

DRYSTONE

CHAMBERS

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

1. Our aim is to provide you with excellent service at all times. If, however, you have a complaint please 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.

Please note that if your complaint is about one of our barristers, the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for service complaints about lawyers, has time limits in which a complaint must be raised with them. The time limit is one year from the act/omission; or one year from when the complainant should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint. Chambers must have regard to these time limits when deciding whether we are able to investigate your complaint. Chambers will not deal with complaints falling outside this time limit.

2. You may make a complaint by telephone or in writing.

COMPLAINTS MADE BY TELEPHONE

3. If you wish to speak to someone on the telephone about your complaint, please telephone 020 7404 1881 and ask to speak to Russell Burton-Lawrence, Chambers Administrator, who is the nominated person to deal with complaints. If the complaint is about Russell Burton-Lawrence, please ask to speak to the Head of Chambers, Allison Summers KC. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. They will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved, they will record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with the outcome, and record that you are satisfied.
4. If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone, you will be invited to write to us about it so it can be investigated formally.

COMPLAINTS MADE IN WRITING

5. Please give the following details:
 - your name and address
 - which barrister or member of staff are you complaining about
 - the detail of the complaint
 - what you would like done about it

Please address your letter to the Chambers Administrator, 1 Bedford Row, London, WC1R 4BU or send it via email to russell.burton-lawrence@drystone.com. If your complaint is about the Chambers

Administrator, you should address your letter to the Head of Chambers, 1 Bedford Row, London, WC1R 4BU or send it via email to allison.summers@drystone.com. 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.

6. Drystone Chambers has a panel headed by the Head of Chambers, and made up of experienced members of Chambers which considers any written complaint. Within 14 days of your letter being received, the head of the panel, or her deputy in her absence, will appoint a member of the panel 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.
7. The person appointed to investigate will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If they find they are not going to be able to reply within 14 days, they will set a new date for their reply and inform you. Their reply will set out:
 - the nature and scope of their investigation
 - their conclusion on each complaint and the basis for their conclusion; and
 - if they find that you are justified in your complaint, their proposals to resolve the complaint

CONFIDENTIALITY

8. All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will generally only be disclosed to those who are the subject of the complaint and those involved in the investigation of any such 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

9. 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 Management Committee inspects an anonymised record regularly with a view to improving services.

COMPLAINTS TO THE LEGAL OMBUDSMAN

10. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation and you fall within their jurisdiction, you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. If you wish to contact the Legal Ombudsman, this must be done within 6 months of our final response being notified to you. We will therefore always make it clear to you in our final response that if you remain unhappy with the situation you may (now) contact the Legal Ombudsman.

You can contact the Legal Ombudsman at the following address:

PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

More information about the Legal Ombudsman is available on their website:

<https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk>

COMPLAINTS TO THE BAR STANDARDS BOARD

11. Drystone Chambers will not always investigate complaints brought by non-clients. This is because the ability of Chambers to investigate and resolve such matters is limited, and some complaints of this nature are often better suited to the disciplinary processes maintained by the Bar Standards Board. If, having made an initial assessment of your complaint, we feel that the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily resolved through our complaints process, we will refer you to the BSB:

Bar Standards Board
Professional Conduct Department
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7HZ

Telephone: 020 7611 1444

Email: contactus@barstandardsboard.org.uk

More information about the Bar Standards Board is available on their website:

www.barstandardsboard.org.uk