

Farrar's Building Complaints Procedure to be provided to the lay client/s

1. Our aim is to give you an excellent service at all times. However, if you do have a complaint, you are invited to let us know as soon as possible. We set out below the steps in our formal complaints procedure.
2. It is not necessary to involve solicitors in order to make your 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 time limits within which a complaint must be raised with them. The time limits are:
 - a. Six years from the date of the act/omission complained of; or
 - b. Three years from the date that the complainant should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.
4. Further, a complainant must ordinarily refer the complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of the date of the written response to the complaint from their lawyer, provided that the written response complies with the requirements in rule 4.4(a) of the Legal Ombudsman's Scheme Rules (which requires the response to include prominently an explanation that the Legal Ombudsman is available if the complainant remains dissatisfied, full contact details for the Legal Ombudsman and a warning that the complaint must be referred to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of the date of the written response). Full information about the Legal Ombudsman's procedure and time limits can be accessed on the Legal Ombudsman's website, details of which are given below.
5. The Legal Ombudsman can extend the above time limits in exceptional circumstances.
6. Farrar's Building will have regard to these time limits when deciding whether we are able to investigate any complaint. We will not therefore usually deal with complaints that fall outside of the Legal Ombudsman's time limits.
7. The Legal Ombudsman will also only deal with complaints from consumers. This means that only complaints from the barrister's client are within their jurisdiction. Non-clients who are not satisfied with the outcome of Chambers' investigation should contact the Bar Standards Board rather than the Legal Ombudsman.
8. It should be noted that it may not always be possible to investigate a complaint brought by a non-client. This is because the ability of Chambers to satisfactorily investigate and resolve such matters is limited and complaints of this nature are often better suited to the disciplinary processes maintained by the Bar Standards Board. Therefore, Farrar's Building will make an initial assessment of the complaint and if we feel that the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily resolved through our Complaints Procedure, we will refer you to the Bar Standards Board.

Complaints Made by Telephone

9. You may wish to make a complaint in writing; if so, please follow the procedure set out below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint, then please

telephone the individual nominated under our Complaints Procedure to deal with such complaints: Alan Kilbey MBE, Chief Executive, on 0207 583 9241. If the complaint is about Alan Kilbey, then please telephone the Head of Chambers, Paul Lewis QC, on 0207 583 9241.

10. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like to have done about it. 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.
11. If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone, you will be invited to write to us about it so that it can be investigated formally by Chambers.

Complaints made in Writing

12. Please address your formal letter of complaint to Alan Kilbey MBE, Farrar's Building, Temple, London EC4Y 7BD. Please give the following details:
 - Your name and address;
 - Which member(s) of Chambers (or staff) you are complaining about;
 - The detail of the complaint; and
 - What you would like done about it.
13. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with by Chambers.
14. Farrar's Building has a panel headed by Paul Lewis QC and made up of experienced members of Chambers from which someone will be appointed to investigate any written complaint. Within fourteen days of your letter being received by Chambers, the head of the panel or his deputy (John Meredith-Hardy) in his absence will appoint a member of the panel to investigate it. If your complaint is against the head of the panel, the next most senior member of the panel will investigate it. In any case, the person investigating the complaint will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.
15. The person appointed to investigate the complaint will write to you as soon as possible to let you know that he/she has been appointed and that he/she will reply to your complaint within 21 days. If he/she finds later that he/she is not going to be able to reply within 21 days he/she will set a new date for his/her reply and inform you. His/her reply will set out:
 - The nature and scope of his/her investigation;
 - His/her conclusion on each complaint and the basis for his/her conclusion; and
 - If he/she finds that you are justified in your complaint, his/her proposals for resolving the complaint.
16. At the conclusion of the complaints process, the person handling the investigation will forward a further copy of this Complaints Procedure to you with his/her response to the complaint.

Confidentiality

17. 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, our Chief Executive, members of our Management Board and anyone else we consider necessary to involve in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or member of staff about whom you have complained about, the head or relevant senior member of the panel and the person who investigates the complaint.

18. Further, the Bar Standards Board is entitled to inspect the documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

Inspection / Retention of Records

19. As part of our commitment to client care, we make a written record of any formal complaint and will retain all documents and correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six years. Our Management Board will inspect an anonymised record of complaints on a regular basis with a view to improving our services.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman or Bar Standards Board

20. We hope that any outstanding issues will be resolved under our Complaints Procedure. However, if you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation and you fall within their jurisdiction, you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for complaints about lawyers, at the conclusion of our consideration of your complaint. The Legal Ombudsman is not able to consider your complaint until it has first been investigated by Chambers. Please note the time limits for referring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman set out above.

21. You can write to the Legal Ombudsman at:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6806
Wolverhampton
WV1 9WJ
Telephone number: 0300 555 0333
Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

22. If you are not the barrister's client and are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation then please contact the Bar Standards Board at:

Bar Standards Board
Professional Conduct Department
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7HZ
Telephone number: 0207 611 1444
Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk