

CHAMBERS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE, 2025

1. Barristers and staff at Selborne Chambers aim to give you the highest standard of service at all times. However, if you have a complaint you are invited to let us know as soon as possible. You may complain directly to Chambers without going through solicitors. The Complaints Officer is William McCormick KC.
2. This procedure deals with issues connected with the service provided to you. It is not usually appropriate for Chambers to deal with complaints which deal solely with allegations of misconduct under the Bar Code of Conduct or of professional negligence. Complaints made more than 12 months after the relevant service has been provided or more than 12 months after the complainant should reasonably have known that there was cause for complaint will only be dealt with under this Procedure in exceptional circumstances.

Complaints made by telephone

3. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 5 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone either the barrister concerned or one of our Senior Clerks, Paul Bunting or Darren Madle. If the complaint is about a member of staff, please telephone one of the Senior Clerks. If the complaint is about either of our Senior Clerks, telephone the Head of Chambers (currently Mr Ian Clarke KC). The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it and will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved he/she 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.
4. 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

5. If you wish to complain in writing (or if you are writing about a complaint that you have raised by telephone but which has not been resolved to your satisfaction), please give the following details: your name and address, which member(s) or employee(s) of Chambers you are complaining about; the detail of the complaint; and what you would like done about it. Please address your letter to: The Complaints Officer, Selborne Chambers, 10 Essex Street, London

WC2R 3AA. If you are sending the complaint by email, please send the email to the Complaints Officer at William.mccormick@selbornechambers.co.uk and our Deputy-Senior Clerk, Richard Sheehan at richard.sheehan@selbornechambers.co.uk unless the complaint is about either of them, in which case it should be sent to the other of them and also to the Head of Chambers at ian.clarke@selbornechambers.co.uk. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint promptly and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with. If you have a vulnerability or disability that you wish Chambers to take into account when dealing with your complaint you should raise it at the earliest opportunity. Reasonable adjustments will be made at the discretion of the Complaints Officer or the person(s) appointed by him in accordance with the procedure set out below.

6. On receipt of your written complaint, the Complaints Officer will consider the complaint and will decide (i) whether it falls within the scope of this procedure and (ii) whether to consider and determine it himself or appoint a person or persons of appropriate seniority (including himself) to consider and determine it. In any case, the person(s) appointed will not be or include any person you are complaining about. If your complaint is about the Complaints Officer, then it will be immediately referred to the Head of Chambers who will take his place in the process for your complaint. If it is decided that your complaint does not fall within the scope of this procedure you will be notified of this decision (with reasons) and given the details of the Legal Ombudsman (set out at paragraphs 11 to 15 below) to whom you may wish to refer the complaint.
7. The precise format of consideration and determination of your complaint will be for the person(s) conducting those functions to decide. Generally, the procedure involves seeking any clarification about your complaint from you (if this is considered necessary); inviting the person about whom your written complaint is made and any persons who may have relevant information to respond in writing to each of the allegations advanced, and for you to have an opportunity to consider that response and to address the issues raised in it. Usually, 14 days is allowed for each of these stages but the time may be extended if this is thought fair. Each complaint will be decided on paper and only by reference to the matters raised in the complaint, response and reply, together with any documents attached.
8. The person(s) appointed to determine the complaint (or the Complaints Officer if he decides to undertake this function himself) will write to you as soon as possible to let you know they have been appointed and how they intend to proceed, as to (i) taking any/all of the steps set

out in the preceding paragraph, (ii) reaching their decision, and (iii) how long they intend to allow for each step and to reach their decision. You will receive a decision letter from the person(s) appointed setting out the nature and scope of the complaint, the principal matters raised in defence and the conclusion reached on each complaint and the basis for this conclusion. If your complaint is found to be justified, the decision letter will set out the proposals for resolving the complaint. If your complaint is not upheld in full (or if you do not accept the proposals for resolving the complaint) you will be provided with the details of the Legal Ombudsman (as set out at paragraphs 11 to 15 below) and of an Alternative Dispute Resolution organisation which might be able to assist in resolving the complaint (or any unresolved aspect of it).

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 to deal with the complaint and discharge our obligations under the Code of Conduct. 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 or member of staff about whom you have complained, the head or relevant senior member of the panel and the person(s) who investigate 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 how it has been dealt with and retain it in accordance with our relevant data policy.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

11. We hope that you will use our procedure. However, if you would rather not do so or are unhappy with the outcome you have the choice of taking up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman if you fall within their jurisdiction.
12. Rule 4 of the Legal Ombudsman Scheme Rules (dated 1 April 2023) set out when complaints can be referred to the Legal Ombudsman. The Scheme Rules are published online at <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/who-we-are/corporate-publications/scheme-rules/>,

along with Guidance published at <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/for-legal-service-providers/learning-resources/guidance-scheme-rules/>.

13. Ordinarily, a complainant cannot use the Legal Ombudsman unless the complainant has first used the authorised person's complaints procedure: see r.4.1 of the Scheme Rules.
14. We also draw your attention in particular to r.4.4(a) and r.4.4(b), which explains that if our written response to a complaint includes prominently (i) an explanation that the Legal Ombudsman was available if you remain dissatisfied, (ii) full contact details for the Legal Ombudsman and (iii) a warning that the complaint must be referred to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of the date of the written response, then you must ordinarily refer the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of the date of the written response.
15. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman at: Telephone: 0300 555 0333;; Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk; Post: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

16. If your complaint is not upheld in full (or if you do not accept the proposals for resolving the complaint) you may wish to consider using an Alternative Dispute Resolution organisation to assist in resolving the complaint (or any unresolved aspect of it). One such organisation is Dispute Resolution Ombudsman Limited, Premier House, 1st Floor, 1-5 Argyle Way, Stevenage, Hert SG1 2AD. Its website address is www.disputeresolutionombudsman.org.

Professional Conduct Issues

17. Matters of professional conduct can be referred to the Bar Standards Board at: Bar Standards Board, Professional Conduct Department, 289-293 High Holborn, London WC1V 7JZ.
18. This Procedure comes into effect on 9 April 2026; all previous Complaints Procedures/Policies concerning complaints by those outside of Chambers are revoked.