

Chambers Complaints Procedure

1. Aim

We want to give the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy with the service we have provided to you or you have concerns about your bill then you should inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve the problem for you. We have a procedure in place which details how we handle complaints. It is set out below.

2. Complaints made by Telephone

- 2.1. 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 Head of Clerking. If the complaint is about a barrister please ask to speak to the Head of Chambers. 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.
- 2.2. 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

- 3.1. Please give the following details:
 - 3.1.1. your name and address;
 - 3.1.2. which member(s) of Chambers you are complaining about;
 - 3.1.3. the detail of the complaint;
 - 3.1.4. and what you would like done about it.
- 3.2. Please address your letter to: Head of Chambers, New Square Chambers, 12 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, LONDON WC2A 3SW

4. Procedure

- 4.1. Your letter will be acknowledged on receipt and within 14 days, the Head of Chambers or, in his absence, his deputy will appoint a member of Chambers of suitable experience and seniority, 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 be investigated by the Head of Chambers. In any case, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.
- 4.2. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know who has been appointed and that they will endeavour to reply to your complaint within 14 days. If s/he considers at the outset or finds later that they are not going to be able to reply within 14 days, a new date will be set for the reply and you will be informed of this.
The reply will set out:
 - 4.2.1. the nature and scope of their investigation;

- 4.2.2.the conclusion on each complaint and the basis for it;
- 4.2.3.if s/he finds that you are justified in your complaint, the proposals for resolving the matter;
- 4.3. 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 member of staff of whom you have complained, the Head and the person investigating the complaint.

6. Our Policy

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

7. Legal Ombudsman

- 7.1. We have eight weeks to consider your complaint. If we are unable to help you, then you can have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman.
- 7.2. The Legal Ombudsman investigates problems about poor service from lawyers.
- 7.3. The Legal Ombudsman's time limits for investigating complaints are:
 - 7.3.1.within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint; and
 - 7.3.2.six years from the date of act/omission; or
 - 7.3.3.three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint (if the act took place more than six years ago).
- 7.4. The act or omission, or when you should have reasonably known there was cause for complaint, must have been after 5 October 2010.
- 7.5. If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman his contact details are as follows:
 - 7.5.1.visit www.legalombudsman.org.uk;
 - 7.5.2.call: 0300 555 0333 between 8.30 am to 5.30 pm;
 - 7.5.3.calls to 03 numbers will cost no more than calls to national geographic numbers (starting 01 or 02) from both mobiles and landlines and will be included as part of any inclusive call minutes or discount schemes in the same way as geographic calls;
 - 7.5.4.calls are recorded and may be used for training and monitoring purposes;
 - 7.5.5.for minicom call 0300 555 1777;
 - 7.5.6.email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk;
 - 7.5.7.Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6806, WOLVERHAMPTON, WV1 9WJ.
- 7.6. Do not send original documents to the Legal Ombudsman. His office will scan any documents you send them to make computer copies and then destroy the originals.

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