

Octagon Chambers Complaints Procedure

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.

Please note that the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for service complaints about lawyers, has a six year time limit from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining within which to make your complaint. Chambers must therefore have regard to that timeframe when deciding whether they are able to investigate your complaint. Chambers will not deal with complaints that fall outside of the six year time limit.

Complaints Made by Telephone

You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in the paragraphs below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the individual nominated under the Chambers Complaints Procedure to deal with complaints – Joanna Cload (Senior Clerk) or if the complaint is about a member of staff, Rebecca Bradberry (Head Of Chambers).

The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. She will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved she 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 the next 14 days so it can be investigated formally.

Complaints made in Writing

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 Joanna Cload, Octagon Chambers, 29 Park Street, Taunton TA1 4DG. 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.

Our Chambers has a panel headed by Rebecca Bradberry and made up of experienced members of Chambers and a senior member of staff, which considers any written complaint.

Within 14 days of your letter being received the head of the panel or her deputy in his absence will appoint a member 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. In any case, 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 he/she has been appointed and that they will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If he/she finds later that they is not going to be able to reply within 14 days they will set a new date for the reply and inform you. The reply will set out:

- The nature and scope of the investigation;
- The conclusion on each complaint and the basis for the conclusion; and
- If he/she finds that you are justified in your complaint, the 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 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 or 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

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.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

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. The Ombudsman is not able to consider your complaint until it has first been investigated by Chambers. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman has a six year time limit from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining within which to make your complaint. You can write to them at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 15870,
Birmingham
B30 9EB

Telephone number: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk