

Dear (Name)

(Matter)

Thank you for instructing us in this case.

Your instructions have been placed before [Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms].

I thought it would be helpful to describe, in summary, how chambers provides its services and I shall be grateful if you will send a copy of this letter to the lay client.

We seek to provide a high quality service to all our clients, provide value for money and comply with the Practice Management Standards of the Bar Council in our dealings with lay/professional clients. If at any time you experience any difficulty in your dealings with any member of chambers, any member of staff or have any comments to offer please contact me. Chambers complies with Equal Opportunities legislation, welcomes all and seeks to secure a fair outcome for its clients. A copy of our Equal Opportunities Policy is available upon request from the clerks. As a set of chambers we welcome and take seriously all comments from clients and have the appropriate internal procedures for addressing any concerns.

Reservation of Counsel

We do not double-book Counsel unless you are informed when making your own booking that yours is a "second" booking and you agree to take the attendant risk of a change of counsel. If for any unexpected reason it appears there will be any difficulty with Counsel not being able to appear in any case for which you have reserved them, we shall inform you immediately of the reason and will take all possible steps to provide you with acceptable alternative Counsel.

Delivery of Briefs

We ask for briefs to be deemed delivered in advance of hearings when either all or a proportion of the brief fee will be incurred. We will agree dates with you for the stages you incur the balance of the brief fee. It depends on the seniority of Counsel and the complexity of the matter as to the time scales for delivery of briefs. We will discuss this with you in each individual case, but as a rough working guide, in leading cases we ask for Counsel's brief to be deemed delivered at least one month in advance of hearings and where you are instructing senior juniors, it is usually two to three weeks in advance.

Conferences

Whilst we have wheelchair access to chambers, conferences can be arranged at your offices or elsewhere particularly to cater for disabilities.

Paperwork

We generally expect that paperwork will be returned within four weeks from receipt unless some other timescale is agreed with you. If there is a risk that Counsel will not be able to comply with those time limits we will inform you accordingly.

Charges

I will be pleased to discuss respective charging rates for the various members of chambers and to give an indication of fees for any particular piece of work in advance of the work being done. For FDR's and certain other types of work our normal practice is to agree a fee to cover the preparation and the estimated time of the hearing with an hourly charge being incurred additionally after that time has elapsed. We of course treat all cases on their own merits.

Professional terms

It is chambers usual practice to expect Counsel's fees to be paid within one month of receipt of fee note. Clients are asked to inform us if this is not possible so that other arrangements can be made and confirmed in writing. In accordance with the Bar Council's recommendation, Chambers reserves the right to charge interest on fees unpaid after one month from the rendering of a fee note where no extension from that time has been agreed.

Confidentiality within Chambers

I enclose a copy of Chambers Confidentiality document. Please read it carefully so that you are aware of the service that we are able to offer.

Complaints information for Lay Clients

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 note that Chambers will only consider complaints that are raised within six months of the act or omission complained of.

You may wish to make a complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the procedure in paragraph 4 and 5 below. However, if you would rather speak on the telephone about your complaint then please telephone the individual nominated under the Chambers Complaints Procedure to deal with complaints, Miss Lucy Stone QC or (if the complaint is about a member of staff) the senior clerk, Mr Ivor Treherne. If the complaint is about the senior clerk, telephone the Head of Chambers, Mr Lewis Marks QC. The person you contact will make a note of the details of your complaint and what you would like done about it. They will discuss your concerns with you and aim to resolve them. If the matter is resolved they will record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with the outcome and record that you are satisfied.

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 it can be investigated formally.

Please give the following details:

Your name and address;

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

The detail of the complaint; and

What you would like done about it.

Please address your letter to Miss Lucy Stone QC at Queen Elizabeth Building, Temple, London, EC4Y 9BS. We will, where possible, acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two days and provide you with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.

Our Chambers has a panel headed by Lucy Stone QC and made up of experienced members of Chambers and a senior member of staff, which considers any written complaint. Within 14 days of your letter being received the head of the panel or her deputy in her 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 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 reply and inform you. His/her reply will set out:

The nature and scope of his/her investigation;

His/her conclusion on each complaint and the basis for his conclusion; and

If he/she finds that you are justified in your complaint, his/her proposals for resolving the complaint.

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 our management committee and to anyone involved in the complaint and its investigation. Such people will include the barrister or member of 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 and seek information about the complaint when discharging its auditing and monitoring functions.

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

We hope that you will use our procedure. However, if you are unhappy with the outcome you may take up your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. Please note that there is a six-month time limit from the conclusion of the investigation by Chambers in which to raise your complaint with the Legal Ombudsman. You can contact them on:-

Legal Ombudsman
P O Box 15870
Birmingham, B30 9EB

Telephone: 0300 555 0333
If calling from abroad: +44 121 245 3050
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk
Web: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Thank you once again for your instructions; if you have any immediate comments or questions please do not hesitate to contact me or one of my assistants.

Yours sincerely

Ivor Treherne
Senior Clerk