



**Mercantile.**  
**Barristers**

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### CHAMBERS' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE 2024

1. Mercantile Barristers prides itself on the excellence of its service. If at any time you have any concerns about the quality of the services of our barristers or members of staff you are invited to let us know as soon as possible.
2. 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.
3. Any concerns about members of staff should be raised with the Head of Chambers.
4. We would very much hope that the matter can be resolved at this point and that you will be satisfied with the outcome.
5. 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 complaint's procedure below.

#### Complaints Made by Telephone

6. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. They will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved they 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.
7. If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone you will be invited to write to us about it within the next 14 days so it can be investigated formally.



### **Formal Complaint's Procedure**

8. Please note that Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within six months of the act or omission complained of.
9. In the first instance, please address your complaint in writing to the member of chambers with whom you have an issue. Please allow 14 days for them to formally respond to you in writing, where we hope both parties can find a solution.
10. If you remain dissatisfied, please then address your further complaint to our Head of Chambers: Mr. Samuel Okoronkwo, Mercantile Barristers, 10-11 Gray's Inn Square, Gray's Inn, London WC1R 5JD. If your complaint is against the Head of Chambers it will be investigated by the next most senior member of our Chambers' Executive Board in conjunction with a member of the clerking team. At present, this is Mr. Dirk van Heck, Deputy Head of Chambers. In any case, the person(s) investigating the complaint will not be the person(s) you are complaining about.
11. When making your complaint, 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. Please also include a copy of your initial complaint and the response that you were dissatisfied with.
12. Within eight weeks of your letter being received the Head of Chambers, or his deputy in his absence, will investigate the complaint himself in conjunction with the practice manager and the clerking team.
13. The person handling the investigation will write to you as soon as possible to let you know they have been appointed and that they will reply to your complaint within eight weeks. If they find later that they are not going to be able to reply within eight weeks they will set a new date for their reply and inform you. Their reply will set out: the nature and scope of their investigation; their conclusion on each complaint and the basis for their



conclusion; and, if they find that you are justified in your complaint, their proposals for resolving the complaint.

14. Please note that there may be circumstances where the investigator feels that they are unable to carry out the investigation at that time; for example, if the complainant has established an intent to commence proceedings against a barrister in the same matter or where a complaint relates to ongoing litigation between the complainant and barrister. If that is the case, the investigator will inform you of this.

### **Confidentiality**

15. 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, a member of our clerking team and our chambers administrator and will include anyone else we consider necessary to involve in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister member or staff member about whom you have complained. If such a complaint is made, we will assume that you are authorising those investigating the complaint to view all the papers or other correspondence relevant to the matter.

### **Our policy**

16. As part of our commitment to client care we will make a written record of any formal complaint.

### **Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman**

17. We hope that you will use our procedure. However, if you are unhappy with the outcome, you may have the choice of taking up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman ("LeO"). The time limits for referring a complaint to the LeO are **no later than one year** from the date (a) of the act or omission being complained about; or (b) you ought to have realised that there was cause for complaint.

18. You can write to the Legal Ombudsman at:



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Legal Ombudsman,  
PO Box 6806,  
Wolverhampton,  
WV1 9WJ.

Tel: 0300 555 0333.

Website: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

### **ADR Approved Bodies**

19. In the event that it does not prove possible to settle your complaint using our formal complaints procedure, and all parties consent, alternative complaints bodies exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services. These include Ombudsman Services, ProMediate and Small Claims Mediation.

**For further information please contact us via [clerks@mercantilebarristers.com](mailto:clerks@mercantilebarristers.com)**