



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Our aim is to give all lay and professional clients a good service at all times. However, in the event that you are dissatisfied with the treatment you have received from a mediator or a member of our staff, we wish to provide a remedy.

### WHEN WOULD YOU COMPLAIN?

2. Experience tells us that, very often, potential complaints can be resolved informally. They may have arisen through a misunderstanding or can be remedied without initiating the full complaints procedure. We encourage you to take up a complaint with the responsible person in the first instance, if possible by telephone. If the matter cannot be resolved to your satisfaction in this way, it is open to you to make a formal complaint.

3. A formal complaint will be considered if it is made within 1 month of the date of the cause of the complaint or when informal resolution has failed, whichever is the later. If a complaint is made after this time limit, an explanation for the delay must be given and the Head of Chambers will have a discretion to take this into account.

### WHAT IS THE FORMAL PROCEDURE?

4. Under the formal procedure a complaint is one which is made in writing, including by email to [info@gclaw.co.uk](mailto:info@gclaw.co.uk), which is addressed to the Head of Chambers. It is necessary to include your name and address, identify the name of the mediator you are complaining about, provide details of the complaint and indicate what you would consider a resolution of the complaint.

5. If you consider yourself to have a disability which affects your ability to formulate or pursue a complaint, please tell us and we will discuss appropriate and reasonable adjustments with you.

6. Your correspondence will be acknowledged in writing by the Head of Chambers within three working days of receipt.

7. It is the job of the Head of Chambers to determine what has gone wrong. You should receive a full written response within 14 days.

8. However, if the matter raises issues which, in the opinion of the Head of Chambers, an investigation is required to determine the facts, he will appoint a suitable member of Chambers to be the investigator. The person investigating the complaint will not be the person you are complaining about. A letter will be sent to you within 14 days of your complaint informing you who has been appointed.



9. The investigator will have access to all the relevant documents, will be able to contact all concerned and may need to contact you for further information.

10. The investigator will then produce a report to the Head of Chambers as soon as possible, ordinarily within 14 days of his or her appointment. If it is not possible to meet this deadline the Head of Chambers will write to you and inform you when the investigation is expected to be concluded.

11. The Head of Chambers will consider the report and write to you, setting out the nature of the investigation. He will inform you whether he upholds the complaint or rejects it, setting out the reasons why. When a complaint is upheld the letter will set out or include a proposal for resolving the complaint.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

12. All conversations, records and documents relating to the complaint will be treated confidentially and retained for 6 years. They will only be disclosed as necessary: normally to the person complained about and the investigator.

#### **SUPERVISION OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

13. As part of our commitment to client care, we keep a record of all complaints made and the outcomes. Our complaints panel may inspect this record regularly to ensure compliance with our procedure and with a view to improving the service we provide. Our complaints panel submits an annual report to the Management Committee to ensure our services improve where necessary.

#### **COMPLAINTS AFTER THE INTERNAL PROCESS**

14. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of our handling of your complaint you may pursue your complaint with either the Legal Ombudsman, the Civil Mediation Council or an alternative complaints body, ProMediate, depending on the mediator's alleged conduct. None of these organisations can consider your complaint until it has firstly been made to the Head of Chambers under the procedure outlined above.

Alternative complaints bodies such as ProMediate exist which are competent to deal with complaints about legal services should both you and the Head of Chambers wish to use such a scheme. ProMediate can be contacted via [www.promediate.co.uk](http://www.promediate.co.uk)

The Civil Mediation Council can be contacted to deal with complaints about mediators via its Registrar, at [registrar@civilmediation.org](mailto:registrar@civilmediation.org).



The Legal Ombudsman can consider complaints made about the professional conduct of a barrister, but not of a mediator. You have six months from the date of our final letter in which to complain to the Legal Ombudsman who can be contacted on 0300 555 0333.

Alternatively you can write to:

Legal Ombudsman

PO Box 6806

Wolverhampton

WV1 9WJ

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

Please see [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk) for further information.