



St John's

CHAMBERS

Complaints Policy

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Introduction

Our aim is to give you a good service at all times. However, if you have a complaint we ask you to let us know as soon as possible. It is not necessary to involve solicitors in order to make your complaint, but you are free to do so should you wish.

Please note that Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within six months of the act or omission complained of.

Complaints made by telephone

Many complaints are best resolved informally over the telephone, so if you would like to contact us in that way, please call +44 (0)117 923 4700 and ask to speak to the Chief Executive, who is the person nominated by St John's to handle complaints. If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, please ask to speak to the Head of Chambers.

The person you speak to will take a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. If the matter is resolved s/he will record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with the outcome and record that you are satisfied. You may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing.

If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone, you will be invited to write to us about it within 14 days so it can be formally investigated under this procedure.

Complaints made in writing

Our Chambers has a panel headed by Chambers' Chief Executive, the Head of Business Support, as well as experienced members of Chambers, which considers any written complaint.

If you have a complaint, please send your complaint in writing in a letter to St John's Chambers, 101 Victoria Street, Bristol, BS1 6PU, or by email to us using complaint@stjohnschambers.co.uk.

Please provide the following details:

- Your name and address;
- Which member(s) of Chambers or staff you are complaining about;
- The detail of the complaint; and
- What you would like done about it.

We will where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

Within 20 working days of your letter being received, the Head of the Panel (or her/his deputy in his absence) or Head of Chambers (if the complaint is about the Chief

Executive) will investigate the matter or appoint a senior member of the panel to investigate it. Any person appointed to investigate will be someone other than the member(s) of Chambers or staff you are complaining about.

Once the Head of the Panel has appointed a person to investigate your complaint, s/he will write to you as soon as possible to let you know who that person is and that they will reply to your complaint within 20 working days. If the Head of the Panel finds later that we are not able to reply within 20 working days, s/he will set a new date to reply and inform you.

Chambers reply to your complaint will set out:

- The nature and scope of the investigation;
- Their conclusion on each complaint and the basis for their conclusion; and
- If the investigator finds that you are justified in your complaint, their proposals for resolving the complaint.

Confidentiality and our policy

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, members of our management committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister member(s) or staff who you have complained about, Chambers' Chief Executive, Chambers' Head of Business Support and the person who investigates the complaint.

The Bar Standards Board is entitled to inspect the documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

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 complaint for a period of six years. Our Management Board inspects an anonymised record regularly with a view to improving services.

We hope that you will use our complaints procedure. However, if you would rather not do so, or if you are unhappy with the outcome from using it, you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman Scheme or the Bar Standards Board at any time.

Alternative complaints bodies (such as the Small Claims Mediation Service) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and your barrister wish to use such a scheme.

Complaints of misconduct

Any complaints of misconduct (that is, a breach of the Bar Standards Board's Code of Conduct) should be made to the Bar Standards Board as the Legal Ombudsman will not entertain that aspect of any complaints. If any misconduct issue arises during the investigation of a complaint by the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman will refer the misconduct issue to the Bar Standards Board.

Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7HZ

Tel: +44 (0)20 7611 1444

Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman Scheme

Please note a complainant must refer a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman

- a) within one year from the act/omission being complained about, or
- b) one year from the dates when the complainant should have realised that there was cause for complaint AND within six months of the final response from our complaints process.

Please see the Legal Ombudsman's website for more details.

Since 6 October 2010, service (not misconduct) complaints by individuals and some non-commercial bodies against barristers must be made to and considered by the Legal Ombudsman, and not to and by the Bar Standards Complaint's Committee. This includes complaints about matters occurring prior to 6 October 2010.

You can write to them at:

Complaints Team
Legal Ombudsman,
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH

Tel: +44 (0)300 555 0333 (Please note all calls will be recorded)

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Website: <http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk>