

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

Our aim is to give you an excellent service at all times. However, if you have a complaint or concern you are invited to let us know as soon as possible. It is not necessary to involve solicitors in order to make your complaint but you are free to do so should you wish.

Parklane Plowden is committed to providing services of high quality and if something goes wrong we want to hear about that so that we can learn and improve our standards or delivery to ensure our objective can be consistently achieved.

If you are not satisfied with any aspect of our service you should write and tell us about it in reasonable detail so that we can investigate and find a solution.

Our policy and procedure is available to clients, solicitors and suppliers. If you are not a client or wish to make a complaint about a barrister's conduct which is not related to a case then it may be more appropriate to contact the Bar Standards Board, but this should not stop you from complaining to us directly.

## 2. Making a Complaint

You are asked to send details of your complaint to:

Karen Jackson  
Office Manager  
Plowden Facilities Limited  
19 Westgate  
Leeds  
LS1 2RD  
Karen.Jackson@plowdenfacilities.co.uk

If the complaint is about the Office Manager, please contact our Head of Chambers – James Murphy, [headofchambers@parklaneplowden.co.uk](mailto:headofchambers@parklaneplowden.co.uk).

We recommend that you use our Complaints Form as this will ensure that you provide us with all the relevant information to enable us to investigate the complaint. This can be found on the [complaints section](#) of our website.

If you wish to complain by telephone you can contact Chambers on 0113 228 5000 and ask to speak to the Office Manager, Karen Jackson to discuss your complaint. If the matter is resolved, the outcome will be recorded. The Office Manager will check that you are satisfied with the outcome, and record it as such. You may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing. We will also send you confirmation of the outcome.

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 may be investigated formally.

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

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## 3. Misconduct / Professional Negligence

If your complaint is in relation to misconduct or professional negligence it may not be appropriate for chambers to investigate. We will inform you if this is the case. If there is the possibility that the complaint may result in a claim against a barrister, then the insurers (Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund Limited) will be informed.

## 4. What will happen when we receive your written complaint?

On receipt of your complaint (which may be by email or letter) we will acknowledge receipt within two days.

If a complaint is received by telephone brief details will be recorded and sent to you promptly by email or letter for confirmation of the basis of complaint and the provision by you any further information reasonably requested.

Parklane Plowden has a panel chaired by our Head of Chambers and is made up of experienced members of Chambers 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. If your complaint is against the head of the panel, the next most senior member of the panel will investigate your complaint. In any event, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

When we write to you we will tell you who will be handling the matter and, if appropriate, clarify the outcome you are seeking. We may ask you in appropriate cases if the matter can be dealt with informally and promptly by correspondence. More substantial and serious complaints will invoke the full complaints procedure and will not be dealt with informally.

We ask that all complaints are raised promptly. This allows you to receive a timely remedy and us to investigate whilst matters are fresh in mind. If any complaint is received later than 12 months after the event we reserve the right not to investigate unless on request you are able to provide good reason for the delay.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate for us to refer the matter to the Bar Standards Board to investigate rather than follow this procedure. We will inform you if we consider that appropriate.

## 5. What happens next?

Once a complaint has been received we will start to investigate. This will usually mean that we speak to the Barrister and/or member of staff involved with the matter.

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

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If the complaint concerns a Barrister that has retired or is no longer with Parklane Plowden we will refer your complaint to them and they will be solely responsible for responding to your complaint. We will provide you with contact details that must be used for all further correspondence on the matter.

We aim to send you a detailed response within 28 days of acknowledgement of your complaint. If we require additional information from you then this may extend the period for our response by up to 14 days. If we require more time due to the complexity of the matter or other substantial reason, we will notify you and confirm when we next expect to be in contact with you.

Our final response will state the outcome of our investigation. The reply will set out:

- The nature and scope of the investigation;
- The conclusion on each complaint and the basis for that conclusion;  
and
- If the findings are that you are justified in your complaint, and the proposals for resolving the complaint.

### 6. Confidentiality

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 the Executive Board and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister / member or staff 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 is entitled to inspect the documents to seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

### 7. Records

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.

### 8. Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman

If you are not happy with the outcome or if the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily within 8 weeks and you are / were a client of Parklane Plowden Chambers you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. The Legal Ombudsman will not investigate complaints unless they have been raised with us first.

You must complain to the Legal Ombudsman either within six years of your barrister's actions/failure to act, or no later than three years after you should reasonably have known there were grounds to complain. You must also complain to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving the final response from Parklane Plowden to your complaint.



## COMPLAINTS POLICY

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You can write to them at: Complaints Team, Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH. Telephone: +44 (0)300 555 0333. Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk). Website: [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk).

### 9. Complaints to the Bar Standards Board

If you are not happy with the outcome and are not a client you should contact the Bar Standards Board, rather than the Legal Ombudsman.

You can write to them at: Bar Standards Board Contact and Assessment Team 289-293 High Holborn London WC1V 7JZ. Telephone number: 0207 6111 444 Website: [www.barstandardsboard.org.uk](http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk)

Any feedback which enables us to improve our service is most welcome.