



Complaints Procedure

Chambers and all its Members make every possible effort to provide their clients with an excellent service. In the event of there being a complaint Chambers have a complaints procedure for the handling of grievances. All clients of barristers practising from 15 NBS, both professional and lay clients, have the right to make a complaint. All complaints received will usually be determined within an 8-week period from receipt.

It is the duty of every member of Chambers and every Chambers' employee to inform the Chambers Director of any complaint made about them and it is hoped that your complaint will be resolved amicably by you dealing informally with the person who you are complaining about. The information below sets out what to do if your complaint has not been satisfactorily dealt with.

The objectives of our complaints procedure are:

- to take action to address the complaint where the problem is not beyond correction
- to look at the root cause of the problem and to take action to prevent a recurrence
- to address as best we can how to remedy the situation so a solution might be realised as soon as possible
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This complaints procedure is not designed to deal with complaints which, if proven, would amount to serious professional misconduct by a barrister. The Bar Standards Board (BSB) investigate complaints where a barrister may have broken the rules or acted in a way that might damage the public's ability to trust barristers or other people that they regulate. If your complaint against a barrister clearly alleges serious professional misconduct, then you are entitled to refer your complaint to the BSB. Contact details for the BSB can be found at 'Complaints to the Bar Standards Board' below.

In the same way, this complaints procedure is not designed to deal with complaints that allege professional negligence by a barrister from these chambers and which may entitle you to sue the barrister for financial loss or damage. If your complaint is of this nature you should seek your own legal advice on the remedies available to you.

The BSB Handbook can be viewed on the BSB website
<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/>

How to Make a Complaint

You can make a complaint by telephone (in the first instance) or in writing. Please make your complaint to the Glenn Matthews (Chambers Director), who will be responsible for the handling of your complaint.

If your complaint concerns the Chambers Director himself then it will be handled by the Head of Chambers or by a member of Chambers' Management Committee. That person will handle the complaint as the Chambers Director would, were the complaint about someone other than him. Once this has been received, a member of Chambers Management Committee will acknowledge your complaint in writing enclosing a copy of this document. We recognise that it is of paramount importance that all complaints are dealt with promptly, courteously and in a manner that addresses the issues raised in accordance with these procedures.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. All conversations and documents relating to a complaint will be treated as confidential and will only be disclosed to the Head of Chambers, Chambers Management Committee and to anyone involved with the complaint. This will include the barrister or member of staff complained about. If the complaint is against a barrister, the Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund (professional indemnity insurers) will also be informed and will be provided with the documentation. The Bar Standards Board is entitled to inspect complaints records and documentation when discharging its periodical auditing and monitoring functions.

Our Policy

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 complainant for a period of six years from the date of closure. Chambers Management Committee inspects the complaints register annually.

The Complaints Process

The Chambers Director will maintain a record of every formal complaint detailing:

- the name and address of the complainant (be it an individual or a firm);
- the nature of the complaint;
- the barrister or member of staff concerned;
- the steps taken to resolve the complaint.
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Where it is appropriate to do so (particularly where it involves a Member of Chambers) the matter will be notified to the Head of Chambers. The Chambers Director will notify the complainant as soon as possible and in any event within 7 days of receiving the complaint that the complaint is under investigation.

The Chambers Director will carry out the necessary investigations and give everyone involved the opportunity to comment on the complaint and provide all relevant information. If appropriate, the investigations may be carried out by other Members of Chambers appointed by the Head of Chambers.

If a Member of Chambers is appointed to investigate the complaint, the Chambers Director will pass all documents in her possession to that person.

The Chambers Director or Members of Chambers carrying out the investigation will:

- inform the complainant that the complaint has been investigated and found not to be justified, explaining why; or
- inform the complainant that the complaint has been investigated and found to be justified and either explain what remedial action is proposed, or refer the matter to the Head of Chambers for resolution. It should also be explained to the complainant his or her right to bring the matter to the attention of the Bar Council's Complaints Commissioner.

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We aim to deal with any complaint within 28 days of receipt. If we are unable to meet this time scale, we will let you know.

Complaints to the Bar Standards Board (BSB)

If you consider that your complaint would best be dealt with by the BSB as set out above, you may refer your complaint directly to them. Please note that in most cases the Bar Standards Board places a twelve-month time limit from the date of the problem happening in which to make your complaint. Call the BSB switchboard on 020 7611 1444 or go to <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/for-the-public/reporting-concerns.html> to report your concerns.

Please see the BSB Barrister's Register [here](#)

Legal Ombudsman

Complaints will usually be determined within 8 weeks of receipt. However, at the conclusion of the investigation you will be informed that you are entitled to refer the matter to the Legal Ombudsman or the Information Commissioners Office if you remain dissatisfied.

The Legal Ombudsman will not consider a complaint until it has first been investigated by Chambers.

The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806,
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
www.legalombudsman.org.uk

You must complain to the Legal Ombudsman either within six years of your barrister's actions/failure to act, or no later than three years after you should reasonably have known there were grounds to complain. You must also complain to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving your barrister's final response to your complaint.

The Legal Ombudsman publishes data on all complaints that have been resolved.

The Ombudsman's final decision data can be found here.

The Information Commissioners Office can be contacted at:

Information Access Team

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Email: accessicoinformation@ico.org.uk

www.ico.org.uk