

ANNEX A

CHAMBERS' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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.

Complaints made by Telephone

2. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 4 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) the Chief Executive. 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. You may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing.

3. 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

4. Please give the following details: your name and address, which member 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 Chief Executive, 3-4 South Square, Gray's Inn, London WC1R 5HP.

5. In the first instance your letter will be read and considered by the chairman of our executive committee. Within 7 days of your letter being received s/he will appoint an appropriate member of chambers to investigate it. If your complaint is against the chairman, the appointment will be made by another senior member of chambers. In any case, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

6. 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 7 days. If s/he finds later that he is not going to be able to reply within 7 days s/he will set a new date for the reply and inform you. The reply will set out:

The nature and scope of the investigation;

The conclusion on each complaint and the basis for that conclusion; and

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

Confidentiality

7. 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 may be to the chairman or members of our executive committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or staff member who you have complained about and the person who investigates the complaint.

Our Policy

8. As part of our commitment to client care we make a written record of any complaint. A member of our executive committee inspects the record regularly with a view to improving services.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

9. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation 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 that the Legal Ombudsman has a twelve-month time limit from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining within which to make your complaint. You can write to them at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 15870,
Birmingham
B30 9EB

Telephone number: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk