

ATKIN CHAMBERS' COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. The barristers at Atkin Chambers aim to provide the highest level of service to all their clients and feedback from clients suggests that they are successful in achieving this aim.
2. Chambers hopes that you will not have to make a complaint, however, if you do, you may contact Chambers directly. It is not necessary to involve solicitors in order to make a complaint, but you are free to do so should you wish.
3. 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 one year from the date of the act or omission being complained about or one year from the date when the complainant should have realised that there was cause for complaint. 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

4. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure 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 your claim. 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.
5. If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone, you will be invited to write to us about it within 14 days following the phone call so that it can be investigated formally.

COMPLAINTS MADE IN WRITING

6. If you decide to put your complaint in writing, please include following details:
 - Your name and address;
 - About which member(s) of Chambers you are complaining;
 - The detail of the complaint; and
 - What you would like done about your claim.
7. Please address your letter to the Chief Executive and Director of Clerking, Atkin Chambers, 1 Atkin Building, Gray's Inn, London, WC1R 5AT. Chambers will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within seven days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

8. The Chief Executive and Director of Clerking will investigate your complaint and reply to you within 28 days. The Legal Ombudsman requires you to bring your complaint to them within 6 months of the date of the final complaint response and therefore the 28 days is well within the Legal Ombudsman time limit. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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

11. 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 Chambers' 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.

CHAMBERS' POLICY

12. As part of Chambers' commitment to client care, Chambers makes a written record of any complaint and retains 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 Chambers' Data Retention and Destruction policy and a decision will be made whether to retain, delete or destroy the documents. Chambers' Management Committee inspects the record regularly and will, if appropriate, make changes to Chambers' procedures with a view to improving services.

COMPLAINTS TO THE LEGAL OMBUDSMAN

13. If you are unhappy with the outcome of Chambers' 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 make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman by using their online complaint process here: <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>.

14. If online accessibility is an issue, please write to the Legal Ombudsman at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH
Telephone number: 0300 555 0333
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Julie Demeritt
Chief Operating Officer
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