

Michael Rawlinson KC

Call: 1991
Silk: 2009

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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Industrial Disease, Product Liability, Inquests, Personal Injury, Abuse, International & Travel, Arbitration, Aviation, Group Litigation, Military Claims, Sport

Michael's principal areas of practice are claims in which exposure to noxious substances are alleged to have led to long-term adverse health effects. He is instructed by victims, expositors and their insurers.

Since such claims often involve the development of cancer many years after exposure, much of his instruction requires the marshaling and presentation of very large quantities of historical documents evidencing or negating either the fact of exposure or the guilty knowledge relating to it.

He works extensively with lawyers from other common law jurisdictions. Under this general description fall specific areas of litigation: occupational exposure to asbestos/other carcinogens and exposure to manufactured products made available to the public.

In addition he accepts a significant number of instructions each year on behalf of service personnel (or their survivors) where injury arises from service life. He is often instructed to appear at the initial fact-finding Inquest and thereafter within subsequent civil litigation. He is regularly instructed in respect of air crashes (fixed and rotary wing) and other aspects of aviation health and safety. More generally, Michael is instructed by insurers where a wider strategic interest arises out of specific litigation. He considers to be a core part of his work to regularly give talks seeking to signpost where the law of causation appears to be heading. He accepts instructions from 'both sides' in catastrophic head and spinal injury.

Notwithstanding the advent of 0% CFA/QOCS claims he is not risk averse where legally interesting or otherwise significant issues arise. Recent work has required him to provide advocacy arising from such diverse topics as the nature of the UK's level of control over Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus, the system of International aviation regulation operating within the UK, the alleged effect of environmental exposure to organophosphates and the historical behaviour of manufacturers of asbestos products within the UK market.

When instructed to lead a team, he always tries to foster a collegiate approach to the litigation because he firmly believes that helps the entire team to provide maximum value to the client.

Inquests

The majority of Michael's inquests (albeit not all) are deaths where the MOD is another interested party. In all Inquests he is instructed by the victims' respective families. Recent examples have included

- *'The Nimrod Inquest'*

- *This Inquest arose out of the Nimrod crash in Afghanistan in which the Armed Forces sustained the largest loss of life in a single incident since the Falklands conflict. I acted for all but two of the families.*
(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7932791.stm>)
- *'The Snatch Land Rover Inquest'*
- *This Inquest arose from the death of 4 service personnel (including the first female soldier to die on active service) travelling in a Snatch Land Rover in Helmand when it drove over an IED planted by the Taliban. The Coroner's comments were the subject of the (then) Leader of the Opposition's questions at the next day's PMQs*
(<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100310/debtext/100310-0002.htm#10031061000011>) and thereafter Indeed in September 2010 the Government announced the replacement of the Snatch with press coverage highlighting the role of the Coroner in this respect – see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11388724>
- *'The Lynx' Inquest – The Inquest arose from the death of 5 service personnel in a 'Lynx' helicopter in Afghanistan on 26.04.14. Michael acted for the aircraft commander whom the MOD sought to criticize as being partly to blame for the crash. The subsequent civil litigation is ongoing.*

Qualifications & Awards

University: Manchester LLB (2:1) (Harry Street Tort Prize, Lawson Prize and Dauntsey Scholarship) 1991

Degree: Inner Temple (Major scholarship)

Panels: Junior Counsel to the Crown (Provincial Panel) (2003 – 2007; 2007 – 2009)

Appointments & Memberships

Assistant Commissioner for Boundary Commission for England (2011-12)

Northern Circuit Medical Law Association, PIBA, Northern and North Eastern Circuits