



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Members and Administration Team at Albion Chambers aim to offer high levels of service at all times. However, should you have any complaint about any area of our service you are asked to inform us as soon as possible. It is not necessary to lodge your complaint through your Solicitor but you may do so should you wish.
- 1.2 You should note that Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within **12 months** of the act or omission complained of.

2. Complaints Made by Telephone

- 2.1 You may wish to make a complaint in the first instance in writing, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraphs 3 below.
- 2.2 If you would prefer to speak on the telephone then please telephone the Chambers Director, Paul Fletcher, who is the individual nominated under this Chambers' Complaints Procedure to deal with such matters. If the complaint is about the Chambers Director, then you should telephone the Head of Chambers, Charles Hyde QC. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and how you would like it to be resolved. 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 that outcome and record your response. You may wish to keep a written record of the telephone discussion. You will in any event be sent a copy of the Chambers Director's note of the discussion.
- 2.3 Should it not be possible to resolve your complaint on the telephone, you will be invited to write to us within **fourteen** days of the date of the original telephone discussion, setting out the full details of your complaint. Your complaint will then be formally investigated.

3. Complaints Made in Writing

- 3.1 When making a complaint in writing, please provide the following details:
 - Your full name and address;
 - Which member(s) of Chambers or member of staff you are complaining about;
 - The detail of your complaint;
 - How you would like the matter to be resolved.

Please address your letter to:

Paul Fletcher, Chambers Director
[or, if the complaint is about the Chambers Director then write to:
Charles Hyde QC, Head of Chambers]
Albion Chambers
Broad Street
Bristol
BS1 1DR

We will acknowledge receipt of your formal complaint in writing, where possible, within **five** days, providing you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

- 3.2 As with complaints made by telephone, we will first seek to resolve your concerns informally. The person you contact will note the details of your complaint and how you would like it to be resolved. He will discuss your concerns with the barrister or member of staff about whom you have complained, he will then contact you again to set out their response. If the matter can be resolved at this stage then



the outcome will be recorded once we have checked that you are satisfied and recorded your response.

- 3.3 Should it not be possible to resolve your complaint at this stage, the matter will be passed to the Chambers complaints panel.
- 3.4 Our Chambers has a panel, made up of experienced members of Chambers and the Chambers Director, which considers any written complaint. Within **five** 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 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 about whom you are complaining.
- 3.5 The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know that s/he has been appointed and that s/he will reply to your complaint within **fourteen** days. Should s/he find that s/he is not able to reply in that timescale then s/he will set a new date and inform you. The reply will set out:
 - The nature and scope of the investigation;
 - The conclusion on each point of the complaint and the basis for the conclusion;
 - If your complaints are found to be justified, the proposals for a resolution.
- 3.4 Should it be felt that your complaint is, or could be, a matter of Professional Negligence or Misconduct, then the Chambers' internal procedure may be stopped and the matter referred to the Bar Standards Board. The barrister's Professional Indemnity Insurer, Bar Mutual Indemnity fund will be informed of the complaint.

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1 All conversations and documents relating to your 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 directly involved in your complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or member of staff 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.
- 4.2 We take the view that if you make a complaint then you are taken to waive any privilege or confidentiality between you and your own barrister. This means that for the purpose of replying to your complaint, your barrister can refer to material and documents that arose in your case that would otherwise have remained confidential between you.

5. Quality Assurance

- 5.1 As part of Albion Chambers' commitment to Quality and Assurance and Client Care, we make a written record of any complaint received and retain all documents and correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six years. An anonymised record is reviewed annually with a view to constantly improving our services.



6. Complaints to the Legal Services Ombudsman

- 6.1 This complaints procedure has been devised in the hope that any complaints will be resolved swiftly and as informally as possible. However, if you would rather not do so, or are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, then you may take up the matter with the Legal Services Ombudsman. Please note the Legal Services Ombudsman operates a **six-year** time limit from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining within which to make your complaint. However, should you raise your complaint with Chambers first, there is a six-month time limit from the conclusion of the investigation by Chambers in which to raise your complaint with the Legal Services Ombudsman.

You can contact the Legal Services Ombudsman at:

Office of the Legal Services Ombudsman
PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ

Lo Call No: 0300 555 0333 (Charged at local rates – available nationally)

Tel: +44 (0) 121 245 3050

Should you have access to the internet then further details can also be found at:
www.legalombudsman.org.uk

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