

CLIENT COMPLAINTS

1. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided such that it requires a written response from Chambers. Complaints by clients regarding members or administrative/clerking staff may be either written or verbal but are dealt with in the same manner. All client complaints are progressed and resolved as speedily as possible at an early stage to prevent escalation.
2. Any complaint received from a client by any member of staff or barrister is immediately reported to the senior clerk, together with all correspondence and documents relating to the complaint. Notes are taken when complaints are received verbally. The senior clerk may discuss briefly the details of the complaint with the client, records any further details, immediately acknowledges receipt and advises the client in writing that the complaint will be investigated.
3. The Senior Clerk discusses the details of the complaint with the barrister or staff member as appropriate, records further details and in serious complaints advises the Head of Chambers or in the event of the complaint being about the Head of Chambers another senior barrister. Thereafter, the complaint is progressed by the senior clerk or in the event of the complaint being about the senior clerk, the Head of Chambers or another senior barrister will investigate. The Senior Clerk deals with complaints regarding other staff.
4. The appropriate person investigates and considers all aspects of the complaint, obtaining further details from the client, barrister or staff member as necessary. He decides the immediate action to resolve the complaint, and advises the client in writing of the results of the investigation or the circumstances leading to the complaint. All investigations should aim to understand the root causes leading to the complaint. Brief results of the investigation are recorded.
5. Options open to Chambers include:
 - a firm statement that the complaint is not justified with defined reasons,

- a letter setting out the circumstances leading to the complaint which may be outside of chambers control with an apology and any proposed remedial action or compensation,
 - a letter of apology from Chambers or the barrister and an assurance that it will not occur again together with proposed remedial action and/or compensation,
 - referral to the Head of Chambers or another senior barrister for resolution and notification to the client of their right to complain to the Bar Council as a matter of professional conduct.
6. Professional clients are made aware of the LSC complaints procedure upon request, for any complaint regarding publicly funded work, or details of the Bar Council's complaints procedure are made available.
 7. Any complaint that involves negligence or a potential claim against professional indemnity insurance is brought to the attention of the insurers as soon as possible.
 8. The Senior Clerk is responsible for ensuring that all complaints are progressed satisfactorily so that they are finalised and resolved and for maintaining copies of all correspondence, notes and investigations regarding complaints in a central file.
 9. The Senior Clerk reviews the circumstances behind all complaints to determine any particular trends, identify the root causes of problems, and consider whether any changes in procedures are necessary in a brief, six-monthly written report to the management review meeting. The Management Review meeting discusses the report and trends, and agrees any actions necessary to prevent similar problems from recurring. All decisions are recorded in the minutes of the management review meeting.