

7 King's Bench Walk Grievance Procedure

1. Scope of this document

- (1) This document, and the procedure which it describes, covers any complaint, grievance or dispute including but not limited to complaints of unfair discrimination or harassment and complaints about the distribution of work from a tenant. As regards Chambers' employees, a grievance is a concern, problem or complaint about their work, working conditions or relationships with colleagues, and includes concerns about terms and conditions of employment, health and safety, work relations, bullying/harassment, new working practices, working environment, organisational change or discrimination.
- (2) The grievance procedure is applicable to all members of Chambers; pupils of Chambers; mini-pupils; Chambers' employees and applicants for positions in Chambers.

2. Statement of Policy

- (1) These Chambers are committed to providing a working environment in which all individuals including members, pupils, mini-pupils, employees, clients and the public are treated with dignity, respect and fairness. No one will be victimised or suffer a detriment because they raise a complaint or grievance in good faith under this procedure.
- (2) All procedures will, as far as practicable, be confidential.

3. Informal Resolution

- (1) Grievances can often be resolved most effectively through informal methods.
- (2) Individuals with grievances are encouraged to consider whether their grievance can be addressed informally, either directly with the person or persons concerned, or with the assistance of other members of Chambers or staff.

- (3) Chambers has appointed Stephen Kenny Q.C. and Rebecca Sabben-Clare Q.C. to act as informal advisers to potential complainants. They may be consulted in absolute confidence, and will assist, if asked, in the informal resolution of grievances.
- (4) Individuals are also recommended to consider seeking the informal assistance of the following: a Senior Clerk (for complaints by or about clerks); Lawrence Williams (for complaints by or about non-clerking staff); the appropriate pupil supervisor, alternatively Sarah Martin and/or Harry Wright (for complaints by or about pupils).

4. The Grievance Procedure

- (1) All complaints under this procedure should be made in writing to the two Chambers Grievance Officers, currently Charles Friday and Julia Dias Q.C. The Grievance Officers should familiarise themselves periodically with the BSB Handbook Equality Rules and Supporting Information.
- (2) In the event that, in the opinion of the complainant, one or more of the Grievance Officers or other member(s) appointed to deal with the complaint has a conflict of interest, the complainant may approach the current head of the Management Committee, who will consider whether to appoint another member of Chambers to replace such person in the handling of the complaint.
- (3) A complaint should be made as soon as reasonably possible, and in any event within 6 months of the act being complained of, save in exceptional circumstances.
- (4) Complaints will be dealt with promptly. The Grievance Officers or other members appointed to deal with the complaint will organise a meeting with the complainant to discuss the grievance within 12 days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are good reasons for delay. The complainant may be accompanied at the meeting by a member or employee of their choice or (if the complainant is an employee) a trade union representative. The Grievance Officers or other members appointed to deal with the complaint should consider (inter alia) whether the meeting should be adjourned for any

investigation to be conducted. Any such adjournment will be for a reasonable time to enable the investigation to be conducted.

- (5) The Grievance Officers or other members appointed to deal with the complaint will assess the complaint and deliver a written response to the complainant, identifying any action which is intended to be taken to resolve the grievance. The response will be delivered within 21 days of completion of the meeting, unless there are good reasons for delay.
- (6) If a complaint is found to be substantiated, appropriate steps will be taken to remedy the problem.
- (7) The complainant is entitled to appeal if they feel their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, and will be informed of that right by the Grievance Officers or other members appointed to deal with the complaint. A complainant who wishes to appeal must inform the Management Committee in writing without unreasonable delay, stating the grounds for their appeal.
- (8) Any such appeal will be dealt with impartially and by people (to be appointed by the Management Committee) other than those who originally dealt with the complaint. For employees, and for others if the Management Committee considers it necessary or desirable, such appeal will be dealt with in accordance with the Acas Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.
- (9) A confidential record will be kept of all complaints and of any meetings or investigations in connection therewith.
- (10) A brief report on all complaints and on the findings of any investigations will be made to the Head of Chambers.

5. Further Sources of Information/Assistance

Members and clerks are made aware:

- (1) That barristers who have paid their voluntary subscriptions and their clerks may also approach the Bar Council Arbitration and Mediation Service to resolve disputes between barristers themselves and between barristers and their clerks.
- (2) That opportunities for support and counselling are provided by associations and groups for women lawyers, members of minority ethnic groups, disabled people, lesbians or gay men, and pupils and confidential advice is available from the Equality and Diversity Officers at the Bar Council / BSB. Any member requiring contact details for such organisations may obtain them from the Bar Council's / BSB's Equality and Diversity Officers.

Employees are made aware of the Acas Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

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