

## Temple Garden Chambers Complaints Procedure

### **Preliminary**

Temple Garden Chambers prides itself on the excellence of its service. If at any time you have any concerns about the quality of the services provided by our barristers or members of staff, you are invited to let us know as soon as possible. In so far as it is possible, any complaint should be made promptly. Chambers will not usually deal with complaints which fall outside the Legal Ombudsman's time limits as set out below.

### **Feedback**

We are delighted to receive feedback from clients on the quality of our services. Members of Chambers and clerks also pass your comments on to our management committee for review. We are constantly looking for ways to improve our business.

If you have any specific issues you wish to raise, please contact Chambers' Senior Clerk, Dean Norton on 0207 583 1315.

### **Informal Resolution of Complaints**

In line with our friendly and open approach, in the first instance we would always encourage you to discuss any day-to-day concerns about the services of our barristers directly with them. Any such concerns can also always be raised with our clerking team, and, in particular, with Dean Norton, our senior clerk. Any concerns about members of staff should initially be raised with the senior clerk. If the complaint is about the senior clerk, please discuss the matter with the Head of Chambers, Keith Morton QC.

These concerns can be raised in any way, for example by telephone. We would very much hope that the matter can be resolved informally at this point and that you will be satisfied with the outcome. If the matter is resolved informally in this way, you will nevertheless be asked whether you are satisfied with that outcome and your response will be recorded.

However, if you feel that the concern or matter you have raised has not been dealt with to your satisfaction, then you may wish to make a formal complaint. We set out the steps in our formal complaints procedure below.

### **Formal Complaints Procedure**

Please either write a letter or send an email to one of the following:  
The Head of Chambers, Keith Morton QC, James Holdsworth, William Hoskins or the senior clerk, Dean Norton.

The following details should be given:

- your name and address;
- which member of Chambers or member of staff you are complaining about;
- the detail of the complaint; and
- what you would like us to do about it.

It is essential that, before you write or send an email, you telephone Chambers to check that the person to whom your letter (or email) is to be addressed will be available to respond to it when it arrives. If you do this, we will where possible acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within 3 working days and tell you how we propose to handle it. **Under no circumstances should the complaint be sent by fax.**

The complaint will initially be considered by the Head of Chambers, James Holdsworth or William Hoskins who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated by one or other of them or another appropriately experienced member of Chambers and, if appropriate, a senior member of staff. In any case, the person(s) initially considering the complaint and/or investigating the complaint will be other than the person you are complaining about.

The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know that he or she has been appointed, to explain the role that they have within Chambers and to inform you that he or she will respond to your complaint in writing within 28 days, or such longer time as the investigator considers necessary. All investigations will be carried out as quickly and efficiently as is reasonably possible but you should be aware that professional diary commitments may delay the procedure. Nevertheless, everything will be done to expedite the investigation. If the person investigating the matter finds later that any time frame indicated will not be possible to achieve, he or she will set a new date for the response and inform you accordingly.

Her/his response will set out:

- the nature and scope of the investigation;
- the conclusion on each complaint and the basis for such conclusion;
- if it is found that your complaint is justified, her/his proposals for resolving the complaint;
- If it is found that your complaint is unjustified, you will be told that you can ask the Head of Chambers to review it within 21 days.

### **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, and if he thinks it appropriate, to the members of the Chambers Executive Committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or member of staff about whom you have complained and the person appointed to investigate the complaint, together with those representatives of the Bar Standards Board who are entitled to see them.

### **Our Policy**

As part of our commitment to client care, we make a written record of any complaint and retain all the relevant documents for seven years.

## **Complaint or referral to the Legal Ombudsman**

If you are unhappy with the outcome of Chambers' complaints procedure, you can take your complaint to The Legal Ombudsman at the conclusion of our consideration of your complaint. The Ombudsman is an independent complaints body which deals with complaints about lawyers in England and Wales. It should be emphasised that the Ombudsman is not able to consider your complaint until it has first been investigated and decided upon by Chambers.

There are time limits within which to refer matters to the Legal Ombudsman as follows:

- a) Six years from the date of the act/omission
- b) Three years from the date that the complainant should reasonably have known there were grounds for complaint (if the act/omission took place before the 6 October 2010 or was more than six years ago)
- c) **Within six months of the complaint receiving a final response from their lawyer, if that response complies with the requirements in rule 4.4 of the Scheme Rules (which requires the response to include prominently an explanation that the Legal Ombudsman was available if the complainant remained dissatisfied and the provision of full contact details for the Ombudsman and a warning that the complaint must be referred to them within six months**

The Ombudsman can extend the time limit in exceptional circumstances. Chambers must therefore have regard to that time frame when deciding whether it is able to investigate your complaint. As stated above, Chambers will not therefore usually deal with complaints which fall outside of the Legal Ombudsman's time limits.

### **You can contact the Legal Ombudsman:**

By telephone: 0300 555 0333

By email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

Via the website: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

By post: PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ

**Please note the 6 month time limit for making a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman as referred to above.**