

Crown Office Chambers 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. You are encouraged to make the complaint directly to us, although you may involve a solicitor if you wish.
2. Any complaint should be made promptly. Please note that only in exceptional circumstances will Chambers consider a complaint that is notified to Chambers more than 6 months after the events giving rise to it.

Complaints made by telephone

3. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 5 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint, then please telephone the Head of Chambers, Richard Lynagh QC (or in his absence, the Deputy Head, Michael Curtis QC) or, if the complaint is about a clerk or other member of staff, the Senior Managing Clerk, Andy Flanagan. If the complaint is about the Senior Managing Clerk himself, then please telephone the Head of Chambers. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like to do about it. He will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved the outcome will be recorded, you will be asked whether you are satisfied with the outcome and your response will be recorded. You may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing.
4. 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

5. Please either write a letter (to the Chambers' address) or send an email (all the relevant e-addresses are on the Chambers website) to the relevant person mentioned in paragraph 3 above, **but under no circumstances send a complaint by fax**, giving the following details:
 - your name and address;
 - which member of Chambers you are complaint about;
 - the detail of the complaint; and
 - what you would like to do about it.

It is essential that, before you write or send an email, you telephone Chambers to check that the person to whom your letter (or email) is to be addressed will be available to respond to it when it arrives. If you do this, we will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days and tell you how we propose to handle it.

6. If the matter is not resolved during an initial telephone conversation, the Head of Chambers will arrange for the complaint to be investigated by an appropriately experienced member of

Chambers and, if appropriate, a senior member of staff, who will consider the written complaint. Within 14 days of the letter of complaint being seen by the person to whom it is addressed the Head of Chambers will appoint such a member of Chambers to investigate it.

7. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know he or she has been appointed, the role that they have within Chambers and that he or she will reply to your complaint within 14 days, or such longer time as the investigator considers necessary. If he or she finds later that this will not be possible, he or she will set a new date for the reply and inform you accordingly. 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 it is found that your complaint is justified, her/his proposals for resolving the complaint.
 - If it is found that your complaint is unjustified, you will be told that you can ask the Head of Chambers to review it within 21 days.

Confidentiality

8. 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, and if he thinks it appropriate, to the members of the Chambers Executive Committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or staff about whom you have complained and the person appointed to investigate the complaint, together with those representatives of the Bar Standards Board (the regulatory arm of the Bar Council, the barristers' professional body) as are entitled to see them.

Our Policy

9. As part of our commitment to client care we make a written record of any complaint and retain all the relevant documents for 6 years. Our Executive Committee inspects the record regularly with a view to improving services.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman (from 6 October 2010)

10. If you are unhappy with the outcome of Chambers Complaints Procedure you can contact The Legal Ombudsman.

The Legal Ombudsman is a new organisation which is independent of the Bar Standards Board and has been set up to deal with service complaints about all types of lawyer in England and Wales.

You can contact the Legal Ombudsman:

By telephone: 0300 555 0333

By email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Via the website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

By post: PO Box 15870, Birmingham, B30 9EB