

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 informally on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the Senior Clerk, Michael Reeves on 0207 427 5200. He will discuss the details of your complaint with you 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 should 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 individual member(s) of Chambers or member(s) or staff you are complaining about;
 - The detail of the complaint;
 - The date or the dates of the conduct you are complaining;
 - If a member of chambers was instructed on your behalf, the name of the firm of solicitors and the individual who conducted your case
 - What you would like done about it.

Please address your letter to Complaints, Furhana Mallick, Chambers Manager and either send to by email to frm@4pb.com or by post to Ms Mallick at 4 Paper Buildings, Temple, London EC4Y 7EX. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days and

then your complaint will be referred to the Head of the Complaints Committee, Christopher Hames QC.

6. Within 14 days of your letter being received an experienced member of the Complaints Committee will be appointed to investigate it. The person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about and will not have had any other involvement in the case about which you are complaining.
7. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know that they have been appointed and will provide you with a written report replying to your complaint within 28 days. If they find later that they not going to be able to reply within 28 days they will set a new date for the reply and inform you. The report will set out:
 - The nature and scope of their investigation, including the documents considered
 - The conclusion on each complaint and the basis for the conclusion
 - If they find that you are justified in your complaint, their 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. Barristers may have an obligation to inform their insurance company of any complaints. 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. Disclosure may, depending on the circumstances, to the solicitor who has instructed the member of chambers on your behalf.
9. Please also note the following:
 - (i) We will only investigate your complaint if it is about conduct concerning you. We will not investigate a complaint which in our opinion is made on behalf of another person.
 - (ii) We may seek further information or documentation either from you or from the solicitor who has instructed the member of chambers on your behalf. If either you or the solicitor do not comply with any such request, it may not be possible for us to conclude the report on all or part of your complaint.

- (iii) We may investigate a complaint even if you were not the client of a member of chambers; but in these circumstances we will always bear in mind that it is the client who is owed the primary professional duty by a member of chambers
- (iv) If your complaint is about advice on an issue of law, we will not usually be able to express an opinion on whether or not that advice is correct.
- (v) If you wish to attach documents to your letter of complaint, please do not send us originals. If this is unavoidable, please take and keep copies. We cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage caused to original documents you send us.

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 ten years. Our management committee may inspect an anonymised record of complaints with a view to improving services.

What happens if I don't agree with your views on the complaint?

10. If we are unable to resolve the complaint with you then you can have the complaint independently looked at by the Legal Ombudsman.

The Legal Ombudsman investigates problems about poor service from Lawyers. Before accepting a complaint for investigation the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

- Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint **and**
- No more than six years from the date of act/omission; or
- No more than three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman please contact them:

Visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 9am to 5pm.

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Write: Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

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
289-293 High Holborn, London. WC1V 7JZ
www.barstandardsboard.org.uk
Telephone: 0207 6111 444