

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

39 Essex Chambers prides itself on the excellence of its service. If at any time you have any concerns about the quality of the services of our barristers or members of staff you are invited to let us know as soon as possible.

Please note that Chambers will generally only consider complaints that are raised within 12 months of the act or omission about which you are complaining within which to take your complaint.

Complaints

In line with our friendly and open approach, in the first instance, we would always encourage you to discuss any day-to-day concerns about the services of our barristers directly with them. Any such concerns can also always be raised with our clerking team.

Any concerns about our clerks or other members of staff should be raised with our Chief Executive. If the complaint is about our Chief Executive please raise the matter with one of the Head(s) of Chambers.

We would very much hope that the matter can be resolved at this point, and that you will be satisfied with the outcome. However, if you feel that the concern or matter you have raised has not been dealt with to your satisfaction, then you may wish to make a written complaint.

Written complaints

Please make your complaint in writing and provide the following details:

- Your name and address
- Which member of Chambers staff and/or members you are complaining about
- The details of the complaint
- What you would like done about it

Please address your letter to the Chief Executive, 39 Essex Chambers, 81 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1DD.

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days of receipt and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

Chambers will appoint a panel headed by the Chief Executive and made up of experienced members of Chambers that will consider your written complaint. Within 14 days of your letter being received the head of the panel, or their deputy in their absence, will appoint a member of the panel to investigate. The person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know they have been appointed and that they will reply to your complaint within 21 working days of receipt. If they

find that they are not going to be able to reply within 21 working days they will set a new date for their reply and inform you of this in writing.

Their reply will set out:

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

Confidentiality

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 Chief Executive, the Head(s) of Chambers, members of the management committee and to anyone else we consider necessary to involve in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister member or staff member about whom you have complained, the head or relevant senior member of the panel and the person who investigates the complaint.

Our policy

As part of our commitment to client care we will make a written record of any formal complaint received and retain all documents and corresponded generated by a complaint for a period of six years.

Complaints regarding Mediators

If you wish to raise a concern regarding a Mediator in Chambers, the above procedure and policy applies and you should follow the same steps as set out above.

Should the response of the person appointed to investigate be unacceptable, you may, for any Mediator who is a Regulated Mediator (i.e. a Civil Mediation Council Associate, Registered or Fellow) or a Member of the Civil Mediation Council, appeal to them on certain grounds. The details of the Civil Mediation Council's appeal processes can be found [here](#).

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

We hope that you will use our procedure and that this will resolve any outstanding issues. However, if you are unhappy with the outcome, you have the choice of taking up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has the responsibility for dealing with all service complaints against legal professionals and normally can only consider complaints once the Chambers' complaints procedure has been exhausted.

Please note that the Legal Ombudsman has strict time limits in which a complaint can be raised with them. Generally, you must refer the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman no later than:

- one year from the act/omission; or
- one year from when the you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

You can write to the Legal Ombudsman at:

Complaints Team
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Tel: 0300 555 0333
Website: <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/>

Complaints to the Bar Standards Board

If you are not a client of Chambers, or if your complaint is about the professional conduct of one of our barristers rather than the quality of our service, then you can complain to The Bar Standards Board (the professional regulatory body for barristers). The Bar Standards Board investigates complaints of professional misconduct or professional disciplinary issues.

You can write to the Bar Standards Board at:

Complaints Department
Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London WC1V 7HZ
DX: 240 LDE
Tel: 020 7611 1444
Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk