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NEW SQUARE

Intellectual Property Chambers

Chambers Complaints Procedure

1. Our aim is to give you a good service at all times. However if you have a complaint you are invited to let us know as soon as possible.
2. Please note that Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised with six months of the act of omission complained of.

Complaints made by Telephone

3. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 4 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the senior clerk, Mr John Call. If the complaint is about the Senior Clerk telephone the head of chambers - Mr Mark Platts-Mills QC. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like 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. Chambers will send a written copy of the outcome to the complainant, if appropriate. You may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing.
4. 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

Complaints made in Writing

5. Please give the following details:

Your name and address;
The name of the person you are complaining about;
The detail of the complaint; and
What you would like done about it.

Please address your letter to Mr John Call, Senior Clerk, 8 Square, Lincoln's Inn, London WC2A 3QP (or, if the complaint is about John Call, to the Head of Chambers, Mr Mark Platts-Mills QC at the same address). We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

6. Our chambers has a panel headed by Mr Mark Platts-Mills QC and made up of experienced members of chambers and a senior member of staff, which considers any written complaint. Within 14 days of your letter being received the head of the panel or his deputy in his absence will appoint a member of the panel to investigate it. If your

complaint is against the head of the panel it will be investigated by the next most senior member of the panel. In any case, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

7. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know he/she has been appointed and that he/she will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If he/she finds later that he/she is not going to be able to reply within 14 days he/she will set a new date for his/her reply and inform you. His/her reply will set out:
 - i. The nature and scope of her/his investigation;
 - ii. His/her conclusion on each complaint and the basis for his/her conclusion; and
 - iii. If he/she finds that you are justified in your complaint, his/her proposals for resolving the complaint.

Confidentiality

8. 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 limited to the head of chambers, members of the panel and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or member of staff whom you have complained about, the head or relevant senior member of the panel and the person who investigates the complaint.

Our Policy

9. As part of our commitment to client care we make a written record of any complaint and retain all documents and correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six year. Our management committee inspects an anonymised record regularly with a view to improving services.
10. We hope that you will use our procedure. However if you would rather not do so or are unhappy with the outcome you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman or the Bar Standards Board. The Legal Ombudsman will deal with complaints from clients about the services provided by barristers or their staff; the Bar Standards Board will deal with complaints about professional misconduct and disciplinary matters. The Legal Ombudsman acts as a single point of contact for all such complaints and will ensure that any complaints that relate to professional misconduct are referred to the Bar Standards Board.
11. The Legal Ombudsman cannot consider a complaint unless it has first been investigated by Chambers.
12. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman have a time limit of 6 months from the date of the determination of the Chambers internal investigation or 12 months from the date on which a complainant should reasonably have known that there was a reason for making a complaint. The Ombudsman has discretion to extend time limits in exceptional circumstances.
13. The contact details for the Legal Ombudsman and the Bar Standards Board are:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 15870
Birmingham
B30 9EB

Telephone 0300 555 0333
email enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
web www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Complaints Team
Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7HZ

Telephone 020 7611 1444
Fax 020 7831 9217
Web www.barstandardsboard.org.uk