

Complaints Procedure for Clients

1. Our aim is to give you 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 make your complaint but you are free to do so should you wish.
2. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for service complaints about lawyers, will only consider complaints about us where a resolution has first been sought and concluded through our complaints procedures or where there has been no conclusion within eight weeks of a complaint being notified to us. Their time limits for investigating complaints are:
 - i) Within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint

and

 - ii) Six years from the date of act/omission; or
 - iii) Three years from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint (if the act took place more than six years ago)

The act or omission, or when you should have reasonably known there was cause for complaint, must have been after 5 October 2010.

3. Chambers operates a two-stage complaints procedure. Under Stage One, in the first instance the complaint will be dealt with by the person nominated under the Chambers complaints procedure to deal with complaints. Under Stage Two, the complaint will be investigated by the Chambers complaints panel.
4. If you wish your complaint to be considered under Stage One of the Chambers complaints procedure, you should follow the procedure in paragraphs 6-9 inclusive below. If you wish your complaint to be considered by the Chambers complaints panel, you should follow the procedure in paragraphs 10 and 11 below.
5. If you do not initially request that your complaint be investigated under Stage Two by the Chambers complaints panel, it will be dealt with under Stage One. However, you may at any time request in writing that your complaint be investigated by the Chambers complaints panel under Stage Two.

Complaints Procedure: Stage 1

6. If you wish to make a complaint under Stage One of the Chambers' complaints procedure, you may make your complaint in writing and, if so, please give the following details: your name and address, which member(s) of chambers you are complaining about; the detail of the complaint; and what you would like done about it.

Please address your letter to:

Michael Shillingford / Alex Calder
Erskine Chambers
1 Paper Buildings
London
EC4Y 7EP

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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.

7. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the individuals nominated under the Chambers Complaint Procedure to deal with complaints – Joint Senior Clerks, Michael Shillingford and Alex Calder on 020 7242 5532 or a King's Counsel appointed by the Head of Chambers for this purpose. 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.
8. If your complaint is not immediately resolved on the telephone, or is made in writing, the person nominated to deal with it may discuss your complaint with Counsel and will respond to you in writing, or by telephone and confirmed in writing.
9. If your complaint is not then resolved, you will have 14 days from the date of the written response either (a) to request in writing that the complaint be investigated by the Chambers complaints panel under Stage Two below or (b) to continue discussions with the person nominated under the Chambers complaints procedure under Stage One, but in that event you will retain the right at any time to request that your complaint be investigated by the Chambers complaints panel.

Complaints Procedure: Stage 2

10. If you wish your complaint to be investigated by the Chambers complaints panel, you should put your complaint in writing (if you have not already done so) and you should request in writing that the complaint be investigated by the Chambers complaints panel.

If the complaint is about Mr Shillingford and/or Mr Calder, please telephone the Head of Chambers, Martin Moore KC.

11. Please give the following details: your name and address, which member(s) of chambers you are complaining about; the detail of the complaint; and what you would like done about it. Please address your letter to:

Michael Shillingford / Alex Calder
Erskine Chambers
1 Paper Buildings
London
EC4Y 7EP

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.

12. Chambers has a panel headed by a King's Counsel which considers any written complaint. The Head of Chambers has power to alter the constitution of the panel. Within 14 days of your letter being received the head of the panel (or his deputy in his absence) will appoint a member of the panel to investigate it. If your complaint is against the head of the panel it will be investigated by another member of the panel. In any case, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.
13. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know he has been appointed and that he will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If he finds later that he is not going to be able to reply within 14 days he will set a new date for his reply and inform you. His reply will set out:

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- the nature and scope of his or her investigation;
- his conclusion on each complaint and the basis for his conclusion; and
- if he finds that you are justified in your complaint, his proposals for resolving the complaint.

Confidentiality

14. 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 or member of staff who you have complained about, the head or relevant senior member of the panel 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.

Our Policy

15. 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 the record regularly with a view to improving services.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman and Alternative Dispute Resolution

16. The Ombudsman would not normally consider your complaint until it has first been investigated by Chambers. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation 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 or where there has been no conclusion within eight weeks of your complaint being notified to us. If it is not possible to settle your complaint and subject to the same time limits, there are also Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes available should both you and us agree to that process (please see the links below).

17. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman at:

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

Alternative Dispute Resolution Schemes:

Ombudsman Services Website: <http://www.ombudsman-services.org>
Small Claims Mediation Website: <http://www.small-claims-mediation.co.uk/>
Pro Mediate Website: <http://www.promediate.co.uk/>

You can also search the decision data on LeO's website:

<http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/raising-standards/data-and-decisions/#ombudsmandecision-data>. This shows providers which received an ombudsman's decision in the previous 12 months, and whether LeO required the provider to give the consumer a remedy. Alternatively, you can contact LeO on 0300 555 0333 to ask about this (or e-mail enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk).