

Quadrant Chambers Complaints Procedure

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 for you to involve a solicitor in order to make a complaint but you are free to do so should you wish.
2. Please note that we will only consider complaints that are raised within six months of the act or omission complained of.
3. On receipt of instructions from a new professional or lay client, as soon as possible we will inform in writing;

(a) That Chambers' Complaints Procedure can be found on our website and that hard copies will be provided on request.

(b) That a lay client may complain directly to Chambers without going through solicitors.

Where a lay client is new to Chambers we will ask the lay client's solicitor in writing to pass the information about Chambers' Complaints Procedure to the lay client.

4. All complaints will be handled and acknowledged promptly. With the acknowledgement we will provide;

(a) The name of the person who will deal with the complaint and details of their role in Chambers.

(b) A copy of our Complaints Procedure

(c) The date by which to complainant will next hear from Chambers.

We will also advise the Complainant that they may, at the end of Chambers complaints process, take their complaint to the Legal Ombudsman (see paragraph 13 below)

5. Where a complaint is passed to Chambers by the Commissioner (i.a.w Annex J to the Bar Code of Conduct):

(a) The Head of Chambers will inform the Commissioner, within 6 weeks of the date of the referral, of the progress that has been made in considering the complaint, or of the outcome.

(b) Where the investigation is incomplete within 6 weeks of the date of referral, the Head of Chambers will update the Commissioner every 6 weeks until the investigation is complete. The Head of Chambers will then inform the Commissioner of the outcome of the complaint.

Complaints Made by Telephone

6. You may make a complaint in writing and, if you wish to do so, please follow the procedure set out below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone us on 0207 583 4444 and ask to speak to the Chief Executive (Tim Gerrard), who 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.
7. 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

8. When making a complaint in writing, please give the following details:
 - Your name and address;
 - Which member(s) of Chambers or staff you are complaining about;
 - The detail of the complaint; and
 - What you would like done about it
 - How you would like us to communicate with you (i.e. whether by e-mail, fax or letter).

Please address your letter to The Chief Executive, Quadrant Chambers, 10 Fleet St, London EC4Y 1AU. If your complaint is about the Chief Executive, please address your letter to Simon Croall QC. 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.

9. Our Chambers has a panel headed by Simon Croall QC 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 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, 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.
10. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know he has been appointed and the date by which he will reply to your complaint. If he finds later that he is going to be unable to meet that date he will set a new date for his reply and inform you. His reply will set out:
 - The nature and scope of his 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

11. 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

12. 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 Bar Standards Board

13. At the end of the above procedure, you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman has a 12 month ordinary time limit from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining within which to make your complaint. The Ombudsman will deal with service complaints, it will refer all complaints about conduct to the Bar Standards Board. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman as follows:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 15870
Birmingham
B30 9EB

Tel: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Web: www.legalombudsman.org.uk