



Complaints Policy

Policy Statement

Black Antelope Law aims to give you a good professional service at all times. However, if you have a complaint you are invited to let us know as soon as possible. It is not necessary to involve legal representatives in order to make your complaint, but you are free to do so should you wish.

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 inspects an anonymised record regularly with a view to improving services.

Time Limits

Please note that the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for service complaints about lawyers, has time limits in which a complaint must be raised with them. The time limits are:

- a) Six years from the date of the act/omission
- b) Three years from the date that the complainant should reasonably have known there were grounds for complaint (if the act/omission took place before the 6 October 2010 or was more than six years ago)
- c) Within six months of the complaint receiving a final response from their lawyer, if that response complies with the requirements in rule 4.4 of the Scheme Rules (which requires the response to include prominently an explanation that the Legal Ombudsman was available if the complainant remained dissatisfied and the provision of full contact details for the Ombudsman and a warning that the complaint must be referred to them within six months)

The Ombudsman can extend the time limit in exceptional circumstances. The practice must therefore have regard to that timeframe when deciding whether

they are able to investigate your complaint. The practice will not therefore usually deal with complaints that fall outside of the Legal Ombudsman's time limits.

Who Else Can You Complain To?

The Ombudsman will also only deal with complaints from consumers. This means that only complaints from the practice's clients are within their jurisdiction. Non-clients who are not satisfied with the outcome of the practice's investigation should contact the Bar Standards Board rather than the Legal Ombudsman.

It should be noted that it may not always be possible to investigate a complaint brought by a non-client. This is because the ability of the practice to satisfactorily investigate and resolve such matters is limited and complaints of this nature are often better suited to the disciplinary processes maintained by the Bar Standards Board. Therefore, the practice will make an initial assessment of the complaint and if they feel that the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily resolved through the practice's complaints process, they will refer you to the Bar Standards Board.

Complaints Made by Telephone

You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure set out below under "Complaints Made in Writing". However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please ask for the Head of Legal Practice. If the complaint is about the Head of Legal Practice, please ask to speak to a member of the complaints panel. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like to have 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.

If your complaint is not resolved on the telephone you will be invited to write to us about it so it can be investigated formally.

Complaints Made in Writing

Please give the following details:

- Your name and address;

- Which staff member you are complaining about;
- The detail of the complaint; and
- What you would like done about it.

Please address your letter to the Head of Legal Practice, Black Antelope Law, 344-354 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8BP. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two business days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

Our practice has a panel headed by the Head of Legal Practice and made up of experienced members of staff which considers any written complaint. Within 21 days of your letter being received the head of the panel or their deputy in their 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.

The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know they have been appointed and that they will reply to your complaint within 21 days. If they find later that they are not going to be able to reply within 21 days, they will set a new date for their reply and inform you. The reply will set out:

- The nature and scope of his investigation;
- Their conclusion on each complaint and the basis for any conclusion; and
- If they find that you are justified in your complaint, their proposal for resolving the complaint.

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 Legal Practice and/or members of the complaints panel and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. The Bar Standards Board is entitled to inspect the documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation, alternative complaints bodies (such as ProMediate: www.promediate.co.uk) exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and I wish to use such a scheme.

We agree to use the ProMediate scheme.

Complaints to the Legal Ombudsmen

Alternatively, if you are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation and you fall within their jurisdiction you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman, the independent complaints body for complaints about lawyers, at the conclusion of our consideration of your complaint. The Ombudsman is not able to consider your complaint until Chambers has first investigated it. Please note the timeframe for referral of complaints to the Ombudsman is as set out at above under the heading "Time Limits".

You can write to them at:

Legal Ombudsman

PO Box 6806,

Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ

Telephone number: 0300 555 0333

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

You can access the Legal Ombudsman's decision data on their website:

<https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/ombudsman-decision-data/>

Complaints to the Bar Standards Board

If you are not the practice's client and are unhappy with the outcome of our investigation, then please contact the Bar Standards Board at:

Bar Standards Board

Professional Conduct Department

289-293 High Holborn

London WC1V 7JZ

Telephone number: 0207 6111 444

Website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk