

## **Angel Chambers Client Care Policy**

All members and staff believe it is helpful to describe, in summary, how Chambers provides its services.

**Quality:** We seek to provide a high quality service to all our clients in compliance with the Bar Council's Code of Conduct and Practice Management Guidelines. However, if at any time you experience difficulties in your dealings with any member of Chambers or any member of our staff, or have any comments to offer, please contact our Head of Chambers, Mr Rhys Jones. We welcome and take seriously all comments from our clients and have internal procedures for addressing their concerns, (see our Complaints Procedure below).

**Confidentiality:** when members of Chambers are acting against each other, separate clerking facilities are arranged where necessary or requested. Please do not hesitate to discuss the details with the clerks. All conversations and documents shall be confidential and disclosed only to the extent necessary.

In a small number of cases when members are too busy to deal with the instructions within a reasonable period, they may seek assistance from another member of the chambers, who is also bound by the duty of confidentiality. This longstanding practice is at no additional expense to the client and the counsel instructed retains complete responsibility for the work done. If you do not wish this to occur with your papers, please inform the clerks as soon as possible.

**Terms:** Other than in cases where your legal costs are being paid directly by the Legal Services Commission, through the Community Legal Service, by the Criminal Defence Service or your instructions are on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service, barristers at Angel Chambers accept your instructions upon the terms contained in The (New) Standard Contractual Terms for the Supply of Legal Services to Authorised Persons 2012. A copy of those terms is to be found on Chambers' Website by clicking on the link "Terms and Conditions, Policies etc".

### **Transparency about Fees**

In respect of private client fees for advice and advocacy the likely costs will be indicated in the form of guide figures during any initial enquiry. Having

said this we would encourage early delivery of case papers so as to confirm any guide figures given. Generally, fees are set taking into account experience and call of counsel chosen. In respect of publicly funded work the standard rates as set out by the Legal Services Commission and Ministry of Justice are applied.

## **Complaints Procedure**

1. Our aim is to give you a good 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 solicitors in order to make your complaint but you are free to do so should you wish. Please see below for information as to how to make a complaint.

2. Please be aware that the Legal Ombudsman is an independent complaints body for complaints about lawyers - whether solicitors or barristers. The Legal Ombudsman publishes a guide to its Scheme Rules on its website which sets out time limits for making a complaint and its financial limits for compensation. Contact details for The Legal Ombudsman are set out in paragraph 11.

3. 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 Angel Chambers to investigate and resolve such matters is limited thus complaints of this nature are often better suited to the disciplinary processes maintained by the Bar Standards Board. So, whilst Angel Chambers will make an initial assessment of the complaint - if we consider that the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily resolved through our complaints process we will refer you to the Bar Standards Board.

## **Complaints Made by Telephone**

4. You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 6 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone chambers asking to speak to the individual nominated under the Chambers Complaints Procedure to deal with complaints. If the complaint is about a barrister or member of staff, that person is Mr Rhys Jones alternatively Miss Alison Donovan. If Mr Jones or Miss Donovan is unavailable when you call, he or she will return your call as soon as possible, make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. Your concerns will be

discussed with you and our aim is to resolve them. If the matter is resolved we will record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with the outcome and record that you are satisfied. You may also wish to confirm the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing.

5. 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**

6. Please give the following details:

Your name and address and a contact telephone number,

Which member(s) of Chambers you are complaining about,

The detail of the complaint,

What you would like done about it.

Please address your letter (whether about a barrister or a member of staff) to Mr Rhys Jones, Head of Chambers, (alternatively, Miss Alison Donovan) Angel Chambers, Ethos Building, King's Road, Swansea, SA1 8AS. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

7. Our Chambers has a panel headed by Mr Rhys Jones and 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 it. If your complaint is against the head of the panel, the next most senior member of the panel will investigate it. In all situations, the person appointed will be someone other than the person you are complaining about.

8. The person appointed to investigate will write to you as soon as possible to let you know that he/she has been appointed and that he /she will reply to your complaint within 14 days. If he/she finds later that he/she is not going to be able to reply within 14 days he/she will set a new date for his/ her reply and inform you. His /her reply will set out:

- The nature and scope of the investigation;

- The conclusion on each complaint and the basis for his conclusion; and
- If he/she finds that you are justified in your complaint, his proposals for resolving the complaint.
- The date which falls 8 weeks from receipt of your initial complaint and whether there is any reason why we consider it would not be possible to resolve your complaint within that period.

## **Confidentiality**

9. 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 Mr Jones or Miss Donovan, members of our executive committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister 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 is entitled to inspect the documents and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

## **Our Policy**

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

## **Complaints to the Legal Ombudsman**

11. 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 about a member of chambers until you have made a complaint to Chambers.

Please note there are time limits for making a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman. These, together with details about the procedure to follow, are set out in detail on the website for the Legal Ombudsman at [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk).

In summary, there will ordinarily be a time limit for referring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman of 6 months from Chamber's final response to your complaint (subject to exceptions identified in Scheme Rules available on the above website) though there is an overall time limit of 6 years from the act or omission complained of or 3 years from the date upon which you should reasonably have been aware that you had a cause for complaint (whichever date is the later). Different periods will apply if you are complaining in the capacity as a personal representative of a deceased former client.

You can write to the Legal Ombudsman at:

Legal Ombudsman  
PO Box 6806,  
Wolverhampton  
WV1 9WJ

Telephone number: 0300 555 0333

Email: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

12. If you are not the barrister'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](http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk)