

ATKIN CHAMBERS' COMPLAINTS POLICY

All of the barristers at Atkin Chambers aim to provide the highest level of service to all of their clients and feedback from clients suggests that they are successful in achieving this aim.

We hope that you will not have to make a complaint, however, if you do you may contact us directly. It is not necessary to involve solicitors in order to make a complaint but you are free to do so should you wish.

Please note that the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for service complaints about lawyers, has a time limit for investigating complaints. This time limit is up to six years from the date of the problem happening or within three years of when you found out about the problem. Chambers must therefore have regard to this timeframe when deciding whether they are able to investigate your complaint. Chambers will not deal with complaints that fall outside of the time limit.

COMPLAINTS MADE BY TELEPHONE

You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraphs 2 and 3 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone Justin Wilson, Chambers' Senior Clerk, on 020 7400 8504. The Senior Clerk will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like 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. The Senior Clerk will in any case write to you to confirm the outcome.

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 that it can be investigated formally.

COMPLAINTS MADE IN WRITING

If you decide to put your complaint in writing, please include following details:

- Your name and address;
- Which member(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 Chief Executive and Director of Clerking, Atkin Chambers, 1 Atkin Building, Gray's Inn, London, WC1R 5AT. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within seven days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

The Chief Executive and Director of Clerking will investigate your complaint and reply to you within 28 days. This is within the eight-week time frame allowed by the Legal Ombudsman. If he finds later that he is not going to be able to reply within 28 days he will set a new date for his reply and explain why he cannot reply within 28 days; this may be because he requires more information from you, the barrister or other parties involved in your case.

Once he has completed his investigation the Chief Executive and Director of Clerking will reply by setting out:

- The nature and scope of his investigation;
- 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.

There may be occasions when the Chief Executive and Director of Clerking in conjunction with the Head of Chambers decides that your complaint should be investigated by a Panel or another Barrister. If such a decision is made, then the Head of the Panel or the nominated Barrister will reply to you with the information listed above.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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 Clerk, members of our Management Committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the Barrister member or staff who you have complained about and the person or persons who investigated the complaint if that is not the Chief Executive and Director of Clerking. 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

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. In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), these documents will then be reviewed under our Data Retention and Destruction policy and a decision will be made whether to retain, delete or destroy the documents. Our Management Committee inspects the record regularly and will, if appropriate, make changes to our procedures with a view to improving services.

COMPLAINTS TO THE LEGAL OMBUDSMAN

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for complaints about lawyers. The Legal Ombudsman is not able to consider your complaint until it has first been investigated by Chambers. You can write to the Legal Ombudsman at:

You can write to the Ombudsman at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806,
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ
Telephone number: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Julie Demeritt
Chief Operating Officer
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