12
King's Bench Walk

Steven Snowden KC



Call: 1989
Silk: 2017

snowden@12kbw.co.uk

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Personal Injury, Industrial Disease, Sport, Clinical Negligence, Inquests, Insurance, Group Litigation, Public Inquiries

Steven Snowden KC is Head of Chambers at 12KBW. He is recognised as one of the leading barristers in the country in his main practice areas, being recommended as a leading KC for personal injuries work (Star Individual in the Chambers & Partners directory and Tier 1 in Legal 500) and he is also ranked in the directories for Industrial Disease and for Inquests/Inquiries.

Steven is an extremely experienced advocate who regularly deals with substantial and complex cases in Court and in settlement meetings. His main area of practice is high-value, complex or sensitive personal injury work, in which he acts for Claimants and for Defendants. His current caseload includes the liability and quantum aspects of head injuries, paraplegic and other serious spinal injury cases, amputations, psychiatric injuries and fatal claims.

In industrial disease work he deals with mesothelioma and other asbestos claims, and other occupational illness claims involving difficult issues of liability, causation or quantum.

His practice also encompasses associated clinical negligence and professional negligence work, insurance, sports, group litigation and public inquiries.

He was the elected Chair (2020 – 2022) of the Personal Injuries Bar Association, a member of the Bar Council (2020 – 2022), a Director of BMIF (2022 – 2024) and has for many years been one of the authors of the Judicial College Guidelines for the Assessment of General Damages in Personal Injury Cases.

Personal Injury

Steven is recognised as a leading silk in the Chambers & Partners Guide (Star Individual) and in the Legal 500 (Tier 1).

He maintains a claimant / defendant balance in his work, being instructed on behalf of all the major insurance companies but also by most major claimant solicitor firms. He works on his own or with a junior in the full range of personal injury work on liability and quantum, including:

- Maximum severity quantum claims (fatal accidents, brain, spinal, amputation and other catastrophic injuries) with issues including periodical payments, statutory funding, reverse indemnities, pension loss, accommodation claims, prosthetics, assistive technology, etc. He regularly handles cases worth £10m+.
- Road traffic accident claims involving technical expert reconstruction evidence.
- The full range of public liability and employers' liability claims, including occupiers' liability, Animals Act claims and those relating to workplace accidents, defective work equipment, etc. He often deals with issues of contribution among defendants and is familiar with substantial contracts and provisions within them for contractual indemnities.
- Sports injuries (currently acting for one of the defendants in the football concussion group litigation).

- Psychiatric injury claims including functional neurological disorders, functional cognitive disorders and somatoform disorders.
- Chronic or complex pain conditions including fibromyalgia and ME.
- Cases involving allegations of fraud, exaggeration or fundamental dishonesty.

Industrial Disease

Recognised as one of only 11 silks nationwide in the "spotlight table" for industrial disease in the Chambers & Partners Guide (Band 2).

In this area, Steven predominantly now acts for claimants in respect of asbestos-related illnesses. But he also works in technical disease cases of all sorts for claimants and defendants including carbon monoxide (anoxic brain injury) cases, stress claims and higher-value or group industrial disease litigation.

This work regularly involves complex issues of limitation, breach, causation and apportionment, and dealing with expert medical and engineering evidence. In mesothelioma claims he is very familiar with the process of taking evidence on commission and with the "show cause" procedure. He regularly deals with the quantum side of high-value fatal claims.

Clinical Negligence

Steven is experienced in clinical negligence cases and dealt extensively with expert evidence in the Infected Blood Public Inquiry. Examples of his work include:

- Liability and quantum aspects of catastrophic birth injury (cerebral palsy) claims.
- Acting for EL insurers pursuing contribution in a high-value personal injury claim for hospital's allegedly negligent treatment of claimant following eye injury at work, which led to loss of the eye.
- Failure to spot a lumbar disc injury shortly after a road traffic accident against a background of ankylosing spondylosis.

Public Inquiries

Recognised as a leading silk in the Legal 500 (Tier 4) for Inquests and Inquiries.

