

# WHITESTONE CHAMBERS

*Barristers*

Whitestone  
Chambers

Chambers of Lawrence Power  
1 Essex Street

London

WC2R 3HU

## GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

*(September 2021)*

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

### **Scope of procedure**

This procedure covers: members of chambers; pupils of chambers; mini-pupils; chamber's staff and applicants for positions in chambers. This procedure is applicable to any complaint, grievance or dispute including but not limited to complaints or grievances of unfair discrimination or harassment. It does not apply to complaints or grievances made by clients concerning barristers or staff. If any of the above persons unsure which policy they should refer to, they can ask the Complaints and Grievance Officer, Mina Heung, or the Head of Legal Operations.

### **Statement of policy**

Whitestone Chambers is committed to providing a working environment in which everyone is 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.

### **Officer**

Mina Heung is the Complaints and Grievance Officer.

### **Notification of procedure**

A copy of this procedure, which includes the names of people who have been nominated to respond to formal and informal complaints and grievances, will be given to all Members, staff, pupils and mini-pupils, and a copy will be available on the Chambers intranet.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible and appropriate. All records of complaints and grievances, including notes of meetings, interviews, results of investigations and other relevant material will be kept confidential by Chambers except where disclosure is required by law or for disciplinary or other remedial processes.

### **Informal procedures**

Complaints or grievances are more easily resolved if dealt with at an early stage. If you have a complaints or grievance, you are recommended in the first instance to seek the informal assistance of one of the following people who will, as far as possible, provide confidential advice and assistance:

- For pupils: your pupil supervisor, the Head of Chambers.

- For complaints or grievances about clerking: The Head of Legal Operations. If the complaint relates to the Head of Legal Operations, the Head of Chambers should be notified.
- For complaints or grievances about harassment or equality and diversity: The Equality and Diversity Officer Mina Heung.
- If the complaint or grievance cannot be resolved informally, or if you prefer to use a formal procedure, the matter may be pursued by making a formal complaint.

## **Formal procedures under the Grievance Policy**

### **How to make a formal complaint**

Formal complaints should be made in writing to the Complaints and Grievance Officer. If the complainant is about the Complaints and Grievance Officer, it should be addressed to the Head of Chambers.

### **When to make a formal complaint**

A formal complaint should be made as soon as reasonably possible. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, it must be made no later than six months after the act which is being complained about, or (if informal action is taken first) within six months of the end of the informal action.

### **What will happen when a formal complaint is received?**

The receipt of a formal complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 7 days.

### **Investigations into formal complaints**

Unless there are good reasons for delay, investigations into alleged incidents of harassment should be completed within 14 days after the complaint was received, and investigations into other complaints or grievances should be completed within 28 days after the complaint was received.

The Complaints and Grievance Officer will appoint one additional Members of Chambers to assist in investigating a complaint or grievance under this policy. Where possible the Members appointed to carry out the investigations will not be directly involved in the matters complained of and will not have been involved in any informal complaint.

The investigation must be carried out fairly. If any interviews or hearings are held, the complainant and any person who is the subject of the complaint or alleged grievance may be accompanied by a colleague or friend.

## **Conclusion of formal complaints**

At the end of the investigation, the Complaints and Grievance Officer will report to the Head of Chambers on their conclusions and any action they recommend be taken to rectify it. The Head of Chambers will have the final decision on what action should be taken. If the grievance or complaint relates to the Head of Chambers, this step will be missed and the Grievance and Complaints Officer will make the final decision on what action should be taken.

If a complaint is found to have substance, appropriate steps must be taken to rectify the problem. Solutions which rely on changes to working arrangements which might unreasonably disadvantage the complainant must be avoided, because they might amount to victimisation.

The complainant will be provided with a written response on the outcome of the complaint or grievance and, where it is upheld, with a clear indication of the action Chambers will take.

Records (which are confidential, as set out above) will be retained for a period of one year and may be retained for longer if necessary.

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Explanatory note:

This policy largely follows the model complaints or grievance procedures for Chambers, which was amended.

AMENDED September 2021. TO BE REVISED: September2023

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