

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Our aim is to give you a good service at all times. We will do everything in our power to ensure that your objectives in using our service are achieved efficiently and economically. 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.

This procedure is concerned with what happens if you feel that the quality of service that we have provided to you has fallen short in some way.

2. As set out on the Legal Ombudsman's website [here](#), there may be a time limit applicable to any complaint you may wish to make. The Legal Ombudsman expects complaints to be made to them within one year of the date of the act or omission about which you are concerned or within one year of you realising there was a concern. You must also refer your concerns to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our final response to you.

3. The Ombudsman can extend the time limit in exceptional circumstances. Chambers must therefore have regard to that timeframe when deciding whether they are able to investigate your complaint. *Chambers will not therefore usually deal with complaints that fall outside of the Legal Ombudsman's time limits.*

4. The Ombudsman will also only deal with complaints from consumers. This means that only complaints from the barrister's client are within their jurisdiction. Non-clients who are not satisfied with the outcome of the Chambers' investigation should contact the Bar Standards Board rather than the Legal Ombudsman.

5. It should be noted that it may not always be possible to investigate a complaint brought by a non-client. This is because the ability of Chambers to satisfactorily investigate and resolve such matters is limited and complaints of this nature are often better suited to the disciplinary processes maintained by the Bar Standards Board. Therefore, Chambers will make an initial assessment of the complaint and if they feel that the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily resolved through the Chambers complaints process they will refer you to the Bar Standards Board.

### Complaints Made by Telephone

6. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 7 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone David Hockney or John Keegan, Joint Senior Clerk, or (if the complaint is about a member of staff) the

Chambers' Head of Operations, People & Compliance Nimisha Patel. If the complaint is about the Head of Operations, People & Compliance, please telephone Tim Ward KC or Philip Moser KC. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like to have 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.

7. 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 made in Writing**

8. 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.

9. Please address your letter to David Hockney or John Keegan, Joint Senior Clerk Monckton Chambers, 1 & R Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, London WC1R 5NR. 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.

10. The complaint will be considered by the Heads of Chambers, Tim Ward KC and Philip Moser KC who will, within 14 days of receipt of the complaint, appoint a suitably senior member of Chambers to investigate the matter further. Where a complaint concerns one of the Heads of Chambers, the other Head of Chambers will make the appointment. In any case, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

11. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know 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 his reply and inform you. His reply will set out:

- The nature and scope of his investigation;
- His conclusion on each complaint and the basis for his conclusion; and
- If he finds that you are justified in your complaint, his proposals for resolving the complaint.

### **Confidentiality**

12. 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 member or staff who you have complained about, the head or relevant senior member of the panel and the person who investigates the complaint. The Bar Standards Board is

entitled to inspect the documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

### **Our Policy**

13. 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 inspects an anonymised record regularly with a view to improving services.

### **Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman**

14. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation and you fall within their jurisdiction you may 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 the timeframe for referral of complaints to the Ombudsman as set out at 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](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

15. 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:

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

Telephone number: 0207 6111 444  
Website : [www.barstandardsboard.org.uk](http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk)