

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

JUDICIAL 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).

Public Authority Liability

Catherine's public authority liability practice extends well-beyond her personal injury and industrial disease specialisms. Catherine is instructed in a wide range of cases, both on behalf of, and against, public authorities of all kinds, ranging from contractual claims, human rights cases, data protection and misuse of personal information claims, and social work negligence, to flooding and other property damage and nuisance claims, cases concerning highway authority liability and law, and cases arising from the alleged negligent performance of duties, or misfeasance by, public officials. Issues of whether a duty of care exists at all and, if it does, the nature and scope of the duty in question are at

the heart of many cases in which Catherine is instructed in this field. She is instructed by police forces, many local authorities, national charities, health authorities, and educational establishments of all kinds, as well as on behalf of claimants bringing claims against public bodies.

Catherine's public authority liability cases include:-

- *P v MOD* (ongoing case) – claim by Army officer for occupational stress (C)
- *W v MOD* (ongoing case) – claim by Naval officer for assault and harassment (C)
- *Willis v Northumberland CC & another*, Newcastle upon Tyne CC (2017) – occupiers not liable to fisherman who fell off unfenced breakwater (D)
- *Dyer v East Sussex CC*, Brighton CC (2016) – school not liable for brain injury suffered by pupil (D)
- *ABC v Northumbria Police* (discontinued 2016) – representing Northumbria Police in case arising from Raoul Moat shooting of PC Rathband
- *Langhorne v LB Merton*, Central London CC (2016) – representing highway authority in claim arising out of defect on forecourt (claim against highway authority dismissed)
- *Claire Cruttenden Inquest*, East Sussex Coroners Court (2015-16) – representing Sussex Police at jury inquest concerning the treatment by the police of a sexual assault complainant who committed suicide
- *Taylor & Fathers v Powys CC* (settlement 2015) – claim arising out of alleged breach of duty by local authority in providing replies about the status of a highway in response to pre-purchase enquiries during the conveyancing process (D)
- *D v University College, London & 1 other* (settlement 2015) – post-graduate student alleging sexual abuse against senior academic (D1)
- *Oates (deceased) v 2 others & West Suffolk College* (settlement 2015) – human rights and negligence claim following suicide of disabled student (D3)
- *Redfern v Corby BC* (settlement 2015) – high profile stress / whistleblowing claim (D)
- *Whelan v Milton Keynes Council & another*, Oxford CC (2014) – council not liable for foster child's accident – issues of non-delegable duty / scope of duty (D1)
- *Morley and Hyde v North East Lincolnshire Council*, QBD, Lincoln DR (2014) (permission to appeal refused 2015) – summary judgment for D in social work negligence claim (D)
- *Bristol CC v ETM*, QBD, Bristol DR (TCC) (2013) – representing highway authority in successful contractual claim against maintenance contractors
- *Armstrong v 2 others and Northumbria CC*, QBD, Newcastle upon Tyne DR (2012) – occupiers' liability claim (claim dismissed)
- *Thomas v Warwickshire CC* [2011] EWHC 772 (QB) – representing highway authority – scope of section 41 Highways Act 1980 (D)
- *Caerphilly CBC v Button* [2010] EWCA Civ 1311 – representing appellant local authority employer
- *Harvey v Plymouth CC* [2010] EWCA Civ 860 – representing successful local authority appellant (led by (Lord) Edward Faulkes QC)
- *Maloney v Torfaen CBC* [2005] EWCA Civ 1762 – representing successful local authority appellant

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".