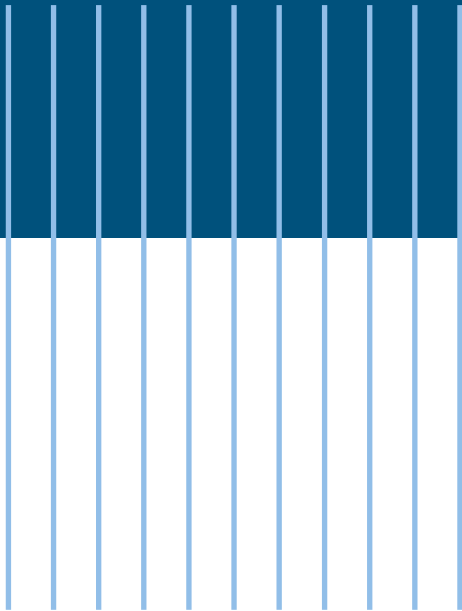


Complaints Procedure

V6.0 – 15.09.26



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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. The complaint may be against any member of chambers i.e. any barrister, employee or pupil of St Mary's.

It is not necessary to involve solicitors in order to make your complaint, but you are free to do so should you wish.

There are 2 aspects to our complaint's procedure. They are that a complaint may be dealt with informally or formally through the complaint's procedure. Regardless of whether your complaint is dealt with informally or through the complaints procedure our aim is to deal with your complaint effectively, efficiently and fairly.

Your complaint should be made initially to the Senior Clerk or (in his/her absence or if the complaint is against the Senior Clerk) the Head of Chambers.

The Senior Clerk is Mr Tim Smith.

The Head of Chambers is Ms Claire Howell.

Once a complaint is received either the Senior Clerk or the Head of Chambers will make a preliminary decision, if possible, within three days of receipt of your complaint, as to whether the complaint may be dealt with satisfactorily in an informal manner or should be dealt with formally. He/ she will also make a written note of your complaint and what you want done about it. Your complaint will be acknowledged promptly, usually within three days of its receipt.

How to Complain

Please note that Chambers will normally only consider complaints that are raised within six months of the act or omission that is being complained of.

Your complaint may be made by telephone or in writing (by letter or email).

Your complaint can be made by you or someone who is supporting you in making the complaint.

Chambers' telephone number is 0115 9503503.

A complaint in writing should be sent to:

FAO The Senior Clerk
St Mary's
32a Stoney Street
Nottingham
NG1 1LL

Or by email to: complaints@stmarysfamily.co.uk

A written complaint should give the following details:

- Your name and address
- Any special circumstances which relate to you in making the complaint, for instance if you require support in reading or writing or need extra time to make your complaint.
- The name of the individual against whom the complaint is made
- Details of the complaint and include any details of any dates and hearing as applicable
- What you would like done about it.

First Steps of a complaint

Upon receipt of your complaint the Senior Clerk or the Head of Chambers will discuss your complaint with you in order to decide whether it can be dealt with informally in an attempt to clear up any misunderstandings and see whether a speedy and informal outcome to the matter may be achieved in the interests of all parties. A full note will be kept of any discussions and made available to you.

If either:

- the complaint is of such a nature that the informal approach is thought inappropriate or
- the complaint makes reference to any form of discrimination or
- 7 days elapses without satisfactory resolution (save that such period may be extended for good reason, in which case you will be informed of the reason) or
- you indicate that you wish your complaint to be dealt with formally or
- for any other reason it is thought better to institute the formal procedure

then the formal procedure set out below shall be adopted.

Formal procedure

Your complaint will be placed before the Head of the Chambers' Complaints panel (or, in his/her absence, the Deputy), who shall nominate a member of the Complaints Panel to investigate your complaint.

The panel consists of the Head of panel, the Deputy, the Senior Clerk and at least three others.

Where the complaint is against the Head of Panel, the Head of Chambers shall investigate or at his/her discretion appoint a member of the Panel to do so.

No member of Chambers shall investigate a complaint of which he/she is the subject.



STEP 1

- i. Within 7 days of his/her nomination the appointed person will write to you informing you that he/she is the appointed person and that a Final report will be sent to you within 28 days.
- ii. (If at any stage it becomes apparent that the report cannot reasonably be prepared within 28 days, you will be informed as soon as possible with reasons for the delay and with an alternative date for completion of the report. No report should take longer than 8 weeks from the initial complaint.
- iii. If you do not receive a final report by 8 weeks from the date you make your complaint you may have a right to complain to the Legal Ombudsman. The details for contacting the legal Ombudsman as set out below.

STEP 2

Unless otherwise agreed, the Nominated Panel Member ('the investigator') will invite you to set out your complaint in writing (unless you have already done so), giving the following details:

- Your name and address
- The name of the person about whom you are complaining
- The detail of the complaint
- The timetable for dealing with the complaint
- What you would like done about it.
- Any special arrangements that will be made for you to take part in procedure fully

The investigator will also ask the person being complained about to set out their response to the Complaint for consideration by the investigator.

STEP 3

During the investigation stage of your complaint, you will be kept informed by the investigator and/or the Senior Clerk of the progress of your complaint.

The investigator has the choice to contact with you or the person being complained of for additional information if it is felt by the investigator that is required.

The investigator will not normally take into account matters that are not raised at the time of the complaint unless the investigator is of the view that they are relevant to the complaint and it would not be fair not to take the subsequent issue(s) into account in dealing with the complaint.

STEP 4

You will be sent a written copy of the Complaint.

The person complained about will be sent a written copy of the Complaint.

The Final report will inform you if :

- a. the complaint or any parts of it are up-held
- b. the complaint or any parts of it are not up-held
- c. if the complaint or any part of it is up-held what SMC intend to do as result of it and if any offer is made to you in respect of your complaint the time-limit for you to accept any offer made which will normally be 7 days from the date of the offer.

Documents relating to the complaint

All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to deal with the complaint fairly and effectively.

Disclosure will be to the Head of Chambers, members of St Mary's Chambers' Management Committee and the Complaints Panel and anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation (so far as may be necessary), including the person complained against.

The Legal Ombudsman is also entitled to inspect the documents and to seek further information about the compliant.

As part of our commitment to client care we make a written record of any formal complaint and keep all documents and correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six years.

Our Management Committee will inspect a record (anonymised where appropriate) regularly with a view to improving services.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

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 at any time. Please note that the Legal Ombudsman generally has a six-month time limit from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining within which to make your complaint.

Your can contact the Legal Ombudsman at:

Website	www.legalombudsman.org.uk
Email	enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Telephone	0300 555 0333
NGT Lite users	18001 0300 555 0333
Overseas	+44 121 245 3050
Postal address	PO Box 6167 Slough SL1 0EH