

## **Complaints Policy**

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. Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within 12 months of the act or omission complained of.

### **Complaints by telephone**

You may wish to make a complaint in writing, if so, please follow the procedure set out below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the barrister concerned or (if the complaint is about a member of staff or if you feel it more appropriate) Alister Williams the Senior Clerk. If the complaint is about the Senior Clerk telephone Lucinda Davies, the Executive Head of Chambers. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. S/he will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved s/he will record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with the outcome and record that you are satisfied.

Complaints that are resolved in fee negotiations would not normally be recorded as a formal complaint unless the complainant has requested it to be recorded as such. Many complaints may be resolved on immediately on the telephone and you may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing.

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.

### **Complaints made in Writing**

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 the Head of Complaints Panel.

Our chambers has a Panel headed by William Emerson and made up of experienced members of chambers and the senior clerk (Alister Williams), which considers any written complaint. Within 14 days of your letter being received the Head of the Complaints Panel or her/his deputy in her/his absence will appoint a member of the Panel to investigate it. If your complaint is against the Head of the Complaints Panel it will be investigated by the next most senior member of the Panel. In any case, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know s/he has been appointed and that s/he will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If s/he finds later that s/he is not going to be able to reply within the 14 days s/he will set a new date for her/his reply and inform you. Her/his reply will set out:

The nature and scope of her/his investigation;

Her/his conclusion on each complaint and the basis for her/his conclusion; and

If s/he finds that you are justified in your complaint, her/his proposals for resolving the complaint.

## **Confidentiality**

As part of our commitment to client care we make a written record of any complaint. Our management committee inspects the record regularly with a view to improving services. These records will be destroyed 6 years after the complaint.

## **Our Policy**

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 Executive Head of Chambers, the Senior Clerk, 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, the Head or relevant senior member of the Complaints Panel and the person who investigates the complaint.

## **Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman or The Bar Standards Board**

If you are unhappy with our conclusion to the investigation you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman or the Bar Standards Board. The Bar Standards Board will deal with complaints about professional misconduct and disciplinary matters whilst the Legal Ombudsman will deal with complaints from barristers' clients in relation to the services provided by barristers. The Legal Ombudsman does act as a single point of contact for all complaints, and will ensure that any complaints that relate to professional misconduct are referred to the Bar Standards Board to consider.

It is important to note that the Legal Ombudsman is not able to consider a complaint until it has first been investigated by Chambers and the Ombudsman has a time limit of 12 months from the date of the event giving rise to the complaint or 12 months from the date on which a complainant should reasonably have known, without taking advice, that there was a reason for making a complaint.

The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman and the Bar Standards Board are as follows:

Legal Ombudsman  
PO Box 15870  
Birmingham  
B30 9EB  
Tel: 0300 555 0333  
E-mail: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

Complaints Team  
Bar Standards Board  
289-293 High Holborn  
London  
WC1V 7HZ  
Tel: 020 7611 1444  
Fax: 020 7831 9217  
See also [www.barstandardsboard.org.uk](http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk)