

Catherine Brown

Call: 1990
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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Personal Injury, Industrial Disease, Clinical Negligence, Public Authority Liability, Abuse, Employment & Discrimination, Health & Safety, Inquests, Costs & Litigation Funding, Arbitration

JUDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Recorder: 2008

Catherine is a specialist personal injury barrister. She is recognised as a leading junior in both Chambers & Partners and Legal 500. She is known, in particular, for her expertise in occupational stress and occupiers' liability claims. However, she is experienced in all fields of personal injury and industrial disease (including fatal claims). She also undertakes clinical negligence cases.

Catherine is regularly instructed in public authority liability cases. In addition to personal injury claims, her public authority practice includes human rights law, social work and educational negligence, misuse of private information, property damage, and disability discrimination.

Catherine also has a strong defendant health and safety practice, she is regularly instructed at high profile inquests, and she has an expanding practice in the field of costs.

Catherine has been a Recorder since 2008 and she sits in the criminal (including serious sexual offences) and civil jurisdictions (Wales Circuit).

When not working, Catherine is often to be found walking her retired racing greyhound (or watching her run around the local park).

Industrial Disease

Catherine has long been recognised in the legal directories for her expertise in occupational stress, bullying and harassment claims, acting on behalf of both defendants and claimants. She has successfully fought trials on behalf of employers such as local authorities and colleges, and she has negotiated significant settlements on behalf of claimants for whom she has acted. She has a particular knowledge and understanding of the relationship between employment tribunal and personal injury claims, including where there are discrimination allegations, a claimant has resigned or the claim arises out of disciplinary or grievance procedures. In recent cases she has successfully argued that an employment tribunal compromise agreement precluded an award of loss of earnings in a civil claim and that a claim for damages should be struck out as *res judicata* due to previous employment tribunal proceedings.

Catherine's occupational stress (stress at work) cases include:-

- *P v MOD* (ongoing case) – claim by Army officer for occupational stress (C)
- *Manda v UBS AG*, Central London CC (2016) Lawtel 20/6/16 – stress claim struck out as res judicata by reason of previous withdrawn / struck out ET proceedings
- *Stock v King Edward VI College*, Birmingham CC (2015) – successful defence of stress claim by Head of Drama at 6th form college (arising from disciplinary proceedings) (D)
- *Redfern v Corby BC* (settlement 2015) – stress / whistleblowing claim which received substantial media coverage (D)
- *N v Chubb Systems Ltd* (settlement 2015) – stress and sexual harassment claim by employee (C)
- *Godber v Bournemouth BC*, Southampton CC (2013) – dismissal of stress claim arising out of disciplinary proceedings – issue estoppel in relation to employment tribunal compromise agreement (D)
- *Grimes v City of Sunderland College*, Newcastle upon Tyne CC (2012) – successful defence of stress (overwork) claim by lecturer (D)
- *C v Basingstoke & North Hampshire NHS Foundation Trust* (settlement 2011) – substantial (over £¼m) settlement of stress (overwork) claim by health service employee (C)
- *Haynes v North Wiltshire CC*, Bristol CC (2011) – dismissal of stress claim by employee of local authority (alleged bullying by manager) (D)

In addition to occupational stress, Catherine's practice includes other industrial disease claims, such as those arising from asbestos exposure (mainly defendant – including date of knowledge and occupiers' liability), noise induced hearing loss (NIHL), vibration white finger (VWF), work related upper limb disorders (WRULD) and repetitive and strain injuries due to manual handling. She is able to advise on all issues relating to liability, limitation, causation, apportionment of damages and quantum.

Qualifications

- University of Birmingham: B Com (Hons)
- Polytechnic of Central London (now University of Westminster): Diploma in Law

Appointments & Memberships

Recorder: 2008 (Wales Circuit – Crime, including Serious Sexual Offences, and Civil)

Barrister Member of Bar Standards Board Professional Conduct Committee 2009 – 2015 (continuing role as a retired pool member)

Previously Faculty Member, SE Circuit International Advocacy Course, Keble College, Oxford (Advocacy and Ethics trainer)

Personal Injuries Bar Association

Professional Negligence Bar Association

Association of Women Barristers

South Eastern Circuit

Middle Temple

Directories

Chambers & Partners 2017 says that she is widely recognised for her broad expertise and delicate handling of psychiatric injury, stress at work and sexual abuse claims. "She very quickly picks out the key details from vast swathes of information." "She's excellent, a joy to work with."

Legal 500 2016 says "She has a wonderful knack for putting difficult legal concepts into plain language".

Chambers & Partners 2016 said "She provides very authoritative and clear advice and she has the ability to assimilate a large amount of documentation very quickly. She is an expert in stress and harassment cases".

Legal 500 2015 said "Her intellect is immense and solicitors trust her judgement implicitly"

Earlier editions of the directories included the following:

"The "decisive and robust," Catherine Brown is a skilled negotiator who is "able to explain complex issues in straightforward terms" and put clients at ease." She has "sound judgment and focus" and was commended for having skills associated with a far more senior advocate. She is respected for her "detailed and comprehensive" approach and the fact that she was "ever-prepared to make hard decisions. "Catherine "is widely held out as one of the leading personal injury juniors on the circuit" who is well known for her "tenacious cross-examination." Fellow barristers note that she is "tough but sensible – she will hold her line but never if it is a foolish one."

She has also been described as "clued up" and "regularly briefed on important personal injury cases". The entry continued by saying that she was "a tenacious trial lawyer and a formidable opponent who is outstanding on large stress claims". Clients have described Catherine as an "exceptional cross-examiner" and "always extremely supportive of her clients".