- Steven was from 2018 to 2025 leading counsel for the largest group of infected and affected individuals and families in the Infected Blood Public Inquiry, which was the largest public inquiry into deaths and injuries in English legal history. It investigated how, in what was described as the largest treatment disaster in the history of the NHS, haemophiliacs and others were in the 1970s and 1980s given blood factor products and blood transfusions which were contaminated with HIV, Hepatitis C and other viruses with devasting consequences. The wide terms of the Inquiry involved scrutiny of government decisions, the accountability of clinicians and civil servants, commercial exploitation and political cover-up, medical ethics, the involvement and influence of pharmaceutical companies and the inadequacy of current support schemes and Trusts. The Final Report was delivered, with considerable press coverage, in March 2024.
- Steven acted from 2023 to 2025 as leading counsel for the largest group of patients and families in the initial stages of the Essex Mental Health (Lampard) Inquiry, dealing with its conversion from non-statutory to statutory, Terms of Reference, Core Participant status, opening statements, commemorative evidence and the initial hearings of family evidence.

Sports

Steven is representing the Football Association of Wales in the professional footballers' group litigation claims (*Stiles and others v the FA and others*), arising from alleged repeated concussive and sub-concussive injuries when heading the ball in matches and training.

Other examples of his sports work include: successfully defending a catastrophic injury claim arising from a mountain

biking accident with allegedly negligent track design; acting in cases of equestrian sporting accidents; and representing a successful amateur boxer in a claim for the loss of the chance of a professional career following an accident.

Inquests

Recognised as a leading silk in the Legal 500 (Tier 4) for Inquests and Inquiries.

Steven has appeared at inquests arising from work accidents, RTAs and deaths in residential or care homes. He has undertaken jury inquests into a swimming pool death during a school swimming lesson, a driver's death arising from a roll-away HGV and deaths in care homes.

Insurance

Examples of Steven's insurance work include:

- Advising motor insurers on policy coverage issues and motor insurance hierarchy in connection with a multi car accident during a "car cruise".
- Considering and advising on issues under the Road Traffic Act.
- Considering the effect of possible findings of exaggeration or dishonesty on liability insurance cover and, in other cases, in the context of ATE insurance.
- Advising historic liability insurers in a living mesothelioma claim on issues over coverage, exclusions, estoppel and withdrawal of admissions.

Qualifications & Awards

- Boroughmuir High School, Edinburgh (comprehensive)
- BA (Law) University of Nottingham 1988
- Inns of Court School of Law 1989

Appointments & Memberships

- Head of Chambers at 12KBW since June 2024
- Elected Chair (2020-2022) of the Personal Injuries Bar Association (previously Secretary, then Vice-Chair)
- Member of the Bar Council and its General Management Committee (2020-2022)
- Director of Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund (BMIF) 2022 to 2024
- Member of the editorial board of the Judicial College Guidelines for the Assessment of General Damages in Personal Injury Cases (provided to all judges who hear PI cases)
- Member of PIBA, PNBA and LCLCBA.

Directories

Since taking silk in 2017 and for many years before that Steven has been listed as a leading barrister in personal injury work. He is ranked as Star Individual by C&P and in Tier 1 by L500. He is one of only 11 silks nationwide in the "spotlight table" for industrial disease in the C&P Guide. He is also ranked as a leading silk for Inquests and Inquiries by L500.

His most recent recommendations include:

Steven is a go-to barrister for catastrophic injury work. He has a calm and smooth approach, but is no pushover. (Chambers & Partners 2026)

Steven is fantastic on his feet and a class act. He is a standout silk. (Chambers & Partners 2026)

He is top of the tree when it comes to complex personal injury litigation. (Chambers & Partners 2026)

Steven is the leading silk in industrial disease and personal injury. He has fantastic advocacy skills and nothing fazes him in court. His attention to detail is second to none. (Chambers & Partners 2026)

Steven's ability to simplify the most complex work is a real asset. (Legal 500, 2026)

He is a strong, forthright advocate with a very persuasive manner. He works extremely hard. (Legal 500, 2026)

He is very effective, extremely thorough and detailed. (Chambers & Partners 2025)

He is a very polished advocate who has a good manner in court. (Chambers & Partners 2025)

He is respected by both claimants and defendants for his knowledge and tactical ability. (Chambers & Partners 2025)

He is outstanding on his feet and extremely calm and measured in his advice. (Chambers & Partners 2025)

Steven displays consummate ability as a Silk, particularly as an advocate. (Legal 500, 2025)

He is very pragmatic. Steven's real strength is he is very user-friendly. He is very easy to deal with while maintaining his clients' interests. (Chambers & Partners 2024)

He is very accomplished and knowledgeable, yet patient and kind. He can explain complex legal terms very simply … There's not much he doesn't know about quantum (Chambers & Partners 2024)

