

BARRISTER & BSB AUTHORISED ENTITY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INFORMATION FOR LAY AND PROFESSIONAL CLIENTS

Dear Clients,

Please take note of the information below. If you are a professional client, that is a solicitor or other intermediary you are required to forward a copy of this procedure to the lay client.

1. My* aim is to give all my clients a good service at all times. However if you have a complaint please let me know as soon as possible, by telephone or in writing. I will treat your complaint as confidential although I may discuss it with other barristers or officials from the Bar Standards Board for their advice. I will not reveal your name to others unless I am setting up mediation or arbitration. I will deal with your complaint promptly.

2. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for service complaints about lawyers, has time limits in which a complaint must be raised with them. The time limits are:
 - a) Six years from the date of the act/omission
 - b) Three years from the date that the complainant should reasonably have known there were grounds for complaint (if the act/omission took place before the 6 October 2010 or was more than six years ago)
 - c) Within six months of the complaint 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 and the provision of full contact details for the Ombudsman and a warning that the complaint must be referred to them within six months)

3. The Ombudsman can extend the time limit in exceptional circumstances. Chambers must therefore have regard to that timeframe when deciding whether they are able to investigate your complaint. Chambers will not therefore usually deal with complaints that fall outside of the Legal Ombudsman's time limits.

4. The Ombudsman will also only deal with complaints from consumers. This means that only complaints from the barrister's client are within their jurisdiction. Non-clients who are not satisfied with the outcome of the

investigation should contact the Bar Standards Board rather than the Legal Ombudsman.

5. It should be noted that it may not always be possible to investigate a complaint brought by a non-client. This is because my ability to satisfactorily investigate and resolve such matters is limited and complaints of this nature are often better suited to the disciplinary processes maintained by the Bar Standards Board. Therefore, I will make an initial assessment of the complaint and if I feel that the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily resolved through my complaints process I will refer you to the Bar Standards Board.

Complaints Made by Telephone

6. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 7 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 - Richard O'Sullivan. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like to have 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 so it can be investigated formally.

Complaints made in Writing

8. 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.
9. Please address your letter to Richard O'Sullivan, 1215 Chambers, One Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1BR. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within seven days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.
10. The person who is to investigate the complaint will write to you as soon as possible to let you know that he will reply to your complaint within 28 days. If he finds later that he is not going to be able to reply within 28 days 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.

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 anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister who you have complained about 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.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

13. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation and you fall within their jurisdiction 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 the timeframe for referral of complaints to the Ombudsman as set out at paragraph 2 above.

You can write to them at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806,
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

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

14. If you are not the barrister's client and are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation then please contact the Bar Standards Board at:

Bar Standards Board
Professional Conduct Department
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7JZ

Telephone number: 0207 6111 444
Website : www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

Please note that all legal services and reserved legal services are provided by the individual barrister or barrister entity you have instructed and not by 1215 Chambers.