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King's Bench Walk

Peter Burns KC



Call: 1993
Silk: 2019

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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Personal Injury, Clinical Negligence, Fraud, Insurance

Peter is a leading silk in catastrophic injury and large loss litigation, with particular expertise in brain injury, spinal cord injury and amputation claims. He is regularly instructed in claims of the utmost severity, with values well into eight figures, and predominantly acts for Defendants.

He has extensive experience of claims involving complex issues of causation, including intervening clinical negligence, pre-existing conditions and presentations that may be psychologically mediated. He is valued for his detailed preparation and analysis, and his ability to cut through to the key issues. Solicitors note his “excellent manner with clients, experts and lay witnesses and razor-sharp attention to detail.”

Peter also has a substantial practice in high-value fatal accident claims, particularly those involving care as a services dependency. Occupiers’ liability is an area of special interest.

He is highly experienced at joint settlement meetings and mediations, where his pragmatic, commercial approach is valued by clients on both sides. Solicitors describe him as “fantastic to work with”, providing “calm, sensible advice”, with drafting that is “exceptional”.

Notable Cases

Brain Injury

W v C (2026)

Injury to mother leading to very premature birth of her child. Severe cerebral palsy. Pleaded at £50m. Settled at £25.5m.

JLL v H (2026)

Devastating brain injury. Settled the £14.5m + £500k PPO with a partial reverse indemnity.

AQ1 (2026)

Infant brain injury sustained when hit by a car whilst being pushed in a buggy. Settled for £5.4m + £500k PPO.

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P v S (2026)

Child brain injury. Pleaded at £4.5m. Settled at £2.45m

A v K (2026)

Devastating brain injury. Pleaded at £20m. Settled for £12.25m+provisional damages for uncontrolled epilepsy.

T v D (2026)

Severe brain injury following a fall at work. Pleaded at £4m. Settled at £2.6m

K v E (2025)

Severe brain injury. Pleaded at £8m. Settled for £6.5m.

L v S (2025)

Serious brain injury but major credibility concerns. Settled for £530k.

C v W (2025)

Severe brain injury. Pleaded at £3.25m. Settled for £1.95m+PI/LA uncontrolled epilepsy.

CGT v A (2025)

Devastating brain injury when C slipped from a moving car. Substantial liability issues. Compromised on a 50% recovery basis at £6.75m.

AEW (2025)

C was resistant to accepting external care. Unusual valuation advanced, whereby Defendant insurers bought new neighbouring house, – now for C and rent for his parents, – in facilitate grandiose care provision. Settled at £5.5m

Spinal Injury

De G (2026)

C2 AIS A tetraplegia. Pleaded at £5.5m+£500k PPO. Settled at £2.45m+£250k PPO.

M v G (2026)

T5 AIS A spinal cord injury. Pleaded at £4.2m. Settled at £8m+provisional damages sytm.

VN v G (2026)

C3 AIS D spinal cord injury. Significant reinsertion issues. Pleaded at £5m. Settled at £3.4m

W v I (2025)

L3 AIS C paraplegia. Pleaded at £4.7m. Settled at £3m.

J v C (2025)

C3 AIS A tetraplegia. Very short life expectancy. Settled at £3m + £400,000 PPO with partial reverse indemnity

Amputation

B v C (2026)

Above knee amputation suffered when van ran by a bus in a bus station. Contributory negligence issues. Pleaded £0.8m | Settled £1.0m

E v P (2026)

Through knee amputation sustained in a road traffic accident. Pleaded at £1.2m. Settled at £1.0m

K v S (2026)

Below knee amputation. Pleaded at £0m. Settled for £1.0m

F v B (2026)

Through knee amputation. Pleaded at £0m. Settled for £1.0 m

Z v G (2025)

Below knee amputation. Serious liability concerns and doubt over the circumstances of the accident. Pleaded at £3m. Settled for £500k inclusive of costs.

La P v F (2025)

Through knee amputation. Pleaded at £1.3m. Settled for £0m.

C v J (2025)

Above knee amputation. Pleaded at £1.4m. Settled at £1.65m.

S v M (2025)

Above knee amputation. Pleaded at £0.8m. Settled at £1.0m

Other Complex Injuries

M v H (2026)

Injury sustained when a reformer pilates machine collapsed. Serious abdominal injuries alleged. Settled at £0m.

S v B (2025)

Serious lower limb orthopaedic injuries that may result in stamp amputation. Pleaded at £4m. Settled at £2.25m

S v J (2020)

Myotonic dystrophy type 2 following a road traffic accident; causation, acceleration and exacerbation in issue. Pleaded: £0.8m | Settled: £2m

Reported Cases

Parker v National Trust [2021] EWHC 1589

High Court trial. Occupier's liability. A limb from a tree fell on to the Claimant causing a spinal cord injury. Claim dismissed.

