

James Pickering

Call: 2013
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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Personal Injury, Industrial Disease, International & Travel, Abuse, Insurance, Military Claims, Group Litigation

James is a leading junior in cases involving serious injuries and fatal accidents, with expertise in international and group litigation. He acts in complex and cutting-edge litigation, often with a cross-border element.

Chambers UK and The Legal 500 describe him as "really excellent" and "a brilliant lawyer". "James has a Rolls Royce brain and eye for detail." "His tactics and strategy always result in favourable outcomes."

The legal directories rank him as a leading junior in Group Litigation, Personal Injury, Industrial Disease, International Personal Injury, and Motor Insurance Fraud.

James was junior counsel in the Military Deafness Litigation, one of The Lawyer's Top 20 Cases of 2025.

James leads 12KBW's Band 1-ranked International & Travel Team. He edits the key practitioner textbooks in his areas of practice: *Occupational Illness Litigation* (Sweet & Maxwell), *Asbestos: Law & Litigation* (Sweet & Maxwell), and *Butterworths Personal Injury Litigation Service (Accidents Abroad)* (LexisNexis UK).

Personal Injury

James is recommended by the legal directories as a specialist in claims for serious injuries, fatal accidents, and industrial diseases.

He acts for both claimants and defendants in claims for injuries of the utmost severity, including brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, and pain disorders.

Recent examples of his cases (led and unled) include:

For claimants:

- Representing thousands of soldiers in claims for military hearing loss and cold injuries in the Military Deafness Litigation and the Military Cold Injuries Litigation.
- Representing clients with severe brain and spinal injuries suffered in an overseas road traffic accident: settled for £2.25 million.
- Representing a client with serious psychological injuries following an accident at an overseas work event: settled for a global sum over £2 million.

For defendants:

- Representing the Rugby Football League and the British Amateur Rugby League Association in their defence of the Rugby Concussion Litigation.
- Defending a severe brain and orthopaedic injuries claim involving lifelong care pleaded at £35.25 million: settled for £10.25 million.
- Defending a severe brain injury claim involving lifelong care pleaded at £12.5 million: settled for £8.5 million.

He is regularly instructed by motor insurance companies and the MIB to defend claims arising from road traffic accidents and he has expertise in associated indemnity issues.

He also represents bereaved families and interested parties in all types of inquest, where his work complements his specialism in fatal accidents litigation. He is committed to pro bono representation and accepts instructions on this basis where appropriate.

Group Litigation

James specialises in group litigation. He is ranked as a leading junior in Group Litigation by Chambers UK. He was junior counsel in *Adams v Ministry of Defence* [2024] EWHC 1966 (KB), the leading authority on the use of "omnibus" Claim Forms in large-scale personal injury actions.

He has acted in some of the largest group actions ever brought in the UK:

- Instructed in several large group claims brought by thousands of military veterans against the Ministry of Defence for personal injuries whilst in service.
- Instructed by the Rugby Football League and the British Amateur Rugby League Association in their defence of the Rugby Concussion Litigation.
- Instructed by thousands of police officers in group litigation relating to the leaking of their sensitive personal data.

Industrial Disease

James is an industrial disease litigation specialist and the legal directories recommend him as a leading industrial disease lawyer. According to the legal directories: "He is truly an encyclopedia of knowledge. He is across law, fact and history."

James is instructed in some of the most high profile industrial disease litigation before the English courts. He represents thousands of serving and ex-members of HM Armed Forces in claims for military hearing loss and cold injuries in the Military Deafness Litigation and the Military Cold Injuries Litigation.

He is immensely experienced in representing bereaved and terminally ill clients in asbestos disease claims and he is recognised by the directories for his warmth and sensitivity in these difficult cases: "He is thoughtful, thorough and extremely good in conference when advising clients on highly sensitive and emotive subjects."

His expertise and depth of knowledge are reflected by the fact that he edits the two leading practitioner textbooks in this area of the law: *Occupational Illness Litigation* (Sweet & Maxwell) and *Asbestos: Law & Litigation* (Sweet & Maxwell).

International & Travel

James leads 12KBW's Band 1-ranked International & Travel Team. He has expertise in all of the complex legal issues that arise in international claims and regularly advises clients on service of process and the conflict of laws.

His solicitors value him for his pragmatic cross-border advice in the most difficult and sensitive of claims, such as to bereaved families in the aftermath of the tragic 2018 Leicester City Helicopter Crash.

James represented the successful claimant in the key cross-border case of *DHV v Motor Insurers' Bureau (No. 1)* [2025] EWHC 2002 (KB) and *(No. 2)* [2025] EWHC 2038 (KB), securing damages and Spanish penalty interest for his severely brain injured client following a 14-day High Court trial dealt with under Spanish law.

He frequently acts for tour operators, airlines, cruise ship operators, and foreign insurance companies. He has successfully represented catastrophically injured clients in cases arising out of overseas road traffic, skiing, and workplace accidents. Much of his group litigation practice involves international elements and he enjoys working as part of a team.

He is regularly invited to speak on cross-border legal issues at conferences, such as those organised by APIL and the Pan-European Organisation of Personal Injury Lawyers. He is the editor of *Butterworths Personal Injury Litigation Service (Accidents Abroad)*.

Abuse

James has expertise in civil claims arising out of sexual and physical abuse. He advises on all aspects of abuse work, including limitation, consent, vicarious liability, non-delegable duties, negligence, causation, and evidential issues. He is regularly instructed in claims against employers, public authorities, schools, and individual defendants.

He has significant experience in all aspects of limitation law in this context. He edits the Limitation chapter of the market-leading practitioner textbook *Occupational Illness Litigation* (Sweet & Maxwell). His instructing solicitors in this area value his cross-over expertise in personal injury and cross-border litigation.

Insurance

James acts for claimants and defendants in a wide range of pure insurance disputes, including travel insurance, private health insurance, and motor insurance. He is regularly instructed by motor insurers to advise on policy and coverage disputes. He cuts through the complex legal issues raised in these cases to deliver pragmatic advice meeting the commercial needs of his clients.

James has particular expertise in motor insurer status and policy construction. He advises in relation to the Road Traffic Act 1988, Article 75 of the MIB's Articles of Association, and the Uninsured Drivers Agreement and Untraced Drivers Agreement. He has extensive experience of coverage disputes relating to vehicle use. His solicitors in this area value his cross-over expertise in litigation relating to personal injuries and overseas travel.

Fraud

James is ranked as a leading junior in Motor Insurance Fraud. He is a robust trial advocate with a counter-fraud specialism. He has expertise in personal injury claims involving exaggeration, phantom passengers, staged accidents, and LVI.

Cases

DHV v Motor Insurers' Bureau (No. 1) [2025] EWHC 2002 (KB): Successful claim for damages for a severely brain injured client following a 14-day High Court trial dealt with under Spanish law.

DHV v Motor Insurers' Bureau (No. 2) [2025] EWHC 2038 (KB): Successful claim for Spanish "penalty interest" in relation to a severe brain injury claim.

Adams v Ministry of Defence [2024] EWHC 1966 (KB): The leading authority on the use of "omnibus" Claim Forms in large-scale personal injury actions.

Woodward v Mapfre Espana Compania de Seguros y Reaseguros [2022] Lexis Citation 1433: A key case on the recovery of Spanish penalty interest in the English Courts, eventually appealed to the Court of Appeal: [2024] EWCA

Civ 718.

Qualifications & Awards

BCL (Distinction), Exeter College, University of Oxford
BPTC, City, University of London
BA Jurisprudence, Saint Peter's College, University of Oxford

Inner Temple Pegasus Scholarship
London Common Law & Commercial Bar Association Essay Prize
Law Faculty Prize for Criminal Justice and Human Rights
Ralph Chiles Award for Comparative Human Rights
Middle Temple Colombos Law Prize
Exeter College Tobias Prize in Law
Times Law Awards, 2nd Prize
Oxford Postgraduate Internship Award
Exeter College Internship Grant
Saint Peter's College Law Essay Prize

Memberships

Personal Injuries Bar Association
Pan European Organisation of Personal Injury Lawyers
London Common Law & Commercial Bar Association

Publications

Occupational Illness Litigation (Sweet & Maxwell) (Editor)
Asbestos: Law & Litigation (Sweet & Maxwell) (Co-Editor)
Butterworths Personal Injury Litigation Service (Accidents Abroad) (LexisNexis UK) (Editor)
'Asbestos Product Litigation', *Journal of Personal Injury Law* (2021, 1, pp. 17-24)

Directories

James is very thorough, with a great eye for detail, tactic and strategy which always results in favourable outcomes – I've been really impressed. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

James is a brilliant lawyer. He is a great speaker and great operator for group litigation as he's seen a lot of it, and is a specialist in industrial disease and international litigation. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

I'm always amazed by his level of expertise and technical knowledge on cross-border matters. He is certainly a fine advocate who deserves strong recognition. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

He is very thorough and has a great eye for detail. His tactics and strategy always result in favourable outcomes. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

James has a Rolls-Royce brain and eye for detail. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

James Pickering is very reliable. He is thoughtful, thorough and extremely good in conference when advising clients on highly sensitive and emotive subjects. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

James is unbelievably brainy and very good at distilling difficult issues into simple, clear digestible notes and advice. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

He is a very erudite barrister able to cut through to the issues quickly. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

He is really good, very experienced and practical. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

James is a super junior with a massive future. He is incredibly bright, meticulous and approachable. – Chambers & Partners, 2025.

James is really excellent – a technical and effective advocate. – Chambers & Partners, 2025.

He gives excellent advice, delivered with an attention to detail and a reassuring, calming demeanour. – Chambers & Partners, 2025.

Quietly understated due to his modesty, James nonetheless possesses a towering intellect and is able to master the law in a wide range of areas from international law to English procedural law before deploying it with lethal effect. – Legal 500, 2025.

James is razor-sharp and super responsive. – Legal 500, 2024.

He is truly an encyclopedia of knowledge. He is across law, fact and history. – Chambers & Partners, 2024.

James is pragmatic and meticulous, and always on hand in the most difficult of cases. His presence at your side is a reassuring one. – Chambers & Partners, 2024.

James is an excellent barrister. – Chambers & Partners, 2023.

James has a brilliantly analytical yet creative legal intellect which he brings to bear in the most legally challenging of claims, with jurisdictional issues being a particular forte of his. – Legal 500, 2022.