

# How to make a complaint

## **Maitland Chambers' Complaints Procedure**

1. Our aim is 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. It is not necessary to involve solicitors in order to make your complaint but you are free to do so should you wish.
2. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation, alternative dispute resolution may be available to you. You may also be able to take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is usually only able to consider your complaint when it has first been investigated by Chambers. The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted through the website at [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk).

### **Complaints made by Telephone**

3. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 4 and 5 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the Chambers Director. If the complaint is about the Chambers Director or Senior Clerk, telephone the Head of Chambers. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. S/he will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved s/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.
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 further.

### **Complaints made in Writing**

5. Please give the following details: your name and address, which member(s) or employees of chambers you are complaining about; details of the complaint; and what you would like done about it. Please address your letter to the Chambers Director, Maitland Chambers, 7 Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, London WC2A 3SZ. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within seven days and provide you with details of when you may expect a substantive response to the issues raised, normally within a further 14 days, and details of our complaints procedure.

6. You will be informed in writing if any aspects of your complaint are deemed to be outside of Chambers' complaints handling procedures.

### **Formal Investigation**

7. If you are not satisfied with the substantive response given, you have the right to request that the complaint be investigated formally by a complaints panel within Chambers. Our Chambers will constitute a panel headed by John Nicholls QC and made up of experienced members of Chambers and a senior member of staff, to consider any written complaint. Within 14 days of your request for a formal investigation being received the head of the panel or her/his deputy in her/his absence will appoint a member of the panel to investigate it. If your complaint is against the head of the panel it will be investigated by the next most senior member of the panel. In any case, the person appointed 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 s/he has been appointed and that s/he will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If s/he finds later that s/he is not going to be able to reply within 14 days s/he will set a new date for her/his reply and inform you. Her/his reply will set out:
  - The nature and scope of her/his investigation;
  - Her/his conclusion on each complaint and the basis for her/his conclusion; and
  - If s/he finds that you are justified in your complaint, any available 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 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 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.

## 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 6 years. Our management committee considers the issues raised by such complaints regularly with a view to improving services.

## Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

11. If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation you have a right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for complaints about lawyers, at the conclusion of our consideration of your complaint. The Ombudsman will not usually consider your complaint until it has first been investigated by Chambers. Please note that any complaint to the Legal Ombudsman must be made within **six-months** from the date on which you are notified of the outcome of our investigation.
12. In addition, the Legal Ombudsman will ordinarily only investigate complaints that are raised either within six years of the act/omission about which you are complaining or within three years of the date on which you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint. In either case, the date of the act/omission or the date on which you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint must have been after 5 October 2010.
13. A copy of the Legal Ombudsman's Scheme Rules can be found by clicking [here](#)
14. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman as follows:

Legal Ombudsman  
PO Box 6806  
Wolverhampton  
WV1 9WJ

Telephone number: 0300 555 0333  
Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)