



NEW COURT CHAMBERS

New Court Chambers

Complaints Procedure

New Court Chambers aims to offer you the highest level of service at all times. If you are dissatisfied at any time with the service you receive from either our barristers or our members of staff you are invited to let us know as soon as possible. It is not necessary to involve your solicitors if you wish to make a complaint but you may do if you prefer.

In the first instance we would invite you to discuss any concerns that you have either directly with the barrister you are instructing or with our senior clerk, Paul Bloomfield. We anticipate that most concerns can be resolved swiftly in this way, however if you feel that your concern has not been resolved to your satisfaction and that you wish to make a formal complaint, the procedure for doing so is set out below:

Making a Complaint by Telephone

You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, you will find the procedure later in this document. However, if you would rather speak to someone on the telephone about your complaint please contact:

Christopher Poole or in his absence Ann Courtney or Sally Homer – For complaints about a barrister.

Paul Bloomfield – For complaints about a member of staff.

If the complaint is about Paul Bloomfield and you have not been able to resolve your concerns by discussing it with him directly or do not wish to do so, please contact Christopher Poole or in his absence Ann Courtney or Sally Homer who have been appointed to deal with complaints by the Head of Chambers and the Chambers Management Committee.

The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like to have done about it. They will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved they will record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with the outcome and record that you are satisfied. You may also wish to have the outcome of the telephone discussion recorded in writing in which case we would be happy to do so.

If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone you will be invited to write to us about it so it can be investigated formally.

Making a Complaint in Writing

If you wish to make a complaint in writing, either instead of, or following making a complaint by telephone we would be grateful if you could provide the following details within your written complaint:

- Your name and address;

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

Please address your letter to:

Christopher Poole
New Court Chambers
Temple
London
EC4Y 9BE.

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.

If for any reason your complaint or any aspects of your complaint are felt to be outside of the Chamber's complaints process we will inform you in writing and shall include information about how you can complain to the Legal Ombudsman or the Bar Standards Board as appropriate.

Chambers has a panel headed by Christopher Poole made up of experienced members of Chambers and a senior member of staff, which considers any written complaint. Within 14 working days of your letter being received either Christopher Poole or in his absence Ann Courtney or Sally Homer 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 that they have been appointed and that they will reply to your complaint within 14 working days. If the investigation will take longer than 14 working days the person appointed to investigate shall set a new date for reply and inform you of that date. The reply will set out the following:

- The nature and scope of the investigation;
- The conclusion reached in respect of each complaint and the basis for that conclusion; and
- Whether or not the investigator finds you are justified in your complain and their proposals for resolving the complaint.

Involvement of the Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund

If your complaint involves a matter which may give rise to an insurance claim, the barrister will be obliged to inform his or her insurers, who will then need to be consulted before any proposals can be put to you to resolve your complaint. This may affect the speed with which we are able to respond to complaints in these circumstances.

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 Head of Chambers, members of the Chambers Management Committee and to anyone investigating or involved in the complaint. This will include the barrister or member of staff who you have complained about. The Bar Standards Board is entitled to inspect the documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

Our Policy

As part of our commitment to client care we make a written record of any complaint and retain all correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six years. Our management committee is regularly provided with a record of any complaints with a view to improving services.

Making a Complaint to the Legal Ombudsman

If, having used our complaints procedure you are still unhappy with the outcome, you may be able to take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman is an independent body for service complaints about lawyers. We will advise you of this right and the appropriate contact information and timescales at the end of the Chamber's complaints procedure regardless of whether you have indicated to us that you are satisfied with the outcome.

Contact details for the Legal Ombudsman are as follows:

Legal Ombudsman
PO BOX 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

The Legal Ombudsman will not consider your complaint until it has first been investigated by Chambers and there are timescales within which you must make your complaint.

The timescales within which your complaint must be submitted to the Legal Ombudsman are as follows:

- a) Six years from the date of the act/omission.
- b) Three years from the date that the complainant should reasonably have known that there were grounds for a complaint (if the act/omission took place before the 6th October 2010 or was more than 6 years ago).
- c) Within 6 months of the complainant receiving a final response from their lawyer, if that response complies with the requirements in rule 4.4 of the Scheme Rules (which requires the response to include prominently an explanation that the Legal Ombudsman was available if the complainant remained dissatisfied, the provision of full contact details for the Ombudsman and a warning that the complaint must be referred to them within six months).
- d) The Ombudsman can extend the time limit in exceptional circumstances

Please note that when deciding whether to investigate your complaint Chambers will have regard to the timeframes set out above. Chambers will not usually investigate complaints that fall out of the Legal Ombudsman's time limits.

Making a Complaint to the Bar Standards Board

The Ombudsman only deals with complaints from consumers which means that only complaints from the barrister's client fall within their jurisdiction. Non-clients who are not satisfied with the outcome of the Chambers investigation should contact the Bar Standards Board rather than the Legal Ombudsman.

Please note that there may be occasions when Chambers does not feel it is possible to investigate a complaint made by a non-client at all, and there, if, having made an initial assessment of the complaint, Chambers considers that the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily resolved through the Chambers complaints process you will be referred to the Bar Standard's Board.

Contact details for the Bar Standards Board are as follows:

Bar Standards Board
Professional Conduct Department
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V7JZ

Telephone: 0207 6111 444

Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

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