Cockerill v CKX [2018] EWHC 1155

High Court trial. Instructed by the Defendant. Occupier's liability; section 69 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. C fell down a step, which it was alleged was not adequately marked. Claim dismissed.

Maylin v Dacorum Sports Trust [2017] EWHC 378

High Court trial. Instructed by the Defendant. Occupier's liability. M fell from a climbing wall suffering a spinal injury.

Claim dismissed, applying the observations made in Poppleton.

Fox v Foundation Piling [2011] EWCA Civ 790
Court of Appeal. Instructed by the Defendant. Case concerning costs consequences of Part 36 offers.

Goundry v Hepworth [2005] EWCA Civ 1738
A child Claimant, who was crossing a road in a group, stopped in the centre of the road to let a vehicle pass before running out in front of the Defendant's vehicle, suffering catastrophic brain injury. Successfully represented the Defendant on appeal, the Claimant's claim being dismissed.

Drinkall v Whitwood [2004] 1 WLR 462
Instructed by the Defendant. An agreement made by insurers with a Claimant who was a protected party but which had not been approved was not binding and could be resiled from at will.

Tomlinson v Congleton [2004] AC 14
Instructed by the Defendant in the House of Lords in a landmark case concerning occupiers' liability arising from natural dangers. Guidance given as to the importance of free will and the social utility of activities when addressing breach of duty. (With Raymond Machell QC).

Jones v JLA [2002] EWCA Civ 1120
A dry cleaning machine exploded due to inappropriate oil being used. Scope of duty for the supplier of the oil. Claim dismissed on appeal. (With Mark Turner QC).

Oldham MBC v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions [2002] R(CR) 1-02
Tribunal of Commissioners. Right of compensator to appeal certificate of recoupable benefits on the ground that the recipient of the benefits was not entitled to receive them. (With Mark Turner QC).

Directories

"He has superb attention to detail, excellent advocate, great intellect and immediately grasps the issues, commercial awareness and great with clients." Legal 500, 2027

"Peter has an excellent manner with clients, experts and lay witnesses and razor-sharp attention to detail. He quickly distils the key issues and provides sound, commercially-focused advice." Chambers and Partners, 2027

"Peter is extremely intelligent and very effective at delivering results." Chambers and Partners, 2027

"Peter is exceptional, loved by insurers, exceptionally bright, very astute in his advice and commercially very sound." Chambers and Partners, 2027

"Peter is a very thorough and detailed KC who is able to cut through complex issues in a concise and understandable way." Chambers and Partners, 2027

"Peter is fantastic to work with. He provides calm, sensible advice and is really approachable. His drafting is exceptional and he is always on top of the detail of a case." Chambers and Partners, 2027

"Intelligent silk who can cut through complex issues in an incisive way." Legal 500, 2026

"He's a top level KC. Peter has an ability to break down even the most complex aspects so they are manageable, and he is very user-friendly." Chambers and Partners, 2026

"He is calm, sensible and measured and concentrates on the essential points." Chambers and Partners, 2026

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"He is excellent. Peter is mostly on the defence side. He is very pragmatic and finds solutions to problems and finds solutions for his clients." Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Peter really adds value with his approach and clients like his manner. He is very accessible and adds real value to every case." Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Peter is excellent on high-value matters. He gets the best result for the clients working multiple angles." Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Peter makes navigating the most complex cases seem easy. His pleadings are always impressive, and his advocacy is first rate, he is extremely intelligent, always on top of the detail and, whilst the epitome of calm, is able to read the room and deliver the submissions that really matter." Legal 500, 2025

"Peter provides a high level of client service and is popular with clients as a result." Chambers and Partners, 2025

"For high value brain and spinal cord cases Peter is one of the go-to silks. He's very easy to get on with, easy to talk to and calms the situation." Chambers and Partners, 2025

"Peter is one of the leading KCs in the region, if not the country. Exceptional talent. You can be absolutely reassured by his advice." Chambers and Partners, 2025

"He is highly innovative on his strategy, incredibly user-friendly and super easy to work with: this is a real bonus. The way that he marshals expert opinion is also supremely impressive." Chambers and Partners, 2025

"Peter is a first-rate personal injury silk whose depth of knowledge is unrivalled. Nothing is too complex and he has an incredible ability of being able to quickly sift through the detail to pick out the issues that really matter; a great strategic thinker who can always be relied upon to help navigate the most difficult of cases." Legal 500, 2024

Education

MA (Oxon) in Mathematics
Postmaster at Merton College, Oxford

Memberships

Personal Injury Bar Association
Gray's Inn