

St Philips Chambers Complaints Handling Procedure

ST PHILIPS CHAMBERS COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service to all our clients. If you are unhappy about any aspect of our service, please tell us about it. This will help us to ensure that we meet the highest standards and enable us to identify any areas we need to improve.

Any complaint will be investigated having regard to the Bar Code of Conduct and any guidance as to complaints handling which is issued from time to time by the Bar Standards Board or the Legal Ombudsman. These are available to download from the Bar Standards Board and Legal Ombudsman's websites.

2. Definition of a complaint

Our Chambers has adopted the Legal Ombudsman's definition of a complaint which is an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction which alleges that the complainant has suffered or may suffer financial loss, distress, inconvenience or other detriment.

3. Time Limits

Our Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within 6 years of the act or omission complained of, or three years from the date of knowledge. Please note that the act or omission must have happened after 6 October 2010. We have 8 weeks within which to investigate and respond to your complaints, failing which you may refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman's details are provided below.

4. Complaints Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the service received or if you are dissatisfied with regards to a charge on a bill received, please first contact the Barrister's Clerk who is dealing with your matter. Alternatively, you may contact Emily Smith (HR & Administration Manager), either by telephone on 0121 246 7043, email at esmith@st-philips.com or by post to St Philips Chambers, 55 Temple Row, Birmingham, B2 5LS. If the complaint is in connection with Emily Smith, please telephone and ask to speak with the Chief Executive. Please set out as clearly as you can the nature of your complaint or concern, how it has arisen and the outcome you seek. Please also ensure that your letter states the identity of the person who dealt with your matter and your file reference number (if any). Alternatively, you can use the attached Complaint Form to detail your concerns.

Please note that there is no charge for dealing with and investigating a complaint.

5. What will happen next?

Within 5 working days of receipt of your complaint we will:

- Record your complaint in our central database and open a file for your complaint.
- Send you a letter acknowledging receipt.
- Ask you to confirm or explain any details which are unclear.

If we have asked for further details, we will acknowledge those within 5 working days of receipt and will confirm what will happen next.

6. Our investigation

Our Chambers has a panel currently headed by Andrew Lockhart Q.C. and made up of experienced members of Chambers and senior members of staff, which considers any written complaint. Where possible, within 7 working days of your letter being received the head of the panel or his deputy in his absence will appoint a member of the panel (or, occasionally, another senior person who is not a member of the panel but has appropriate experience) to investigate it. If your complaint is against the head of the panel, the next most senior member of the panel will investigate it. In any case, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

Emily Smith will write to you as soon as possible to let you know who has been appointed and the person appointed will reply to your complaint ideally within 21 working days. His/her reply will set out:

- The nature and scope of the investigation;
- The conclusion on each complaint and the basis for the conclusions reached; and
- If it is found that you are justified in your complaints, the proposal for resolving the complaint.

The person appointed may also invite you to a meeting. He/She will write to you within 5 working days of the meeting to confirm what took place and any solutions agreed with you.

If you are still not satisfied, you can write to us again. We will review our decision within 14 days and then write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explain our reasons.

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain our reasons why.

7. Confidentiality

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 head of chambers, members of our management committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister member or staff member who you have complained about, the head or relevant senior member of the panel 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.

8. Our document retention policy

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.

7. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

If you are still not satisfied, the next step is for you to contact the Legal Ombudsman by the following methods :

- Telephone : 0300 555 0333
- Overseas: +44 12 245 3050

- Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
- In writing : PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ
- Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

You must contact the Legal Ombudsman within six months of our last written response.

CLIENT COMPLAINT FORM

We understand that you have expressed dissatisfaction with the service we have provided and we are eager to investigate the matter fully to resolve any issues. So that we can understand your complaint, please complete the form below. We aim to respond to your initial complaint within 21 working days.

Your details:

Title:	
Name:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
E-Mail:	

Firm details:

Our Reference:	
Barrister:	

Complaint details

<p>Details of Complaint: Please use a separate sheet if required</p>	
<p>How would you like us to deal with your complaint?</p>	<p>In writing A meeting Other (please state)</p>