Data Protection Complaints Policy

We are committed to protecting personal data. We take all complaints regarding the handling of personal data seriously. This policy sets out what you need to do when you have a data protection complaint.

1. Purpose and scope

Risdons Solicitors has complaints handling obligations under the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (DUAA). If an individual considers that we have breached data protection laws, they have the right to make a complaint directly to us.

A data protection complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction regarding how we have handled personal data, including insecure data handling, failure to meet data protection rights (e.g. the right of access, correction or erasure) or unfair or unlawful processing.

This Policy outlines our approach to handling data protection complaints. It applies to all employees, workers, contractors and third parties acting on our behalf.

2. Guiding principles

We are committed to handling data protection complaints in line with our legal obligations and in an accessible, fair, transparent and timely manner. We will handle complaints confidentially and only share information where appropriate to investigate and resolve the complaint, as required or authorised by law or otherwise in accordance with our privacy policies. We will aim to avoid conflicts of interest.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Our Data Compliance Manager is responsible for co-ordinating how we handle data protection complaints. They will involve relevant business, HR, IT, security, risk or compliance teams as needed.

All staff are responsible for recognising complaints and referring them to the Data Compliance Manger promptly as well as for providing supporting information and responding to requests from Data Compliance Manager when asked.

The Data Compliance Manager is responsible for ensuring staff are aware of and trained sufficiently to deal with data protection complaints.

4. Transparency

We will provide information about how to submit a data protection complaint. We will make this obvious and easily accessible to individuals, including in our privacy notices, via our website, in person when requested and, where relevant, through internal channels. Using plain and clear language, we will explain:

- Our data protection complaints process.
- How individuals can make a data protection complaint.
- How we will respond if we consider the complaint is not a data protection matter.
- The available complaint channels.
- The information we require to investigate a complaint such as any supporting documentation including, contact details, unique reference numbers, account numbers.
- What we do with that information and why (for example, investigations, establishing the facts, complaint resolution).
- How we handle complaints which might be sensitive in nature.
- What individuals can expect from the process.
- When individuals can expect to hear from us, including status update communications such as acknowledgements, progress updates and outcomes.
- Any reasonable support we provide to help individuals make complaints such as alternative formats or language options.

5. Non-data protection complaints

Some complaints will include both data protection and non-data protection issues; we will handle the data protection aspects under this Policy. Non-data protection issues will be addressed under the separate Complaints Handling Policy.

6. Complaints involving children or vulnerable individuals

Children and vulnerable individuals have the same fundamental data privacy rights as adults. Where we receive a complaint from, or on behalf of, a child or other vulnerable individual, we will follow the procedure below which sets out safeguards and requirements to ensure our process is fair, transparent and accessible to the individuals concerned, having regard to age, understanding and any other relevant circumstances.

- All responses will be written in plain, clear and age-appropriate language.
- We will assess the child's competence to understand their rights and exercise a complaint. In the UK, children age 12 and over are generally presumed competent, but each case is assessed on an individual basis. If there is any doubt about a child's or vulnerable individuals' capacity to understand the complaint process or consequences, we may engage with their parent or legal guardian on their behalf to resolve the concern safely.
- Children and vulnerable individuals may be assisted by a parent, carer, guardian, or advocate when making a complaint.
- Complaints received directly from or concerning children or vulnerable individuals will be investigated as a priority, ensuring responses are provided without lengthy delays.
- When a parent or representative complains on a child's behalf, we will consider the child's best interests, rights, and privacy. If the child is deemed capable of managing their own rights, we may seek consent directly from the child.

7. Complaint channels

People may submit a data protection complaint to us using any of the following options:

- By email to edward.judge@risdons.co.uk
- By post to Mr Edward Judge, 1 Mendip House, High Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3SX
- By telephone at 01823 251571
- By clicking on the contact us button on the website

- By speaking to any team member when visiting any of our offices.

Where a complaint is made through social media or another insecure public channel, we will ask the complainant to continue the complaint through a more secure method to protect their data.

8. Requesting additional information

Some complaints may be easy to resolve; others may require further investigation. Where reasonably necessary to investigate a complaint, we may ask the complainant for additional information, including information to verify their identity or to clarify the scope of the complaint. We will only request information that is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances and will not request more information than we require to identify the complainant or their representative.

Where a complaint is made on behalf of another individual, we may require evidence such as a power of attorney or signed letter of authority indicating that their representative is authorised to act on their behalf. We cannot progress complaints unless adequate proof of authority is provided. Where this is the case, we will explain it to the person who submitted the complaint.

9. Complaints to or about processors or partners

Where a complaint received by us relates to the processing of personal information by our service providers, we will ask these providers to provide us with details and information relevant to the complaint without undue delay and in accordance with any agreed and specified terms within our contract with the service provider.

Where a service provider receives a complaint about the processing of our personal data whether by them or us, they should forward this to us without undue delay. Service providers are under no obligation to handle complaints on our behalf unless this has been agreed between us and the relevant service provider(s) under a binding contract. Where applicable, we will ask service providers to handle such complaints in line with our policies and procedures.

10. Record keeping

We will keep appropriate records about each data protection complaint in our complaints register. Records include:

- The date of receipt.
- The acknowledgement.
- Any relevant correspondence, conversations and documents.
- The outcome of the complaint, including escalation, and any actions taken in response.

These records will be used to demonstrate compliance, for audit and monitoring purposes, training, to support consistent handling and to identify recurring issues, trends or areas for organisational improvements or remediation.

We will not retain personal data relating to complaints for longer than is necessary and will handle such records in accordance with our Records Retention Schedule and data protection policies.

11. Acknowledgement and timeframes

For complaints received on or after 19 June 2026, we must acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 30 days of receipt.

We will aim to:

- Request any further information including for clarification or identification purposes within fifteen working days.

- Provide updates at least every 30 days.
- Reach an outcome within 60 working days.

For ongoing investigations, we will communicate this to individuals with an indication of our initial, anticipated timescales for resolving the complaint. We will continue to keep the complainant informed of our progress, including, where appropriate, the next steps, any further information required, and any expected timeframe for the next update, or outcome.

12. Investigations

We will take reasonable and proportionate steps necessary to investigate complaints fairly and in a timely manner.

It may take us longer to investigate and resolve complaints which are complex, serious or which relate to multiple data protection issues.

13. Outcomes and escalation

We will communicate the outcome of the complaint to the complainant without undue delay, explaining our findings, whether the complaint is upheld (in whole or in part), any action taken or proposed, and, where no action is taken, the reasons for that decision.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they have the right to complain directly to the Information Commission's Office (ICO), the UK's supervisory authority: Information Commission's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

14. Monitoring and audits

We will routinely monitor and audit our data protection complaint handling to ensure we can maintain performance levels in line with our legal obligations, our own performance targets and to demonstrate our compliance.