



## APPENDIX 12E

### CHAMBERS' COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Our aim is to provide a good service at all times. However, if you have a complaint you are invited to let us know as soon as possible. Lay clients may complain to us directly or through solicitors if preferred.
2. Please note that Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within six months of the act or omission complained of.

#### **Complaints made by telephone**

3. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure set out in paragraph 5 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please call our Senior Clerk Simon Butler who is the individual nominated to deal with complaints. If the complaint is about the Senior Clerk, please telephone our Head of Chambers Nicholas Atkinson QC or Jennifer Knight. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. S/he will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved, s/he 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.
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;
  - Which member(s) of Chambers you are complaining about;
  - The details of your complaint; and
  - What you would like done about it

Please address your letter to either Simon Butler or Nicholas Atkinson QC at Atkinson Bevan Chambers, 2 Harcourt Buildings, London EC4Y 9DB. 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 Nicholas Atkinson QC and made up of experienced members of Chambers and our Senior Clerk, 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, the next most senior member of the panel will investigate it. 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 s/he has been appointed and that s/he will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If s/he finds later that s/he is not going to be able to reply within 14 days, a new date will be set and you will be informed. The substantive reply will set out:
  - The nature and scope of the investigation;
  - His / Her conclusion on each complaint and the basis for that conclusion; and
  - If s/he 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 to the Head of Chambers, members of our Management Committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister, pupil or staff member who you have complained about, the head or relevant senior member of the panel and the person who investigates the complaint. The Bar Standards Board (the regulatory arm of the Bar Council, the professional body for barristers) is entitled to inspect the documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions. Where a complaint raises an allegation of negligence the Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund will also be informed.

### **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 years. Our Management Committee inspects an anonymised record regularly with a view to improving services.

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

10. We hope that you will be satisfied with our complaints handling procedure. However, if you are unhappy with the outcome, you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. You will have six months from the date of our final decision in which to complain to the Legal Ombudsman, so long as you ensure that your complaint is submitted no later than twelve months from the date of the act or omission about

which you wish to complain, or the date when you could reasonably have been expected to have found out there was a problem. The contact details are as follows:

Legal Ombudsman  
PO Box 15870  
Birmingham  
B30 9EP  
Tel: 0300 500 0333  
[www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)  
[enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)