

CHAMBERS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**1. Aim**

Our aim is to give you a good service at all times. However if you have a complaint you are invited to let us know as soon as possible.

2. Complaints made by Telephone

- a. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 3 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the barrister concerned or, if the complaint is about a member of staff, the Senior Clerk - Clive Petchey. If the complaint is about the Senior Clerk please telephone the Chairman of the Chambers Management Committee – who is currently Robin Hollington QC. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. He will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved he will record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with it and record that you are satisfied. You may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing.
- b. If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone this will be acknowledged in writing and you will be invited to write to us about it within the next 14 days so it can be investigated formally.

3. Complaints made in Writing

- a. Please give the following details:
 - (1) Your name and address.
 - (2) Which member(s) of chambers you are complaining about.
 - (3) The detail of the complaint.
 - (4) And what you would like done about it.
- b. Please address your letter to:

Chairman
Chambers Management Committee
New Square Chambers
12 New Square
Lincoln's Inn
LONDON
WC2A 3SW

4. Procedure

- a. Your letter will be acknowledged on receipt and within 14 days, the Head of Chambers or, in his absence, his deputy will appoint a person of suitable experience and seniority, being either a member of Chambers or the Senior Clerk, to investigate it. If

your complaint is against the Head of Chambers it will be investigated by the Deputy head of Chambers unless he considers it appropriate to appoint another member of Chambers. A complaint against a member of staff will ordinarily be investigated by the Senior Clerk. In any case, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

- b. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know s/he has been appointed and that s/he will endeavour to reply to your complaint within 14 days. If s/he considers at the outset or finds later that s/he is not going to be able to reply within 14 days s/he will set a new date for s/his reply and inform you. Her/His reply will set out:
 - (1) The nature and scope of her/his investigation.
 - (2) Her/His conclusion on each complaint and the basis for it.
 - (3) If s/he finds that you are justified in your complaint, her/his proposals for resolving the matter.
- c. If your complaint includes a request that any outstanding fees should be remitted or reduced all procedures for collecting such fees will be suspended until 14 days after you have received the reply to your complaint.

5. **Confidentiality**

All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent that is necessary for the purpose of investigating the complaint or improving the administration of Chambers in the light of the complaint. Disclosure will be to the head of chambers, members of our management committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister member or staff of whom you have complained, the head and the person who investigates the complaint.

6. **Our Policy**

As part of our commitment to client care we make a written record of any complaint. The chairman of our management committee inspects the record annually with a view to proposing to the committee changes designed to improve our services.

7. **Complaints to the Bar Standards Board (professional body for barristers)**

We hope that you will use our procedure. However, if you would rather not do so or are unhappy with the outcome, you do have the choice of taking up your complaint with the Bar Standards Board if your complaint concerns a matter with compliance with the Bar Code of Conduct's rules of professional conduct. You can write to them at:

Complaints and Hearings Team
Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7HZ
Complaints Information Line: 020 7611 1445

Fax: 020 7611 1342

8. **Legal Ombudsman's Office**

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which a complaint regarding an act or omission in the course of providing services has been investigated and or resolved by us, you may contact the Legal Ombudsman for free advice or to make a complaint. Details are as follows:

Telephone: 0300 555 0333 or email: at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Office hours are from 8.30am to 5.30pm to answer your calls or in writing at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 15870,
BIRMINGHAM
B30 9EB.

The Ombudsman will deal with service complaints itself but will not investigate complaints of professional misconduct or be involved in the consideration of disciplinary issues. Neither will it consider complaints previously considered by the Bar Standards Board. However, the Ombudsman's office will refer all conduct issues relating to barristers to the Bar Standards Board. Ordinarily, a complainant must refer a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of the date of Chambers' written response to a complaint if that written response prominently included: (a) an explanation that the Legal Ombudsman was available if the complainant remained dissatisfied; and (b) full contact details of the Legal Ombudsman and a warning that the complaint must be referred to the Legal Ombudsman within six months. The ordinary time limit for making a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman will be one year from the act/omission or one year from the date that the complainant should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint without taking advice from a third party.