

Boels Zanders Advocaten Complaints Handling Scheme

Article 1 definitions

In this complaints handling scheme, the following terms will have the meanings assigned to them below:

- *complaint*: every written expression of dissatisfaction from or on behalf of a client with respect to the lawyer or the persons working under his or her responsibility regarding the conclusion and implementation of a contract for services, the quality of the services or the level of the fee statement, not being a complaint as referred to in paragraph 4 of the Dutch Counsel Act (*Advocatenwet*);
- *complainant*: the client or his or her representative who has made a complaint known;
- *complaints officer*: the lawyer who is charged with dealing with a complaint;
- *complaints procedure*: the procedure applicable at the firm for dealing with complaints;
- *complaints handling scheme*: this document, being the written description of the complaints procedure applicable within Boels Zanders.

Article 2 scope of application

1. This complaints handling scheme will apply to every contract for services between Boels Zanders and the client.
2. Every Boels Zanders lawyer will ensure that complaints are dealt with in accordance with the complaints handling scheme.

Article 3 aims

The aims of this complaints handling scheme are:

- a. laying down a procedure for handling complaints of clients in a constructive manner and within a reasonable period;
- b. laying down a procedure to determine the causes of complaints from clients;
- c. maintaining and improving existing relationships by means of an effective complaints handling scheme;
- d. training staff to respond to complaints in a client-oriented manner;
- e. guaranteeing and improving the quality of services by dealing with and analysing complaints.

Article 4 providing information at the start of the service provision

1. This complaints handling scheme has been made public. When the contract for services is entered into, the lawyer will inform the client that Boels Zanders has a complaints handling scheme and that this scheme applies to any provision of services.
2. Complaints as referred to in Article 1 of this complaints handling scheme that cannot be solved after being dealt with may be submitted (if desired) to the competent district court.

Article 5 internal complaints procedure

1. If a client submits a complaint to the firm, the complaint will be passed on to the complaints officer.
2. The complaints officer will inform the person against whom the complaint is directed (in so far as the complaint has not already been submitted via the lawyer in question) and will give the complainant and subsequently the person against whom the complaint is being made the opportunity to explain or to respond.
3. The person against whom the complaint is being made will attempt as far as possible to arrive at a solution with the client, whether or not following the intervention of the complaints officer.
4. The lawyer involved or the complaints officer will ensure that the complaint is dealt with properly, with due observance of this complaints handling scheme.
5. The complainant will receive a detailed response within four weeks of the receipt of the complaint or, if that is not possible, a statement giving the reasons why this term is being deviated from and indicating the period within which a detailed response will be given.

Article 6 confidentiality and free complaints handling

1. The complaints officer and the person against whom the complaint is directed will observe confidentiality when handling the complaint.
2. The complainant will not owe any fee to cover the costs of dealing with the complaint.

Article 7 responsibilities

1. The complaints officer will be responsible for the proper and timely handling of the complaint.
2. The person against whom the complaint is directed will keep the complaints officer informed of any contacts and a possible solution.
3. The complaints officer will keep the complainant informed regarding the handling of the complaint.
4. The complaints officer will keep a complaint file.

Article 8 complaint registration

1. The complaints officer will register the complaint.
2. A complaint may involve several subjects.
3. The complaints officer will report periodically to the Executive Board and the compliance officer regarding the handling of complaints and will make recommendations where necessary to prevent new complaints, as well as to improve procedures or services.

Article 9 preventive action

1. On the basis of an annual analysis of complaints, Boels Zanders may decide to take preventive measures to improve the quality of services.
2. The analysis the measures to be adopted are part of the periodic evaluation and the annual planning process.

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