

**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/she decides the immediate action to resolve the complaint, and informs 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. 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 acknowledgement and / or apology.
  - a letter setting out the circumstances leading to the complaint which may be outside of chambers control with an acknowledgement and / or apology and any proposed remedial action.
  - a letter of apology from Chambers or the Barrister and an assurance that it will not occur again together with proposed remedial action.
  - 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 Standards Board as a matter of professional conduct, relating to either the Barrister in question and / or Chambers.
6. In addition to the above, all clients are able to make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman for any complaint regarding publicly funded work, or details of the Bar Standards Board's complaints procedure are made available. Any complaint should first be directed to the Senior Clerk, or if the complaint is concerning the Senior Clerk then it should be directed to the Head of Chambers. If it is impossible to direct your complaint to Chambers, you can direct your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of Chambers final response letter, though you will need to provide personal information and documents, which include evidence of your initial complaint to Chambers together with our response. A link to the Legal Ombudsman is found on Chambers website.
7. Any complaint that involves alleged negligence or a potential claim against professional indemnity insurance is brought to the attention of the Senior Clerk, the Barrister concerned and if necessary the Head of Chambers – Subject to the details of that claim, relevant insurers will be informed as a matter of course.
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 and themes, identify the root causes of problems, and consider whether any changes in procedures are necessary and presents any changes to the Head of Chambers.