



Chambers Complaints Policy

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 time limits in which a complaint must be raised with them. The time limits are:
 - a) Six years from the date of the act/omission
 - b) Three years from the date that the complainant should reasonably have known there were grounds for complaint (if the act/omission took place before the 6 October 2010 or was more than six years ago)
 - c) Within six months of the complaint receiving a final response from their lawyer, if that response complies with the requirements in rule 4.4 of the Scheme Rules (which requires the response to include prominently an explanation that the Legal Ombudsman was available if the complainant remained dissatisfied and the provision of full contact details for the Ombudsman and a warning that the complaint must be referred to them within six months
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.

How to make a complaint

6. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 8 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the individual nominated under the Chambers Complaints Procedure to deal with complaints, Sarah Cavanagh, Chambers' Director. (If the complaint is about the Chambers' Director, you are invited to write to the Head of Chambers, Richard Bradley.)

The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like to have done about it. She/he will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved she/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.

8. Please give the following details:

- Your name and address;
- Which member(s) of Chambers, pupil or member(s) of staff you are complaining about;
- The detail of the complaint; and
- What you would like done about it.

9. Please address your letter to Sarah Cavanagh, Oriel Chambers, 14 Water Street, Liverpool L2 8TD. 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 Chambers' Director (or Head of Chambers where applicable) will write to you, where possible, within 14 days. 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 she/he finds that you are justified in your complaint, her/his proposals for resolving the complaint.

Confidentiality

11. 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 if deemed necessary by the Head of Chambers and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister, pupil, or member of staff who you have complained about, the Chambers' Director (or Head of Chambers where applicable) and any relevant person(s) as required as part of the investigation into 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 Chambers' Standards 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

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