

INTRODUCTION

1. Members of South Square seek to provide the best-possible service to their clients. However, in the unlikely event that clients are not satisfied with the services members provide, they have the right to complain directly to the barrister without the need to either involve or inform their instructing solicitor. This Policy explains the South Square complaints process.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF A COMPLAINT

2. Quite often, sources of complaint arise from a simple misunderstanding. It is often best if, in the first instance, clients raise any matter of concern directly with the instructed barrister. That way, a quick and mutually-agreed solution can often be achieved. Clients do not need to raise any matter directly with their barrister if they feel uncomfortable so doing. Instead, they may take the matter up directly with the Chambers Director under the South Square complaints procedure.
3. Where complaints are initially dealt with informally, by telephone or other means, the complainant may none the less be asked to make the complaint formally in writing if they wish to take the complaint forward, and if after an initial review it is decided that the matters raised in the complaint are not suitable for informal resolution.

SOUTH SQUARE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

4. A link to the South Square Complaints Procedure can be found on the South Square website at:

<http://www.southsquare.com/terms-of-business>

If a client wishes to make a complaint about a South Square barrister, they should in the first instance contact the Chambers Director by telephone, letter or email at:

Chambers Director
South Square
3-4 South Square
Gray's Inn
London
WC1R 5HP

Tel: 020 7696 9900

Email: williammackinlay@southsquare.com



The Chambers Director will need the following information in order to initiate the investigation of any complaint:

1. Client name and contact details.
2. The case in respect of which the client is complaining (if relevant).
3. The name of the barrister about whom the client wishes to complain.
4. The specific matter about which the client wishes to complain.
5. The outcome the client seeks in respect of their complaint.
5. Ideally, Chambers would like to receive all of these details in writing, either by letter or email. However, the client may wish to provide them by telephone. If so, then the Chambers Director will record the points the client makes and will write to the client within five working days to allow the client to confirm that his understanding of the client's complaint is correct. Please also note that all complaints will be acknowledged within five working days of receipt.
6. Once the details of a complaint have been established, the Chambers Director will inform the Head of Chambers of the receipt of the complaint. The Head of Chambers will then appoint a senior Member of Chambers (not connected with the case) to investigate the matter. Appointment of the investigating Member will be made within seven working days of the receipt of the complaint. Please note that if the complaint relates to the Head of Chambers, the Chambers Director will take the matter to another senior QC (normally a member of the Chambers Executive Committee) in Chambers.
7. The nominated barrister who is to investigate the complaint will write to the client to let them know of their appointment to investigate the matter and will reply to the complaint within seven days. If he or she finds that they are not going to be able to reply fully within seven days, they will set a new date for the reply and inform the client accordingly. The final reply will set out:
 1. The nature and scope of the investigation.
 2. The conclusion reached in respect of each complaint and the basis for that conclusion.
 3. If the complaint is justified, proposals for resolving the matter.

FURTHER OPTIONS FOR COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

8. If the client is not satisfied with the outcome of South Square's investigation into your complaint, they have the right to take up the matter with the Legal Ombudsman, the independent body which deals with complaints about lawyers. The Ombudsman is not able to consider



any complaint until it has first been investigated by South Square in the manner described above. Also, the Legal Ombudsman will only consider a complaint made within a period of 12 months from the date of receiving a final response from South Square in respect of any complaint. Clients can contact the Legal Ombudsman as follows:

Legal Ombudsman
PO Box 6167,
Slough,
SL1 0EH

Tel: 0300 555 0333

Email:
enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

CONFIDENTIALITY

9. All conversations and documentation relating to any complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent that is necessary for the purposes of investigating and resolving your complaint. Disclosure may be to the Chairman or members of our Executive Committee, and to anyone involved with the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister about whom the complaint has been made, the person investigating the complaint and the Chambers Director who will be responsible for the security of all documentation relating to the complaint.

CLIENT CARE

10. As part of South Square's commitment to client care, Chambers makes a written record of any complaint. A member of Chambers' Executive Committee inspects the record regularly with a view to improving our services to lay clients.