

2 DR. JOHNSON'S BUILDINGS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Any complaint received in Chambers whether to the clerks, to a barrister or to the Head of Chambers should be notified to the Senior Clerk, together with copies of all significant correspondence etc.

A complaint is any material expression of dissatisfaction which is about a matter which covers negligence, incompetence or a significant shortfall in levels of service. It may be in writing, by fax, by telephone and to either the relevant barrister or any other member of Chambers.

All complaints will be acknowledged, preferably in writing, within 72 hours of receipt, and a copy of this procedure will be included in that letter.

The client will also be advised when a full reply will follow, which should usually be within 28 days.

If received by a barrister, it should be handled by him/her in the first instance. If it is unable to be satisfactorily resolved, then the matter must be advised to the Senior Clerk.

If the complaint involves the Senior Clerk it will be handled throughout by the Head of Chambers.

If the complaint relates to the Head of Chambers, it will be dealt with by a committee of three appointed by the Management Committee.

If received by the Senior Clerk, he will make enquiries of the barrister concerned, speak to the professional client and endeavour to resolve matters.

If this is insufficient, the matter will be referred to the Head of Chambers, who will then investigate and liaise with the professional client as appropriate.

In resolving each complaint, the matter is reviewed to assess the need for:-

- Appropriate redress :** as a compensatory/goodwill measure for the client
- Remedial Action :** where the problem is not beyond correcting
- Improvement Action :** to look at the root cause of the problem and implement changes to prevent the problem from recurring.

The existence of this procedure does not prohibit Chambers from dismissing without further investigation complaints that are manifestly without merit.

If a complainant, having had the matter reviewed by the Head of Chambers, is still unsatisfied, they may take their complaint to the Legal Ombudsman who can be contacted at:-

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ
Tel : 0300 555 0333
www.legalombudsman.org.uk

In normal circumstances the Ombudsman expects the matter to be referred to his office within six months of the final letter from Chambers regarding the complaint.

If, however, Chambers does not deal with the complaint within 8 weeks of the initial contact then the matter may be referred directly to the Ombudsman's office.

The complaints file will be reviewed in annually by the Senior Clerk, who will report the number and type of complaints to the Management Committee, together with confirmation that any changes of procedures identified as being necessary have been introduced, or suggesting any changes to be introduced.