

## **Chambers Complaints Procedure**

1. Barristers and staff at 4 Paper Buildings always strive to maintain the highest standards of service. However if you have a complaint you are invited to let us know as soon as possible. We take any cause for dissatisfaction seriously and it is our policy to investigate fully any complaint. We aim to learn from any mistakes so as to improve our service in the future. It is not necessary to involve solicitors in order to make your complaint but you are free to do so should you wish.
2. Please note that Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within one year of the act or omission complained of.

### **Complaints made by telephone**

3. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 5 and 6 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the Senior Clerk, Michael Reeves. He 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 the outcome and record that you are satisfied. You may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing.
4. If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone you will be invited to write to us about it so it can be investigated formally.

### **Complaints in writing**

5. Please give the following details:
  - Your name and address;
  - Which member(s) of Chambers or member(s) or staff you are complaining about;
  - The detail of the complaint; and
  - What you would like done about it.

Please address your letter to Complaints, Chambers Manager, 4 Paper Buildings, Temple, London EC4Y 7EX. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days.

6. If the complaint is about a barrister the matter will be referred to the head of the Complaints Committee Christopher Hames QC; if the complaint is about a member of the staff it will be referred to Michael Reeves.  
Within 14 days of your letter being received an experienced member of the Complaints Committee or senior member of staff from the complaints panel will be appointed to investigate it. The person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.
  
7. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know that he has been appointed and that he will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If he finds later that he is not going to be able to reply within 14 days he will set a new date for the reply and inform you. The reply will set out:
  - The nature and scope of his investigation
  - His conclusion on each complaint and the basis for his conclusion
  - If he finds that you are justified in your complaint, his proposals for resolving the complaint.

### **Confidentiality**

8. All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent that is necessary. 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 or member of staff who you have complained about and the person who investigates the complaint. The Legal Ombudsman and The Bar Standards Board are entitled to inspect the documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

### **Our Policy**

9. As part of our commitment to client care we make a written record of any complaint and retain all documents and correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six years. Our management committee may inspect an anonymised record of complaints with a view to improving services.

### **If you are not happy with the our investigation**

10. You must have tried resolving you complaint with us first but if we are unable to help you then you can have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman.

The Legal Ombudsman investigates problems about poor service from lawyers. Their time limits for investigating complaints are:

i) within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint;

**and**

ii) Six years from the date of act/omission; or

iii) Three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint (if the act took place more than six years ago).

The act or omission, or when you should have reasonably known there was cause for complaint, must have been after 5 October 2010.

If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman their contact details are as follows:

Visit [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

Call 0300 555 0333 between 8.30am to 5.30pm.

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.

Calls are recorded and may be used for training and monitoring purposes.

For minicom call 0300 555 1777

Email [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk).

Legal Ombudsman  
PO Box 6806,  
Wolverhampton,  
WV1 9WJ

Please do not send original documents to the Legal Ombudsman. They will scan any documents you send us to make computer copies and then destroy the originals.

11. If you are not the Barrister's client and are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation then please contact the Bar Standards Board at:

The Assessment Team  
Professional Conduct Department  
Bar Standards Board  
Professional Conduct Department  
289-293 High Holborn  
London  
WC1V 7JZ

[www.barstandardsboard.org.uk](http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk)

Telephone: 0207 6111 444