

Chambers' Complaints Procedure

1. Our aim is to provide you with a good service at all times. However, if you have a complaint, you are invited to let us know as soon as possible. It is not necessary to involve solicitors in order to bring your complaint but you are free to do so if you wish.
2. Please note that Church Court Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within six months of the act or omission complained of.

Complaints made by telephone

3. You may wish to make a complaint in writing, and if so, please follow the procedure below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint, please telephone the individual nominated under the Church Court Chambers Complaints Procedure to deal with complaints, the senior clerk, Mr Rod McGurk. If the complaint is about a member of the clerks' team, telephone the senior clerk, Mr Rod McGurk. If the complaint is about the senior clerk, telephone the Head of Chambers, Mr Michael Mather-Lees KC. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. He will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved 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.
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 that it can be investigated formally.

Complaints made in writing

5. **Please give the following details:-**
 - Your name and address
 - Which member of Chambers you are complaining about or member of Chambers' staff
 - The details of the complaint; and
 - What you would like done about it.

Please address your letter to the senior clerk, Mr Rod McGurk at Church Court Chambers, Central Court, 25 Southampton Buildings, London, WC2A 1AL. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with. Alternatively you may use the form on our Website.

6. Our Chambers has a panel headed by the Head of Chambers, Mr Mather Lees KC, and made up of experienced members of Chambers (Those members of the Management Committee) and the senior clerk, which considers any written complaint. Within 5 days of your letter being received, the head of the panel or his deputy in his absence, will appoint at least two members of the panel to investigate it. If your complaint is against the head of the panel, the next most senior member of the panel will investigate it together with a colleague. In any case, the persons appointed will not include the person against whom you are complaining.

7. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know he/she has been appointed and that he/she will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If she/he finds that he/she is not going to be able to reply within 14 days, he/she will set a new date for his/her reply and inform you.

The reply will set out:

- The nature of the investigation
- His/her conclusion on each complaint and the basis for his/her conclusion; and
- If he/she finds that you are justified in your complaint, his/her proposals for resolving the complaint.

Confidentiality

8. All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent that it is necessary. Disclosure will be to the Head of Chambers, and those members of the Management Committee involved in the investigation. The barrister member or clerk against whom you have complained will also be consulted, in that we must seek their views on the matters that you raise. Please be advised that the Bar Standards Board is entitled to seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.
9. In making a complaint please note that you are taking to have waived Legal Professional Privilege; and thus a barrister may reveal to the Management Committee the advice that they have provided to yourself. If you do not give consent for Legal Professional Privilege to be waived, please expressly confirm the same in your complaint.
10. You are asked to consider, further, Chambers Privacy Notice.
11. 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 Committee inspects an anonymised record regularly with a view to improving services.

Non-client complaints

12. It may not always be possible to investigate a complaint brought by a non-client. This is because our ability satisfactorily to investigate and resolve such matters is limited, and complaints of this nature are often better suited to the disciplinary processes maintained by the Bar Standards Board. Accordingly, we will make an initial assessment of the complaint and if the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily resolved by means of the chambers complaints procedure we will refer you to the Bar Standards Board.
13. Complaints to the Bar Standards Board (the regulatory arm of the Bar Council, who are the professional body for barristers)

14. We hope that you will use our procedure. However if you would rather not do so or are unhappy with the outcome you do have the choice of taking up your complaint with the Bar Standards Board at any time. Please note that the Bar Standards Board has a six monthtime limit from the date of the act or omission about which you arecomplaining within which to make your complaint. However, should you raise your complaint with chambers first, there is a three monthtime limit from the conclusion of the investigation by chambers in which to raise your complaint with the Board.

You can write to them at:

Complaints Team Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London WC1V 7HZ
Tel: 020 7611 1444
Fax: 020 7831 9217
Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

15. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation and you fall within its jurisdiction you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman the independent complaints body for complaints about lawyers, at the conclusion of our consideration of your complaint.

You can write to them at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806,
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ
Telephone number: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

16. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman will only deal with complaints from consumers. This means that only complaints from the barrister's client are within his/her jurisdiction. Nonclients who are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation should contact the Bar Standards Board rather than the Legal Ombudsman.

There are strict time limits got complaints to be considered by the Legal Ombudsman which is 6 years from the act/omission, but must be lodged within 6 months from the end of Chambers' Complaint process.

Church Court Chambers
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