not\* attempted to contact the solicitor complained of with a view to resolve the matter<sup>2</sup>;
- 4) to the best of my knowledge there has been no other complaint made to the Council of Law Society of Singapore by me or any other person related or connected with me which arises from the same set of facts and particulars detailed in my "my Letter of Complaint"; and
- 5) I have not commenced any other proceedings or sought any other remedy against the solicitor named in my letter of complaint which arise from the same set of facts and particulars detailed in my letter of complaint<sup>3</sup>.

I understand that any person who makes in a statutory declaration a statement which is false and which he knows or has reason to believe is false or does not believe to be true touching any point material to the object for which the statutory declaration is made or used, commits an offence under the Oaths and Declarations Act 2000 for which upon conviction a person may be liable to be imprisoned for a term that may extend to 7 years and a fine.

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule 2 of the Legal Profession Act 1966 Section 1(2): "*The Council — (a) must not take any of the directions pursuant to a complaint of the conduct of the solicitor, if the complaint is made to the Society after the expiry of a period of 3 years from the date of the conduct; and ...*"

<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 of the Legal Profession Act 1966 Section 1(3): "*In determining in any case whether it is appropriate to take any of the directions, the Council may - ... (c) where the client has attempted to contact the solicitor with a view to resolving a matter, have regard to whether the solicitor has responded to the client or attempted to resolve the matter.*"

<sup>3</sup> Schedule 2 of the Legal Profession Act 1966 Section 1(3): "*In determining in any case whether it is appropriate to take any of the directions, the Council may - (a) have regard to the existence of any remedy which it is reasonable to expect to be available to the client in civil proceedings; ...*"

**\* Choose one only and delete the item which is inapplicable**

*(To be used for declarations by individual persons)*

**AND**

I make this solemn declaration by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths and Declarations Act 2000 and subject to the penalties provided by that Act for the making of false statements in statutory declarations, conscientiously believing the statements contained in this declaration to be true in every particular.

Declared at \_\_\_\_\_ )

By \_\_\_\_\_ )

This day \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ ) (signature)

**Before me,**

**Commissioner for Oaths/Notary Public**



(For use for declarations made on behalf of corporate bodies)

**STATUTORY DECLARATION UNDER THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS ACT 2000**  
***in support of a complaint against an advocate and solicitor made under Section 75B of***  
***the Legal Profession Act 1966***

I, ..... (name), a ..... (occupation)  
residing at ..... (address) do  
solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:-

1. I am duly authorized by \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal) to make the complaint dated the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_ to the Council of the Law Society (hereinafter called "**the Letter of Complaint**");
2. the facts stated in the Letter of Complaint signed by me on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal) are within my personal knowledge or derived from documents placed before me and are true on every point material to the complaint and there are no other particulars or additional information relevant to the complaint;
3. all the statements made by me in the Letter of Complaint are true on every point material to the complaint and there are no other particulars or additional information relevant to my complaint;
4. the conduct complained of in the Letter of Complaint did not occur more than three (3) years prior to the date of the Letter of Complaint<sup>1</sup>;
5. I have/have not\* attempted to contact the solicitor complained of with a view to resolve the matter<sup>2</sup>;
6. to the best of my knowledge there has been no other complaint made to the Council of Law Society of Singapore by me or any other person related or connected with me which arises from the same set of facts and particulars detailed in the Letter of Complaint; and
7. I have not commenced any other proceedings or sought any other remedy against the solicitor named in the letter of complaint which arise from the same set of facts and particulars detailed in the letter of complaint<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Schedule 2 of the Legal Profession Act 1966 Section 1(3): "*In determining in any case whether it is appropriate to take any of the directions, the Council may - (a) have regard to the existence of any remedy which it is reasonable to expect to be available to the client in civil proceedings; ...*"

**\* Choose one only and delete the item which is inapplicable**

*(For use for declarations made on behalf of corporate bodies)*

I understand that any person who makes in a statutory declaration a statement which is false and which he knows or has reason to believe is false or does not believe to be true touching any point material to the object for which the statutory declaration is made or used, commits an offence under the Oaths and Declarations Act 2000 for which upon conviction a person may be liable to be imprisoned for a term that may extend to 7 years and a fine.

**AND**

I make this solemn declaration by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths and Declarations Act 2000 and subject to the penalties provided by that Act for the making of false statements in statutory declarations, conscientiously believing the statements contained in this declaration to be true in every particular.

Declared at \_\_\_\_\_ )

By \_\_\_\_\_ )

This day \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ ) (signature)

**Before me,**

**Commissioner for Oaths/Notary Public**