

CLIENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – 9 STONE BUILDINGS

It is Chambers' policy to deal with problems and complaints in a responsive way.

All clients are advised to approach the Senior Clerk in the event of any unhappiness with the service provided. Any client is also provided with a copy of Chambers' complaints process on request.

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided such that it requires a formal written response from Chambers. The Senior Clerk will initially discuss the issue with the client by telephone and try to resolve the problem informally.

Formal complaints to the Senior Clerk are normally requested to be made in writing within a week of the difficulty arising and are acknowledged in writing within 7 days with advice that the complaint is being investigated. The Senior Clerk additionally refers the client to the LSC web site for details of the LSC complaints procedure upon request, in any circumstance where the case is funded by the LSC.

The Senior Clerk investigates and considers all aspects of the complaint, obtaining further details from the client, barrister or administrative/clerking staff as necessary. All relevant people should be given the opportunity to state their opinions on the circumstances of the complaint. Records are taken of discussions, investigations, and notes relevant to the complaint. All investigations should aim to understand the root causes leading to the complaint. Brief results of the investigation are recorded. The Senior Clerk agrees with the barrister the action necessary to resolve the complaint and provides a substantive response in writing to the client of the results of the investigation or the circumstances leading to the complaint within 21 further days of acknowledgment of the complaint.

If this does not provide a resolution to the dispute, then the complaint is referred to the Head of Chambers.

In the alternative a complaint may be made direct to the Head of Chambers.

The Head of Chambers' approach will be objective and detached from the day-to-day business of running Chambers. He will pursue his own enquiries with the purpose of ensuring that the complaint is dealt with fairly and firmly. The Head of Chambers will normally acknowledge the complaint within 7 days of his notification of the complaint, arrange to meet with the client if appropriate, and provide a substantive response to the client within a further 21 days.

Clients may contact the Bar Council directly at any stage of the complaints process and in particular if the Head of Chambers is unable to resolve the complaint.

Any complaint that involves negligence or a potential claim against professional indemnity insurance is brought to the attention of the insurers as soon as possible by the barrister.

The Senior Clerk ensures that all complaints are recorded and maintains copies of all notes, correspondence and documents regarding a complaint in a central file together with a register of complaints.