

Westgate Chambers Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction:

- a. We will always make every effort to provide you with a quality level of service. If, however, you are not satisfied with the service provided by either chambers or a member of chambers (barrister) then you can make a complaint.

2. Our policy

- a. Set out below is how you can make a complaint. We will approach each complaint with a view to understanding the issues caused and where applicable how we can best remedy the situation.
- b. All conversations and documents relating to your complaint will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be disclosed within chambers to those involved in dealing with the complaint. It may be necessary to share details of your complaint externally with the Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund (professional indemnity insurers) or our regulator the Bar Standards Board, who carry out periodic auditing and monitoring.
- c. We monitor complaints, at least every 12 months, to identify if there are any specific trends so that we may seek to prevent any reoccurrence and to ensure our complaints procedure is fit for purpose.
- d. We will retain all correspondence and documents relating to your complaint for a period of 7 years, before they are destroyed.

3. How to make a complaint:

- a. All complaints must be addressed to our Senior Clerk. If your complaint is about our Head of Chambers or the Senior Clerk, then please send your complaint to Head of Crime or Head of Family (Deputy Heads of Chambers). Their contact details can be found on our website <https://westgate-chambers.co.uk/our-people> or email clerks@westgate-chambers.co.uk
- b. Please provide full details of your complaint and how you believe that we can put things right for you.

4. How we manage complaints

- a. You can be assured that we take complaints about chambers and members of chambers seriously.

- b. We will deal with your complaint effectively, efficiently and seek to ensure it is resolved fairly and promptly.
- c. We may contact you, depending on your preference, to discuss your complaint in the hope that it can be resolved quickly and informally.
- d. If, however, this is not possible then we will carry out a full investigation of your complaint.
- e. We will acknowledge your complaint within 7 days and set out our understanding of the issues raised.
- f. Your complaint will be investigated by either (i) Head of Chambers, or (ii) one of the deputy Heads of Chambers who will investigate your complaint thoroughly and fairly and provide you with their detailed response. Head of Chambers will retain overall supervision of your complaint unless the complaint is made against the Head of Chambers (see above).
- g. Where appropriate the investigation may be carried out by another member of chambers appointed by the Head of Chambers.
- h. All complaints received will usually be determined within 28 days and no longer than 8 weeks. If we are unable to meet our timescales, we will let you know.
- i. You will not be charged for investigating your complaint.

5. The Legal Ombudsman/Bar Standards Board:

- a. If we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction within the 8 week period, you may have the right, subject to their jurisdiction, to refer your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman.
- b. The Legal Ombudsman are the independent complaints body for complaints about providers of legal services.
- c. They will not consider your complaint until you have given us an opportunity to resolve your complaint directly with you.
- d. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman must be made within 6 months from the date of our final complaint response.
- e. You must also make your complaint within 6 years of when the problem complained about occurred, or no later than three years after you ought reasonably to have known you had grounds to complain.

- f. Further details about the Legal Ombudsman can be found on their website <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk>

- g. You can contact the Legal Ombudsman at: -

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH

Telephone: 0300 555 0333

Website: enquires@legalombudsman.org.uk

- h. The Legal Ombudsman publishes data on all complaints that have been resolved. The Ombudsman's final decision data can be found:

<https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/information-centre/data-centre/ombudsman-decision-data/>

- i. If the Legal Ombudsman is unable to deal with your complaint, then our regulatory body, The Bar Standards Board may be able to assist you.

- j. You can contact the Bar Standards Board at: -

Bar Standards Board Contact and Assessment Team
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7JZ

Telephone number: 0207 6111 444

Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

- k. Report a concern to the Bar Standards Board:

<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/for-the-public/problems-with-a-barrister/reporting-a-concern.html>

- l. You can access the Bar Standards Board register:

<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/for-the-public/search-a-barristers-record/the-barristers-register.html>

- m. If you require a copy of our complaints procedure in another format then please contact us: T: 01273 480510, E: clerks@westgate-chambers.co.uk

6. Data Protection Complaints:

- a. If you have a complaint about how your data has been processed, then please follow the same procedure set out above.
- b. If we are unable to resolve your complaint, you can find full details of how to complain to the ICO and their contact details: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

-End Document-

Reviewed 30.07.26