Steven is a leading light in the area; always on top of his game and a compelling advocate (Legal 500, 2024, personal injury and industrial disease)

Steven is an exceptional silk and a great negotiator … Steven's ability to cut to the key points and cross-examine is superb … He is brilliant on his feet … Steven is a very calm presence, he puts clients at ease (Chambers & Partners, 2023)

Steven is one of the most balanced barristers at the personal injury Bar. He works for both claimants and defendants which gives him a unique insight that benefits everyone (Legal 500, 2023, personal injury)

Publications

One of the authors of the 11th to 18th editions of the Judicial College Guidelines for the Assessment of General Damages in Personal Injury Cases (18th edition due to be published in early 2026).

Cases

Steven's reported cases include:

- **Johnstone v Fawcett's Garage (Newbury) Limited [2025] EWCA Civ 467** – Court of Appeal decision on causation / the application of "material increase in risk" in mesothelioma cases / use of statistics / adverse inferences.
- **Clarke v Poole [2025] EWCA Civ 447** – Court of Appeal decision on permission to appeal and on the approach to be taken under CPR 52.30 for an exceptional re-opening of a refusal of permission to appeal.
- **Clarke v Poole [2024] EWHC 1509 (KB)** – High Court decision on staying all aspects of future loss in a catastrophic personal injury claim when the claimant declined to agree to undergo testing to assist the defendant's experts to reach an opinion on the existence, nature and likely progression in any event of a pre-existing and underlying genetic condition.
- **Doughty v Kazmierski [2024] EWHC 1393 (KB)** – Acting for defendant motor insurers in a three-day High Court liability trial of a multi-vehicle pile-up in which the claimant (the motorcyclist at the rear of the line) was

found 25% contributorily negligent. Judicial observations about the relevant importance of expert and factual evidence and about the assessment of contributory negligence.

- **Steve Hill Ltd v Witham [2021] EWCA Civ 1312** – Acting for the Claimant in the Defendant's appeal against the judgment which Steven had obtained in the High Court. CA judgment clarifies important principles on the scope and nature of FAA dependency claims and the breadth of a judge's discretion and permissible approach to quantification of damages. Judgment below was upheld on legal principles but remitted in one respect to take account of a significant post-trial change of circumstances.
- **Kyriacou v Finch [2021] 1 WLUK 359** – Acting for defendant in a 3-day High Court RTA liability trial, part in-person and part remote. Complex accident reconstruction, CCTV reconstruction and toxicology expert evidence. Finding of 80% contributory negligence.
- **Witham v Steve Hill Ltd [2020] 2 WLUK 412, [2020] PIQR Q4** – Acting for a widow in quantum trial following her husband's death after asbestos exposure. Novel quantum arguments over the law on Fatal Accidents Act dependency, where the couple had long-term special needs foster children, succeeded and the claimant was awarded £900k+.
- **Evans v Secretary of State for Health [2017] EWHC 3572 (QB)** – Obtaining permission to begin group litigation for the haemophiliac claimants in the Infected Blood scandal.
- **Flanagan v Battie [2017] EWHC 3044 (QB)** – Disputed interim payment hearing in a catastrophic injury claim
- **Dowdall v William Kenyon & Others [2014] EWHC 2822 (QB)** – Preliminary issue trial in a living mesothelioma claim brought by a claimant who had many years before brought (and compromised provisional damages claims on a full and final basis) claims against a number of other employers who had exposed him to asbestos. Novel legal issues, with arguments of estoppel, abuse of process and limitation.
- **Everett v London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority** (Lawtel 7.11.14 and articles in JPIL 2015 C108 and PILJ 2015 (Feb) 10-11) – At costs hearings after trial advancing novel and detailed arguments about 'success' which achieved orders for issue-based costs, payment of a proportion of costs, and set-off against damages.
- **Kotula v EDF and others [2011] EWHC 1546 (QB) and [2010] EWHC B11 (QB)** – Acting initially for one, then for all three defendants in a paraplegic claim which had contested High Court hearings over liability, then over provisional damages and variable PPs, then over the terms of the final periodical payments order and the security of periodical payments when insurers were out of the jurisdiction and had policies with indemnity limits capped at fixed sums in Euros.
- **Dixie v British Polythene Industries [2010] EWCA Civ 1170, [2011] 1WLR 945** – Appearing at trial and in Court of Appeal on the issue of whether resurrection of a personal injury claim by second proceedings after the first had been struck out for failure to serve a claim form in time was permissible under the Limitation Act or was an abuse of process.
- **Gray v Thames Trains [2009] UKHL 491** – Appearing in the House of Lords (led) for the defendant in a claim by a survivor of the Ladbrooke Grove train crash for damages – issue of whether his claims for loss of earnings etc after committing manslaughter as a consequence of psychiatric injury sustained in the accident were barred as unlawful acts or under the doctrine of ex turpi causa.
- **Glaister v Appleby in Westmoreland Town Council [2009] EWCA Civ 1325, [2010] PIQR P6** – Acting at trial and in the Court of Appeal arguing over the existence of a duty of care alleged to have been owed to seriously injured bystander by a runaway horse at the Appleby Horse Fair.
- **Carver v BAA** [2008] EWCA Civ 412; [2009] 1 WLR 113; [2008] 3 All ER 911; [2008] PIQR P15 – Achieving an award of costs for a defendant despite its Part 36 offer being beaten by a small margin.
- **Hashtroodi v Hancock [2004] EWCA (Civ) 652** – Appearing at all stages from master's hearing through to Court of Appeal in a case concerning the proper test for extension of time for service of a claim form application made when claim form still valid but after limitation period had expired – whether "good reason" needed.
- **Fleet v Fleet [2009] EWHC 3166 (QB)** – Deceased mesothelioma claim – assessment of damages – proper approach to claims for loss of the unique care and attention of a spouse – Ogden 6 contingency discounts for a man older than 55.
- **Watson v Cakebread Robey Ltd [2009] EWHC 1695 (QB)** – Trial of a living mesothelioma claim – assessment of damages – recoverability of prospective funeral expenses – Ogden 6 contingency discounts for a man older than 55 – past and future loss of earnings when the claimant had not declared his business for tax, VAT, etc.

