



Updated: 14/1/2022

COMPLAINTS POLICY



Updated: 14/1/2022

Chambers Complaints Procedure and Handling:-

1. 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. 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 the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for service complaints about lawyers, has a time limit of six years within which to make your complaint from the date of the problem happening; provided that the complaint is made to it within three years from when you found out about it; and the complaint is referred to it within six months of our final response. However only certain clients have the ability to make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman and you should check whether this is the case or not. Chambers must therefore have regard to the LO timeframe when deciding whether we are able to investigate your complaint. Chambers will not however ordinarily deal with complaints that fall outside of the period of twelve months from the matter which is the subject of the complaint.

Complaints Made by Telephone

3. Complaints can be made by telephone, but we urge clients to make their complaint in writing as then it is clear, and you are able to expand on the points you wish to raise. Please follow the procedure in paragraph 5 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the individual nominated below: -

Mr Lee Cook – Principal Clerk – 020 7822 7000

If the complaint is about the above-named person please contact

Miss Suzanne Palmer - 020 7822 7000

The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. They will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved they 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 within the next 14 days so it can be investigated formally.



Updated: 14/1/2022

Complaints made in Writing

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

Please address your letter to Mr Lee Cook, Principal Clerk at the address below. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

6. Our Head of Chambers and Principal clerk considers any written complaint and will involve other senior members of chambers where necessary, and are likely to delegate any investigation and response to Chambers' Complaints Officer, Suzanne Palmer (or, if the complaint is made against Ms. Palmer, to an appropriate nominated member of the Chambers Management Committee) who will investigate it within 35 days of your letter being received. In any case, 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 they have been appointed and that they will reply to your complaint within 49 days in accordance with the timeline set out below. If they find later that they are not going to be able to reply within 49 days they will set a new date for the reply and inform you. The reply will set out:
 - The nature and scope of the investigation;
 - the conclusions on each complaint and the basis for those conclusions; and
 - If there is a finding that you are justified in your complaint, 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, the Complaints Officer, and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or staff member who you have complained about, the Head of Chambers and Head of the relevant Team (or in the case of a staff member, the Principal Clerk) and the person who investigates the complaint. The Bar Standards Board is entitled to inspect



Updated: 14/1/2022

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 seven years. Our management committee inspects an anonymised record regularly with a view to improving services.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

10. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation you may (if you fall within the categories of persons who are able to do so) take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for complaints about lawyers, at the conclusion of our consideration of your complaint. The Ombudsman is not able to consider your complaint until it has first been investigated by Chambers. Please note that the time limits for making a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman set out in paragraph 2 above. You can write to them at:

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

Telephone number: 0300 555 0333

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Complaints against Regulated Mediators

11. This policy applies to complaints against Regulated Mediators which are made to Chambers.
12. In addition, where the Regulated Mediator is a member of the Civil Mediation Council (which we will confirm to you at the time of the acknowledgement of the complaint) and the complaint relates to their conduct as a mediator, if you are unsatisfied with our response you may in certain circumstances be able to appeal to the Civil Mediation Council. Details of the appeal process can be found here: <https://civilmediation.org/for-the-public/complaints/>.

Handling of your complaint (time line 49 days)

- Complaint received (Telephone or Written)
- Acknowledge complaint (7 days)
- Copy complaint to Member of chambers or staff giving 14 days to respond (7 days)
- Copy complaint to Complaints Officer -7 days
- Investigation -14 days
- Written decision to Complainant -7 days

Chambers aims to deal with complaints in accordance with the time-line set out above, although it may not always be possible to meet these deadlines and, if that is the case, we will aim to explain to you why it has not been possible to do so and provide you with revised deadlines as appropriate.