

## **Complaints Procedure – Client Guide**

**We pride ourselves on the level of service we provide to our clients. However, from time to time we might not get it right. Should this be the case then please let us know as soon as possible. We will investigate any complaint promptly and will endeavour to ensure that we resolve any complaint to your satisfaction. All complaints are monitored and reviewed regularly so that we can learn from any mistakes!**

Complaints may concern an individual member, a group of members or a member of staff.

## **Timescales**

1. As set out on the [Legal Ombudsman's website](#), there may be a time limit application to any complaint you may wish to make. Ordinarily you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to look at your complaint if meets certain criteria either: (i) six years of the problem happening or three years from when you found out about it; and (ii) you are referring your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of any final response from your service provider. Other criteria may apply. Please refer to the Legal Ombudsman direct.
2. For the reasons set out above we will not ordinarily deal with complaints that fall outside of the twelve month period save in exceptional circumstances when the reasons for the delay in complaining are considered by us to be reasonable.

## **Contact by telephone**

3. If you would like to raise your complain or concern over the telephone then this must be done by contacting Wayne Digby, our Senior Clerk. If the complaint or concern relates to him then please request to speak to our Head of Chambers, Gurdial Singh.
4. An informal complaint, being one that is capable of being resolved over the telephone, relating to a barrister should be directed to Wayne in the first instance.
5. Wayne will listen to your complaint or concern and will endeavour to resolve the matter there and then. If the matter is resolved in that way then he will record the outcome on our complaints form.

6. If a complaint is not resolved on the telephone then you will be invited to write to us with a completed complaints form that can be found on our website or by requesting the same from us within 14 days of the date of the initial telephone conversation.

## **Complaints made in writing**

7. To make a complaint in writing the please send your letter and completed complaints form to us addressed for the attention of the Head of Chambers.
8. When writing to us please provide the following information:
  - i. Your name and address;
  - ii. Which member(s) of chambers or staff you are complaining about;
  - iii. The details of your complaint;
  - iv. What you would like the outcome to be.
9. Unless the complaint is against our Head of Chambers, where in which case a senior member of chambers will handle the complaint, he will investigate it.
10. All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt confirming the name of the person who will be investigating the complaint.
11. Where the complaint may involve an allegation of professional misconduct and/or any complaint which may involve an allegation of negligence then we reserve the right to inform the Bar Standards Board of the complaint if, following the investigation, we consider the complaint to be justified and a referral to be desirable in the interests of Chambers and in order to comply with our requirements of the Bar Handbook.
12. Where a complaint raises an allegation of negligence then the Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund will be informed accordingly and will, as a course of necessity, be consulted before any proposals of resolution are made.
13. The Head of Chambers shall inform the person to whom the complaint has been made against of the complaint within three working days of receipt of the complaint form in the event the complaint was not initially received by them.

14. As part of the investigation the barrister or member of staff may be asked to make a written record of their version of events relating to complaint.
15. The Head of Chambers will report back as soon as possible and in any event within 28 days with an update on the position of the investigation. If they are unable to provide a substantive response within this deadline then they will advise you on a new date that will be no more than an additional 28 days. In exceptional cases an investigation may take longer and in which case the investigator will keep you informed and explain the reasons for the delay.
16. The report made at the conclusion of the investigation will set out:
  - i. The nature and scope of the investigation;
  - ii. The conclusion and reasons on each complaint; and
  - iii. Where the complaint has been justified, the proposals for resolving the matter.
17. If you are unhappy with the conclusion reached or wish to discuss the matter further then the Head of Chambers will arrange to meet with you within a further 14 days where possible, subject to diary commitments.
18. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation then you may take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman is not able to consider your complaint until it has first been investigated by us. They can be contacted at:

Legal Ombudsman  
Po Box 6806  
Wolverhampton  
WV1 9WJ

Telephone: 03005550333  
Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

## Confidentiality

19. All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will only be disclosed when it is necessary as part of the investigation.
20. Disclosure will be to the Head of Chambers and the Management Committee and anyone else involved in the complaint and/or its investigation. Additionally, the Bar Standards Board and Legal Ombudsman may be entitled to inspect documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging their auditing, monitoring and other statutory and related obligations.

## Complaints records and reviews

21. We shall maintain comprehensive record of all complaints, communications and investigations, whether in paper or electronic format, for a period no less than 6 years.
22. We will review all formal complaints bi-annually to consider what changes are required to our processes and procedures to ensure we avoid complaints of a similar nature in the future.

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The decision data on the Legal Ombudsman's website shows providers which received an ombudsman's decision in the previous calendar year, see [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk). In each case, the data shows whether the Legal Ombudsman required the provider to give the consumer a remedy.