Complaints Policy and Procedure

Effective date: 30 October 2026

1. Purpose and principles

Keating Chambers is committed to providing a high standard of service. We welcome feedback and will deal with complaints free of charge, fairly, consistently, diligently and impartially. Making a complaint will not disadvantage you or affect the professional standards applied to your case or matter.

We will seek to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, keep you informed throughout and communicate in a format reasonably suited to your needs.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints about the service provided by a barrister, member of staff or Chambers. A client may complain directly and does not need to complain through a solicitor, although they may choose to involve one.

We will assess every complaint. Service complaints will be handled under this procedure. If a complaint also raises possible professional misconduct, we will investigate the service issues but may refer the conduct issues to the Bar Standards Board. If negligence or compensation is alleged, the barrister may need to notify their professional indemnity insurer before any resolution is proposed.

Complaints from non-clients will be considered where Chambers is able to investigate the matter fairly. If a complaint falls outside the scope of this procedure or would be more appropriately considered by a regulatory body, we will explain the reasons and direct the complainant to the appropriate route.

Alternative dispute resolution roles

Where a member of Chambers has acted as an independent neutral, including as a mediator, arbitrator, adjudicator, expert determiner or neutral evaluator, we will consider the complaint under this procedure. The Legal Ombudsman may not have jurisdiction where the member was not providing regulated legal services as a practising barrister. The final response will identify any relevant professional, accrediting or appointing body.

3. Accessibility

You may complain in writing, by telephone, by video call or by another reasonable means. We can provide information in an accessible format and make reasonable adjustments, including using plain English, large print or an agreed method of communication. Please tell us what support or format you require.

4. Time limits

Please complain as soon as possible. When deciding whether it can investigate a complaint, Chambers will have regard to the Legal Ombudsman's time limits set out in section 10. Chambers will not therefore usually deal with complaints that fall outside those time limits. The Legal Ombudsman may extend its time limits in exceptional circumstances.

5. How to complain

Informal resolution

You may first wish to raise your concern informally with the Joint Directors of Clerking. If the complaint concerns a Joint Director of Clerking, it should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer.

We will make a note recording your name and address, the date of the complaint, the person complained about, the details of the complaint, the outcome you are seeking and any communication needs. We will discuss your concerns with you and try to resolve the matter promptly where appropriate. If it is resolved, we will record the outcome and whether you are satisfied, tell you about the Legal Ombudsman procedure and any right to escalate, and invite you to make your own written note of the discussion. We will send you this complaints procedure if it has not already been provided. If the matter is not resolved, you will be invited to make a formal complaint in writing or another accessible format.

Formal complaint

Please send your formal written complaint to:

Mark Barbour-Smith (CEO)
Keating Chambers
15 Essex Street
London
WC2R 3AA
Email: mbarbour-smith@keatingchambers.com

You should include the following:

- your name and contact details;
- the name of the barrister, staff member or part of Chambers concerned;
- a clear description of what happened, including relevant dates;
- copies of relevant documents; and
- the outcome you would like.

If you would like to make your complaint in another way or format, or require an accessible option, please contact us so that we can accommodate your needs as far as reasonably possible.

6. Formal complaint process after receipt

Chambers has a Complaints Panel headed by the Head of Chambers and made up of King's Counsel, experienced Members of Chambers and the Chief Executive Officer.

1. **Acknowledgement.** We will, where possible, acknowledge the complaint within two working days, explain how it will be handled and confirm the next steps.
2. **Investigator.** Within 14 days of the acknowledgement, the head of the Complaints Panel, or their deputy, will appoint an investigator who is independent of the matters complained about and is not the person complained about. A complaint against a member of staff will normally be investigated by the Chief Executive Officer or another suitably senior and independent person. A complaint against the Chief Executive Officer or a barrister will be investigated by a suitably senior independent member of the Panel appointed by its head. If the complaint concerns the Head of Chambers, the deputy head of the Panel will act.
3. **Investigation.** The investigator will define the issues, speak to the barrister or staff member complained about and any other relevant person, review all relevant material and request further information or clarification where necessary.
4. **Updates.** The investigator will keep you informed and provide regular progress updates. Chambers aims to provide a full response within 14 days of the investigator's appointment. If this is not possible, we will give a realistic revised date and explain the reason.
5. **Final response.** The response will identify the nature and scope of the investigation, the conclusion on each complaint and the reasons, any proposed remedy or action, and any available external route and time limit. A copy will also be provided to the barrister or staff member complained about.

If the complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction within eight weeks, you may be entitled to refer it to the Legal Ombudsman without waiting for our investigation to conclude.

7. Possible outcomes

An outcome may include an explanation, an apology, corrective action, a service improvement, training, a review of procedures, a reduction in fees, compensation where appropriate, or referral to another body. If a remedy is accepted, Chambers will implement it promptly.

8. Confidentiality and data protection

Complaint information will be treated confidentially and disclosed only where necessary to investigate, decide or resolve the complaint, obtain insurance or professional advice, comply with legal or regulatory obligations, or review services. This may include disclosure to the person complained about, the investigator, the Complaints Panel, the Head of Chambers, the Chief Executive Officer, relevant committee members, insurers, advisers or the Bar Standards Board.

Personal data will be handled in accordance with applicable data protection law and Chambers' privacy arrangements.

9. Records, oversight and learning

Chambers will keep a written record of each complaint, the investigation, correspondence, outcome and action taken. Records will be retained securely for six years after resolution and then reviewed under Chambers' retention arrangements.

The Chief Executive Officer and Compliance Manager are responsible for complaints records. The complaints file will be reviewed regularly, with papers anonymised where necessary. At least annually, the person responsible for administering the procedure will report to the Executive Committee on the number of complaints received and their subject areas. The review will consider trends, risks, systemic issues in the assessment and resolution of complaints, wider service issues, training needs and resource requirements. Chambers will implement appropriate measures to address identified issues and will submit anonymised complaints data to the Bar Standards Board as required.

10. External routes

Legal Ombudsman

If you are a client and remain dissatisfied, you may be able to complain to the Legal Ombudsman after Chambers' final response or if the complaint has not been resolved within eight weeks. The Legal Ombudsman decides whether a complainant and complaint fall within its jurisdiction.

A complaint will normally need to be referred within one year of the act or omission, or within one year of when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint, and within six months of Chambers' final response where that response contains the required notice.

LEGAL OMBUDSMAN
PO Box 6167
Slough
SL1 0EH
Telephone: 0300 555 0333
From overseas: +44 121 245 3050
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Bar Standards Board

If you are not a client, or your concern relates to possible professional misconduct rather than service quality, the Bar Standards Board may be the appropriate body.

BAR STANDARDS BOARD
Contact and Assessment Team
289–293 High Holborn
London WC1V 7JZ

Telephone: 020 7611 1444
Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

Alternative dispute resolution

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, alternative complaints bodies as approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (https://www.tradingstandards.uk/consumer-help/adr-approved-bodies/) also exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services, should you and the barrister both wish to use such a scheme. If you wish to use your chosen ADR provider, please contact us to discuss this, including time limits for contacting your chosen ADR. Please also note that if mediation is used, neither you nor the barrister is required to accept the proposed resolution. If mediation does not resolve the complaint, you may still make a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman (provided you fall within their jurisdiction and you do so within the time limit).

11. Review and approval

This policy must be applied consistently, made readily available and reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective and compliant with current regulatory requirements.

Last review date – October 2026.