

Complaints Procedure

Chambers will only consider complaints made within 12 months of the act or omission complained of (or 12 months of the date when you knew or could reasonably have been expected to know that there was reason for making the complaint), unless in the absolute discretion of Head of Chambers, this time limit is waived.

As part of our commitment to client care we make a written record of all complaints and retain all correspondence and other documents generated by complaints for 7 years.

1. Complaints made by Telephone

In line with our friendly and open approach, in the first instance, we would always encourage you to discuss any concerns about the services of our barristers directly with them. Any such concern can also always be raised with Head of Chambers, Steven Snowden KC and our Director of Clerking, Oliver Parkhouse.

Any concern about members of staff should be raised with Oliver Parkhouse, or Business Operations Manager, Rachel Lockhart, appropriate. If the complaint is about either the Director of Clerking or the Business Operations Manager, please discuss the matter with the Head of Chambers.

If your complaint is about the Head of Chambers, ask to speak to the next most senior member of the Complaints Panel who is available.

We would very much hope that the matter can be resolved at this point, and that you will be satisfied with the outcome.

The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. Your concerns will be discussed with an aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved the outcome will be recorded in writing.

If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone you will be invited to write to us about it so that it can be investigated formally.

2. Complaints made in writing

Please address your formal letter of complaint to Head of Chambers. If your complaint is about the Head of Chambers, then please address your letter to the Complaints Panel.

In any case, the person investigating the complaint will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

Please give the following details:

- Your name and address;
- Which Member(s) of Chambers, Pupils, Staff Member you are complaining about;
- The details of your complaint; and

- What you would like done about it.

We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with, including the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint and a description of their role in Chambers.

The person appointed to investigate your complaint will complete a report of their investigation and reply to your complaint within 8 weeks of receipt of the written complaint. If there are exceptional circumstances which mean that the investigation cannot be concluded within that time, you will be informed accordingly and realistic time frame set.

The investigators report will set out:

- The nature and scope of the investigation;
- The conclusions on each complaint and the reason for the conclusions;
- If they find that you are justified (in whole or in part), the report will provide proposals for resolving the complaint;
- Your right to complain to the legal Ombudsman and the Bar Standards Board, the time frame for doing so and full details of how to contact them.

A copy of the report will also be provided to the barrister/member of staff complained against.

If the complaint concerns a Civil Mediation Council registered mediator, the complaint will be investigated and responded to (by somebody other than the mediator who is the subject of the complaint) in the manner described above but, in line with the Civil Mediation Council standards, within 21 working days of receipt of the complaint. If further time is required to complete the investigation, the complainant will be notified of this in writing. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, he or she may be able to appeal to the Civil Mediation Council, the details of which can be found here: <https://civilmediation.org/for-the-public/complaints/>

Confidentiality

All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent necessary, for the purposes of investigating and resolving the complaint, to:

- The complainant
- Head of Chambers
- Members of the Complaints Panel
- Investigator

And for other purposes such as:

- Internal Chambers review – to improve practices.
- Complying with requests from the Legal Ombudsman and Bar standards Board
- Complying with any requirement of a Court or other legal authority.

Policy

Chambers welcomes feedback and take complaints very seriously.

The Head of Chambers inspects the complaints record regularly and, along with the Management Committee will consider the number of complaints received, the subject areas of the complaint and the outcomes, with a view to improving services.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

Clients can complain to Legal Ombudsman if they are unhappy with the final response to their complaint, or if their complaint has not been dealt with in eight weeks; and

Clients who have a right to complain to Legal Ombudsman are individuals and, broadly speaking, small businesses and charities. The full list of who has a right to complain to Legal Ombudsman is available on their website: <http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/?faqs=who-can-use-our-service>.

You can write to the Legal Ombudsman at:

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

Telephone number: 0300 555 0333.

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

More information about the Legal Ombudsman is available on their website: <http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/>

The Legal Ombudsman has time limits in which a complaint must be raised with them. The time limits are:

- The act/omission, or when you should reasonably have known there was a cause for complaint, must have been after 5 October 2010; and
- You must complain to the Legal Ombudsman either within six years of your barrister's act/omission to act, or no later than three years after you should reasonably have known there were grounds to complain; and
- You must also complain to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving your barrister's final response to your complaint.'

Decision data on Legal Ombudsman's website is:

<http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/raisingstandards/data-and-decisions/#ombudsman-decision-data>

The decision data shows which providers have received an ombudsman's decision in the previous 12 months. In each case, the data shows whether Legal Ombudsman required the provider to give the consumer a remedy.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, alternative complaints bodies such as [Pro Mediate](#) also exist, which is competent to deal with complaints about legal services, should you and the barrister wish to use such a scheme.

If you wish to use Pro Mediate please contact us to discuss this. Please note that:

- The time limit to contact Pro Mediate is one month after our conclusion is sent to you; and
- If mediation is used, neither you nor the barrister is required to accept the proposed resolution. If mediation does not resolve the complaint, you may still make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman, as set out above.

Bar Standards Board

The Bar Standards Board investigates complaints of professional misconduct or professional disciplinary issues.

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

Alternatively, you can visit:
www.barstandardsboard.org.uk