

WESTGATE CHAMBERS

INTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 1 As part of our commitment to give you an excellent service at all times, and in compliance with the Bar Standards Board and the Legal Services Commission Quality Mark for the Bar, we possess our own internal complaints procedure.

Complaints made by Telephone:

2. 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 a complaint regarding either a Tenant or a member of staff, then please contact:

Paul Tuffs for a complaint that may involve a member of staff or a criminal tenant.

Jason Britcher for a complaint that may involve a tenant who practices in family or civil litigation.

If you have a complaint that involves either Paul Tuffs or Jason Britcher, please direct your complaint to either of the Heads of Chambers. The person you contact will make a detailed note of your complaint, and will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved via the telephone, the outcome will be recorded and retained in our central complaints register.

3. 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 that it can be investigated internally.

Complaints made in Writing:

4. When forwarding a complaint in writing, please can you provide the following details:

- (a) Your name and address;
- (b) The identity of the tenants(s)/employees you have a complaint about;
- (c) Details of the complaint and what you would like to be done to resolve the complaint.

Please can you address your letter “Private & Confidential, (Paul Tuffs, Jason Britcher, Philip Meredith or John Collins – whomever is applicable as above), Westgate Chambers, 64 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XG”.

- 5. Paul Tuffs maintains overall responsibility for our complaints procedure, however, all complaints are reported to the Heads of Chambers on an individual basis. Your letter will be acknowledged in writing within 48 hours, along with a copy of this document and will outline the procedure for your complaint being dealt with. If the matter is serious, a timescale for resolution will be set, e.g. 21 or 28 days.
- 6. Once the complaint has been investigated, you will be contacted confirming: the nature and scope of the internal investigation, the conclusion and the basis for the conclusion. If your complaint is justified, our proposals will be set for resolution of the complaint. You will also be informed of your right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, the timeframe for doing so and be provided with full details of how to contact them.

Confidentiality:

- 7. All conversations and documentation relating to your complaint will be treated as confidential, and will be disclosed only to the extent that is necessary. Disclosure will be to the Paul Tuffs, Heads of Chambers, and anyone who may be involved in the complaint and its investigation.

Our Policy:

- 8. All complaints are regularly monitored by Paul Tuffs, at least every 12 months to identify if there are any specific trends or complaints that are being made consistently about one particular issue or a particular tenant, pupil or employee. In conjunction with the Heads of Chambers, Paul Tuffs will meet

and decide any decisions that may have to be made, or systems that may require to be implemented, to reduce the possibility of a similar complaint arising again. All complaints are retained for a period of 6 years.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman:

9. We hope that you will use our procedure as detailed in this document. However, if you would rather not do so, or you are unhappy with the outcome, you do have the choice of taking up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of your last contact with us, please note their contact details below:

By telephone: 0300 555 0333

By email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Via the website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

By post: PO Box 15870, Birmingham, B30 9EB

The Legal Ombudsman may pass your complaint to the Bar Standards Board to be dealt with, this will happen if your complaint involves examples of professional misconduct. You do not have to do anything, the Legal Ombudsman will let you know that it has referred any issues to the Bar Standards Board and they will also contact you to confirm this.

10. If you require details of Crown Prosecution Service or the Legal Services Commission complaints procedure, please contact Paul Tuffs for further information.

Westgate Chambers

Reviewed and updated March 2012