



## **Apex Chambers Complaints Procedure**

### **Scope of Procedure**

This procedure covers complaints from members of the public and professional clients concerning chambers employees.

Where a complaint is received regarding the professional conduct of a barrister, this will be dealt with in accordance with the Bar Standards Board complaints procedure.

### **Statement of Policy**

Apex Chambers is committed to openness in the receipt and investigation of complaints. It has a clear process for handling such complaints including an investigation into the cause and ensuring that appropriate action is taken, where necessary. It aims to communicate with the complainant in a clear and timely manner.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible and appropriate to the circumstances.

### **Formal Complaints – Time Scales**

Complaints will be dealt with promptly and in accordance with this procedure. A formal complaint must be made as soon as reasonably possible and should be in writing. Other complaints will also be accepted verbally, if identified as a complaint at the time.

All complaints will be acknowledged within seven days' of receipt. Any investigation will be completed within 28 days of receipt, unless there are good reasons for delay. Investigations will be conducted in accordance with standards of natural justice. Where possible, two members of chambers not directly involved in the complaint will undertake the investigation. All parties to the complaint should be permitted to be accompanied by a colleague or friend at any hearing.

## **Remedial Action**

The complainant will receive a written response on the outcome of the complaint with a clear indication of the action chambers will take if the complaint is upheld. Solutions which rely on changes to working arrangements which may unreasonably disadvantage the complainant should be avoided as this could amount to victimisation.

If the formal complaint is found to have substance appropriate steps in the circumstances will be taken to remedy the problem. A brief confidential report on all formal complaints and on the outcome will be made to the Head of Chambers and records will be retained for a period of one year from the conclusion of the case with discretion to keep longer if necessary<sup>1</sup>.

## **Informal Procedures**

Complaints are more easily resolved if dealt with at an early stage. Individuals with complaints are recommended to seek the assistance of the Senior Clerk who will, as far as possible, give confidential advice and assistance.

## **Nominated Persons**

Members of Chambers who are nominated to investigate complaints are the Head of Chambers, Christopher Rees and Nick Gedge, Equal Opportunities Officer. Informal complaints will be handled by the Senior Clerk, Craig Mansfield.

Formal complaints should be made in writing and addressed to;

Apex Chambers  
Harlech House  
20 Cathedral Road  
Cardiff  
CF11 9LJ

Or emailed to [clerks@apexchambers.net](mailto:clerks@apexchambers.net)

The complainant also has a right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman at the conclusion of the complaints process, if the client remains dissatisfied.

Complainants may contact the Legal Ombudsman in the following ways:

- Online at [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk);
- By phone – 0300 555 0333
- By post to PO Box 15870, Birmingham, B30 9EB.

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<sup>1</sup> If a complaint is not resolved within chambers a further avenue of appeal to an external, independent individual may be considered. Where the complaint concerns equal opportunities matters the individual should have relevant expertise.