

Complaints Procedure and Policy

A complaint pursuant to this procedure may be made by someone who is not a Member or employee of Chambers or by a Member of Chambers or an employee. There is a written grievance and disciplinary procedure for employees. There is a written grievance procedure for Members of Chambers. This complaints procedure is always followed where any concern is raised suggestive of an infringement of the equal opportunities and harassment policy. The equal opportunities policies form will also be completed where necessary.

1. Chambers treats as a complaint any expression of dissatisfaction to which a client or other person would reasonably expect a response or by which it is clear that a system or procedure may not be in effective operation. Parties making a complaint in good faith will not be discriminated against by virtue of their having made a complaint in good faith. In so far as is possible and appropriate the details of the complaint and complainant are kept confidential. Professional clients are informed that Chambers operates a complaints procedure and that any complaint should be addressed to the senior clerk or to the Head of Chambers and that a copy of the complaints procedure is available on request.
2. The Head of Chambers has overall responsibility for the complaints procedure.
3. If the senior clerk or any Member of Chambers or any member of staff is made aware of the existence of a complaint, the details will be recorded and passed to the Head of Chambers and Quality Manager (Secretary) who will ensure that this procedure is followed and that complaints records are made and retained. The complainant is told that this will happen. The barrister(s) and/or members of staff about whom a complaint has been made are informed.
4. The Head of Chambers will notify the complainant, as soon as possible and within 7 days, that the complaint is under investigation and will give a time-

scale for further contact. If the complaint has not been reduced to writing, written details of the complaint are requested. Where necessary a copy of this complaints procedure will be supplied.

5. The Head of Chambers will carry out or cause to be carried out by the Equal Opportunities Officer any necessary investigations and provide all relevant parties with the opportunity to state their opinions on the circumstances of the complaint.
6. The Head of Chambers will determine whether the complaint is justified and whether remedial action is necessary. The Head of Chambers will inform the complainant that the complaint has been investigated and has been either
found not to be justified giving reasons; or
found to be justified, giving reasons, and explain any remedial action proposed and the right in the event of continued dissatisfaction to pursue the complaint with the Bar Council and LAA or as may otherwise be appropriate.
7. Any complaint involving negligence or potential claims against professional indemnity insurance will be brought to the attention of the professional indemnity insurers as soon as possible. Where necessary the matter will be referred to the Bar Council or the Legal Ombudsman. If the matter involves the CPS then the CPS complaints procedure will be followed.
8. The complaints forms set out below are completed and retained upon the relevant personal files and centrally for at least 12 months and reviewed by the Equal Opportunities Officers and Quality Manager (Secretary). Where appropriate the systems procedures and training needs will be reviewed by the Quality Manager to prevent a similar complaint in the future.
9. Where the complaint is made against the Quality Manager and/or Head of Chambers then these Members of chambers will not investigate consider or determine the complaint, nor will they contact the complainant. The matter will be dealt with by the Management Committee in line with the external

Complaints Policy at Appendix 15 with the assistance of an Equal Opportunities Officer.

10. This policy will be disapplied or amended in exceptional circumstances for example upon the advice of the police or the Bar Council or the professional indemnity insurer.