

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).

Health & Safety

Catherine has a strong defendant health and safety practice, which combines her expertise in health and safety law and practice, based on her personal injury law specialism, with her knowledge and experience of the criminal justice system, as both a barrister and a Crown Court Recorder.

She has been instructed in a range of health and safety prosecutions, including cases alleging gross negligence manslaughter, breaches of sections 2, 3 and 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and breaches of Wales specific regulations.

Catherine has particular knowledge and expertise in drafting and negotiating the terms of "Friskies" schedules for bases of plea, and in the application of the Sentencing Guidelines, both in relation to fatalities and in respect of other health and safety cases.

In addition to criminal health and safety cases, Catherine is often instructed to protect the interests of potential

defendants at inquests, including Article 2 cases. Catherine's human rights law knowledge is of particular importance in ensuring that the scope of inquests and, more importantly, the nature and scope of the "verdict", is limited where appropriate.

Catherine's health and safety cases include:-

- *Welsh Government v Hillcrest Care Limited & 2 others*, Newport Magistrates Court (at Cardiff Crown Court) (2015) – prosecution pursuant to Children's Homes (Wales) Regulations 2002 following the suicide of a child resident at D1's children's home (D1) – most serious charges abandoned at close of P case
- *Epping Forest DC v Casterbridge Care and Education Limited and others*, Chelmsford Crown Court (2013) – prosecution following death of 2 year old Rhiya Malin at the Defendants' nursery – subject of Channel 4 Documentary "How Safe is Your Child's Nursery?" in February 2013 (D1&D2)
- *R(HSE) v Tennant*, Truro Crown Court (2013) – successful defence of individual prosecuted as the alleged "manager" of main contractor following death of scaffolding sub-contractor's employee (D)
- *R v Collier*, Mold Crown Court (2012) – gross negligence manslaughter prosecution of builder responsible for defective retaining wall which fell and killed a child (D) (led by Ronald Walker QC)
- *R v Menna*, Luton Crown Court (2012) – ss2 & 3 HSWA 1974 – prosecution arising out of murder of care worker by resident with bi-polar affective disorder (D2) (led by Ronald Walker QC)
- *Rhiya Malin Inquest*, Essex Coroner's Court (2010) – Death of child as a result of neck entrapment in a playhouse at a private nursery (Nursery)
- *R (Malin) v Crown Prosecution Service* [2010] EWHC 1255 (Admin) – Judicial review of decision not to prosecute for manslaughter in case of child who died at a private nursery (Interested Party)

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".