



BELL YARD CHAMBERS HARASSMENT POLICY

It is the duty of every barrister of these chambers and every member of staff to inform the Chambers Management Committee of any complaint of harassment (“a Harassment Complaint”) made about them.

We recognise that it is important that all Harassment Complaints are dealt with promptly, courteously and in a manner which addresses the issues raised in accordance with our procedures.

Chambers’ Harassment Complaints Procedure

We pride ourselves on a culture of mutual respect and dignity for all persons and do not tolerate harassment or bullying.

However, if you feel that you have been the subject of or have witnessed harassment or bullying by a barrister or member of staff at our chambers then we would prefer to know straight away, so that we can try to do something to rectify the matter immediately, if that is possible. If we are not able to resolve matters, we understand that you may feel that you would prefer to make a formal Harassment Complaint. We take feedback, complaints and the investigation of them seriously.

We recognise that it is important that all Harassment Complaints are dealt with promptly, sensitively and in a manner which addresses the issues raised in accordance with our procedures and professional obligations.

Our Harassment Complaints Procedure deals with issues covered by our Anti-Harassment Policy. Insofar as a complaint relates to services issues you may have experienced, we have a separate Complaints procedure. It is also not usually appropriate for chambers to deal with allegations of professional negligence or serious misconduct under the Code of Conduct. In so far as your complaint raises issues of professional negligence the Barrister is required to report the same to their professional indemnity insurers who may elect to deal with it themselves. In so far as a complaint relates to misconduct we may suggest that it be referred to the Bar Standards Board.

We have a Management Committee whose responsibilities include overseeing the Harassment Complaints Procedure and which acts on behalf of Barristers at our chambers.

The Committee is responsible for ensuring that we have a clear, robust, fair and transparent Harassment Complaints procedure with clear timescales and which is adhered to. They determine what lessons can be learnt from Harassment Complaints made to chambers and make decisions of improvements which could be made to the processes, procedures and support offered by Bell Yard Chambers to staff, members and clients alike.

Harassment Complaints Made by Telephone

You may wish to make a Harassment Complaint in writing and, if so, please follow the formal procedure below. However, if you would rather speak to someone on the telephone about the Harassment Complaint then please telephone the Head of Chambers or, in their absence, the Senior Clerk. If the complaint is about the Head of Chambers, please telephone the Senior Clerk. All the contact details are provided at the end of this Procedure document.

The person you contact will make a note of the details of your Harassment Complaint and what you would like to have done about it. Harassment Complaints can be dealt with formally under our Harassment Complaints procedure or more informally. It is your choice (or if you are a witness of rather than the victim of alleged harassment, the choice of both you and the victim) how to proceed. Once you have spoken to someone our Management Committee will email you with details of the complaints procedure for formal Harassment Complaints and, if you have expressed an interest in dealing with the matter informally, the name and contact details of someone who will deal with the matter informally. If you elect to proceed on an informal basis that person 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. You may also wish to record the outcome of the telephone discussion in writing.

If your Harassment Complaint is not resolved informally, you will be invited to write to us about it so it can be investigated formally.

Formal Harassment Complaints made in Writing

Please make your Harassment Complaint by letter or email to the Head of Chambers who will have the initial responsibility for handling your complaint. If your complaint is about the Head of Chambers and you feel uncomfortable about addressing it directly to them, in the first instance, then please send it by letter or email to the Senior Clerk.

It would be helpful if you could include the following information so we can deal with your Harassment Complaint as effectively as possible:

- Your contact details including name, address and, if applicable, email address;
- If you are a witness to rather than the victim of alleged harassment, the name and address (if you know it) of the alleged victim;

- Whether you (and the victim, if you are a witness) are a member of staff, barrister, pupil, mini-pupil or other work experience person, client, instructing solicitor or had/have some other role;
- The name of the Barrister or member of staff you are complaining about;
- The nature of the Harassment Complaint, giving details, if possible, of what happened or did not happen and what the Barrister or member of staff did or did not do;
- What steps you would like to see taken to resolve your Harassment C

Once your formal Harassment Complaint has been received, the Head of Chambers will explain to you how it will be handled. We try to keep this process flexible to take account of different circumstances. In principle, it will work as follows.

We will aim to acknowledge receipt of your Harassment Complaint within 4 days of receipt, or sooner, and provide you with details of how your Harassment Complaint will be dealt with. You may be asked to provide further information if it is required. Within 14 days of acknowledging receipt of your Harassment Complaint, we will write to inform you who has been appointed and the date by which we aim to send you their response, after a thorough investigation. This would normally be within 14 days of the Harassment Complaints Officer being appointed. If this is likely to be delayed for some reason, we will write to you to explain this and also the new date for their response. Their response will set out:

- The nature and scope of their investigation;
- Their conclusion on the Harassment Complaint and the basis for their conclusion; and
- If they find that you are justified in your Harassment Complaint, their proposals for resolving the Harassment Complaint.

If you (and/or the victim of the alleged harassment, if you are a witness) are not satisfied with the conclusion reached by the Harassment Complaints Officer, you will be offered the opportunity to ask for a review of that decision by another suitably senior member of chambers.

Confidentiality

In line with BSB guidance, all conversations and documents shall be confidential and disclosed only to the extent necessary. They may be disclosed only to the complainant, the Barrister or member of staff complained about, the Head of Chambers, the Chambers Management Committee (for monitoring purposes) and any other individual with whom enquiries need to be made for the purpose of the investigation.

Record Keeping

As part of our commitment to client care, we make a written record of any Harassment Complaint and retain all documents and correspondence generated

by the complaint for a period of (at least) six years, with due regard to our obligations under GDPR.

Contact Details

The primary contact for Harassment Complaints about any barrister or member of staff is:

Anti Harassment Officer

Sharn Mardner
S.Mardner@bellyardchambers.co.uk
+44 (0)20 37930641

or, if the Anti Harassment Officer is not available, please contact:

Senior Clerk

Philip Bishop
P.bishop@bellyardchambers.co.uk
+44 (0)20 3793 0641