

4 Pump Court 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 to involve solicitors in order to make your complaint, but you are free to do so should you wish.
2. Please note that Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within 12 months of the act or omission complained of.
3. There may be occasions when the nature or circumstances of a complaint make it more appropriate (e.g. because the complaint might raise an allegation of professional misconduct) to be dealt with by the Bar Standards Board or the Legal Ombudsman rather than through this complaints procedure. If we reach this conclusion in relation to any complaint we will tell you promptly. It will then be a matter for you to decide whether you wish to raise the complaint with the Bar Standards Board or the Legal Ombudsman. The contact details of those bodies are given in paragraph 13 below.

Complaints Made by Telephone

4. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 6 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, Carolyn McCombe (Chambers' Head of Professional Standards) or (if the complaint is about Carolyn McCombe) one of the Joint Heads of Chambers (Nigel Tozzi Q.C. and Nick Vineall Q.C.). The person you contact 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.
5. 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

6. 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.

Please address your letter to Carolyn McCombe, Head of Professional Standards, 4 Pump Court, Temple, London EC4Y 7AN (or, if the complaint is about Carolyn McCombe, to one of the Joint Heads of Chambers, Nigel Tozzi Q.C. and Nick Vineall Q.C., at the same address). 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.

7. The complaint will be investigated by Duncan McCall Q.C. or by another Queen's Counsel nominated by Duncan McCall Q.C. (If the complaint is about Duncan McCall Q.C., it will be investigated by one of the Joint Heads of Chambers, Nigel Tozzi Q.C. and Nick Vineall Q.C.). In any case, the person appointed to investigate the complaint will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.
8. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know

he has been appointed and that he will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If he finds later that he is not going to be able to reply within 14 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.

Confidentiality

9. 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 Joint Heads of Chambers and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or staff member who you have complained about, Duncan McCall Q.C. 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

10. 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 Joint Heads of Chambers inspect a record of complaints regularly with a view to improving services.

Alternative Complaints Bodies, the Legal Ombudsman or the Bar Standards Board

11. We hope that you will use our procedure. However, if you would rather not do so or are unhappy with the outcome you may take up your complaint with one of the other bodies designated to hear complaints against barristers or mediators. If it has not been possible to resolve your complaint using our procedure, alternative complaints bodies (such as ProMediate <http://www.promediate.co.uk>) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should you and the person about whom your complaint is made both agree to use such a scheme. In addition, there are the Legal Ombudsman (who deals with complaints from clients of barristers about the services provided by barristers) and the Bar Standards Board (which deals with complaints about professional misconduct and disciplinary matters). The Legal Ombudsman acts as a single point of contact for all such complaints, and will ensure that any complaints that relate to professional misconduct are referred to the Bar Standards Board to deal with.
12. Complaints must be referred to the Legal Ombudsman within the time limits set out in the Legal Ombudsman Scheme Rules, which ordinarily means no later than six years from the act/omission about which complaint is made; or three years from when the complainant should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.
13. The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman and the Bar Standards Board are as follows:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

Tel: 0300 555 0333
E-mail: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Complaints Team
Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7HZ

Tel: 020 7611 1444
Fax: 020 7831 9217

See also www.barstandardsboard.org.uk