

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Great James Street Chambers

All of the barristers and clerks at Great James Street Chambers aim to provide the highest level of service to all clients and the feedback we regularly receive and internal audits suggest that we are successful in achieving this aim. We want to give you the best possible service. However, if at any point you become unhappy or concerned about the service we have provided to you, you should inform us immediately so that we can do our best to resolve the problem for you.

In the first instance it may be helpful to contact the barrister who is working on your case to discuss any concerns. They will try to resolve any issues at this stage. If you are not content with their response, your complaint can be escalated as detailed below.

There is no charge for making a complaint, and raising a complaint will not affect the service you receive or your legal rights.

How to make a complaint

Complaints made in writing

If you wish to make a complaint, please provide the following information:

- Your name and address;
- The name of the barrister(s) or member(s) of Chambers to whom the complaint relates;
- Details of your complaint; and
- What outcome you are seeking.

Complaints should be sent to the Senior Clerk:

Zoe Preston

Email: zoe.preston@greatjames.co.uk

Other ways to make a complaint

If you are unable to make your complaint in writing, or if you require reasonable adjustments (for example because of a disability or vulnerability), you may make your complaint orally. We will make appropriate arrangements to assist you.

Acknowledgement and informal resolution

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, where possible, within 14 days.

At this stage, we may be able to resolve your complaint informally. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, your complaint will be treated as a formal complaint and referred to the Management Committee.

Formal investigation

The Management Committee will investigate your complaint and provide a written response within 42 days. This is within the eight-week timeframe allowed by the Legal Ombudsman. If it is not possible to respond within 42 days, we will inform you of the reason for the delay and provide a revised timeframe.

Once the investigation is complete, the response will explain:

- The scope of the investigation;
- The conclusions reached and the reasons for those conclusions; and
- Where appropriate, any proposed steps to resolve the complaint.

In some cases, the Management Committee may decide that the complaint should be investigated by a panel or another barrister. If this happens, you will be informed and provided with a response in the same manner.

Confidentiality

All conversations and documents relating to a complaint will be treated as confidential and disclosed only to the extent necessary to investigate and resolve the complaint.

Information may be shared with the Head of Chambers, the Senior Clerk, members of the Management Committee, the barrister or staff member concerned, and anyone else involved in investigating the complaint.

The Bar Standards Board may request access to complaint records when carrying out its regulatory and auditing functions.

Records and review

A written record of all complaints is kept, together with any correspondence and documents relating to them. These records are retained for six years.

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated where necessary to improve standards of service.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

If we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you may refer it to the Legal Ombudsman, who investigates complaints about the quality of service provided by lawyers. Before the Legal Ombudsman will consider your complaint, you must have given us the opportunity to resolve it first.

You must contact the Legal Ombudsman:

- Within one year of the act or omission being complained about, or within one year of when you should reasonably have become aware of the issue; and
- Within six months of receiving our final response.

The Legal Ombudsman cannot investigate complaints about professional misconduct and cannot deal with complaints from people who are not clients.

Legal Ombudsman contact details:

- Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk
- Telephone: 0300 555 0333 (10am–4pm)
- Relay UK: 18001 0300 555 0333
- Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
- Address: PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

Complaints to the Bar Standards Board

If you are not a client of Chambers, or if your complaint concerns the professional conduct of a barrister rather than the quality of service provided, you may raise the matter with the Bar Standards Board (BSB).

The Bar Standards Board is the regulator for barristers and investigates complaints about professional misconduct or breaches of professional rules. The BSB does not award compensation.

Bar Standards Board contact details:

Complaints Department

Bar Standards Board

289–293 High Holborn

London WC1V 7HZ

DX: 240 LDE

Telephone: 020 7611 1444

Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

Availability of this policy

This Complaints Policy is available on our website. It can also be provided in alternative formats on request.