

3 VERULAM BUILDINGS

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Our aim is to give you a good service at all times. However if you have a complaint you are invited to let us know about it as soon as possible.

Contact the barrister concerned

2. We would invite you, in the first place, to make contact with the particular barrister concerned, whether by telephone or in writing. He/she (hereafter he) will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like to be done about it. He will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved 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.

3. We would expect him to deal with your complaint within 14 days, or, if that timescale proves impracticable for whatever reason, to tell you why and thereafter to keep you informed of progress.

4. If you remain dissatisfied, or if you would prefer not to contact the barrister direct, or if the complaint concerns a member of staff, then we would invite you to pursue the matter further as follows.

Complaints made by telephone

5. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 7 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the Senior Practice Manager, **Nick Hill**, on **020 7831 8441**.

If the complaint is about the Senior Practice Manager, please telephone the Head of Chambers: **Ali Malek QC** on the number above.

The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like to be done about it. He or she (hereafter he) will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved 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.

6. 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

7. If you wish to make a complaint in writing, please give the following details: your name and address, which barrister(s) or staff member(s) you are complaining about, the detail of the complaint including dates where appropriate, and what you would like to be done about it.

Please address your letter to:

Ali Malek QC
3 Verulam Buildings
Gray's Inn
London WC1R 5NT

8. Our chambers will appoint a panel headed by **Ali Malek QC** and made up of experienced members of chambers and a senior member of staff, which will consider any written complaint. Within 14 days of your letter being received the head of the panel or his deputy in 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.

9. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know he has been appointed and that he will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If he finds later that he is not going to be able to reply within 14 days he will set a new date for his reply and inform you of it. His reply will set out

- The nature and scope of his investigations
- His conclusion on each complaint and the basis for his conclusion; and
- If he finds that you are justified in your complaint, his proposals for resolving the complaint.

Confidentiality

10. 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, the Senior Practice Manager, the investigating panel and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation.

Our Policy

11. As part of our commitment to client care we will make a written record of any complaint. Chambers is committed to providing the best possible service to clients and to this end we will take any such records into account in our regular reviews of the services we provide.

Complaints to the Bar Council (barristers' professional body)

If you have a complaint we do hope that you will use our procedure. However if you would rather not do so or are unhappy with the outcome you do have the choice of taking up your complaint with one of the other bodies designated to hear complaints against barristers. These are the Legal Ombudsman (who deals with complaints from clients against barristers about the services provided by barristers) and the Bar Standards Board (which deals with complaints about professional misconduct and disciplinary matters). The Legal Ombudsman acts as a single point of contact for all such complaints, and will ensure that any complaints that relate to professional misconduct are referred to the Bar Standards Board to deal with.

The Legal Ombudsman has a time limit of 12 months from the date of the event giving rise to the complaint or 12 months from the date on which the complainant should reasonably have known, without taking advice, that there was a reason for making a complaint.

The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman and the Bar Standards Board are:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 15870
Birmingham
B30 9EB
Tel: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Complaints Team
Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7HZ
Tel: 020 7611 1444
Fax: 020 7831 9217