

CLIENT COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY

Barristers and staff at Outer Temple Chambers aim to provide a quality service at all times. We recognise however that occasionally mistakes will happen and, when they do, they can cause inconvenience and upset. Our policy aims to ensure that:

- a. Our solicitors and clients are provided with a procedure that enables them to make a complaint or raise a concern;
- b. All complaints are handled quickly and efficiently;
- c. Our solicitors and clients feel that the complaint has been handled properly and fairly;
- d. The outcome of the complaint satisfies the complainant;
- e. Where concerns and complaints highlight problems with our service, these are properly addressed; and
- f. Complaints are monitored so that we can ensure that the same concerns do not reoccur.

SCOPE

Complaints may relate to service, professional negligence and misconduct. A single complaint may have elements of all three and Chambers' obligations are different for each aspect. We will investigate all complaints which include a service element. However, we may not be able to deal with complaints which raise issues relating to professional misconduct or professional negligence. If your complaint or any part of your complaint falls outside our complaints handling procedure we will inform you in writing that this is the case.

COMPLAINTS BY NON CLIENTS

It may not always be possible to investigate complaints by non-clients. By non-clients we mean those individuals who have not asked for our assistance either directly or through their solicitor. This is because the ability of Chambers satisfactorily to 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. If, having made an initial assessment of your complaint, we feel that the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily resolved through our complaints process, we will refer you to the BSB.

Please also note that the Legal Ombudsman will 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 any Chambers' investigation should contact the BSB.

COMPLAINTS MADE BY TELEPHONE

If you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone Rhonda Murkin, our HR & Regulatory Manager on 020 7427 0813. If the complaint is about Mrs Murkin then please telephone Chambers' Chief Executive Officer, Rebecca Priestley on 020 7353 6381. 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 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 so that it can be investigated formally.

COMPLAINTS MADE IN WRITING

If you would prefer to make a complaint in writing, please give the following details:

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

Please address your communication to Mrs Rhonda Murkin at 222 Strand, London WC2R 1BA or email: rhonda.murkin@outertemple.com. Once we have your complaint in writing we will follow our Complaints Handling Procedure to try and resolve this for you.

RECORD KEEPING

We will keep a record of your complaint, all steps taken in response to it, and the outcome of the complaint. Copies of all correspondence, including electronic mail, and all other documents generated in response to the complaint will be kept. It is a requirement of our regulator that these records and copies should be kept for 6 years from resolution of your complaint.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Each year, statistics on formal and informal complaints and the nature of the complaints are collated together on an anonymous basis. This information is reported to the Chambers Management Committee and circulated to all staff and barristers with a view to improving our services.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All conversations and documents relating to your complaint will be treated as confidential. They will only be disclosed so far as is necessary for:

- The investigation and resolution of your complaint;
- internal review in order to improve Chambers' handling of complaints;
- complying with requests from the Bar Standards Board in the exercising of its monitoring and/or auditing functions.

TRANSPARENCY

The Legal Ombudsman publishes data on all complaints that have been resolved by an Ombudsman's final decision in the previous 12 months. In each case the data shows whether the Legal Ombudsman required the provider to give the consumer a remedy.

Decision data can be found at: <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/information-centre/data-centre/ombudsman-decision-data/>

In addition the Bar Standards Board Barristers' Register shows who has a current practising certificate and whether a barrister has any disciplinary findings, which are published on the Barristers' Register in accordance with the Bar Standards Board policy. The link to the Barristers' Register is <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/regulatory-requirements/the-barristers'-register/>