Recent examples of Steven's personal injury work, in addition to the reported cases above, include:

- Acting for one of the defendant Football Associations in the football concussion / heading group litigation. The case raises huge issues of duty, foreseeability, breach, medical diagnosis and medical causation.
- Acting for the Defendant in a case of a devastating brain injury to a young woman which left her lacking capacity in all domains except sexual consent, which led to the need for a considerable future care and support regime. Settlement of the claim was successfully negotiated on the basis of PPOs and a reverse indemnity for statutory funding, which was approved by Ritchie J.
- Acting for one of the defendants in a tetraplegic claim arising from a mountain biking accident with allegations of negligent downhill trail design. Primary liability, contributory negligence and very substantial quantum were all dealt with in a negotiated nuisance-value settlement after a tri-party mediation.
- Acting for a young man involved in an RTA with a lorry reversing on a country road as a result of which he suffered extremely serious brain injuries. The case had been rejected by previous solicitors and counsel but was re-focussed, strengthened and ultimately settled satisfactorily at a JSM.
- Recovering £14m at a JSM for a claimant with the combination of serious brain and orthopaedic injuries.
- Successfully acting for a defendant in a 2-week quantum trial (part remote and part in person) over the nature and extent of an alleged brain injury following an accident at work, which involved evidence from, and cross examination of, five disciplines of experts.
- A case of allegedly hugely-disabling functional neurological / somatic disorder following a minor RTA, successfully settled after strong approach taken at interlocutory hearings, then negotiation.
- Acting for a defendant in a claim following a hypoxic/ischaemic brain injury with complex issues over the interaction of the brain injury with functional cognitive disorder, the claimant's pre-existing vulnerability and psychiatric illnesses, conscious exaggeration and how the claimant would have been in any event.
- Advising a defendant employer in a claim where the claimant employee fell from the top deck of a car transporter suffering a catastrophic brain injury. Damages of £15m claimed. All aspects of liability and quantum in issue and no positive evidence of how the accident occurred, so it was necessary to reconstruct from inference and expert engineering evidence the probability of what happened and how and when the safety rail may have been weakened. Claim successfully settled.
- Acting for a young claimant suffering a devastating combination of brain and orthopaedic injuries in an RTA. Damages of £20m claimed. Successful in opposing the introduction of life expectancy evidence from statisticians.
- Representing the defendant in a £20m claim where the claimant required permanent residential care as a result of devastating brain injuries and behavioural disturbance. Issues over security of the insurer to make periodical payments. Settled at JSM and approved.

Recent examples of Steven's industrial disease work, in addition to the reported cases above, include:

- Acting for the victim, then the widow, of asbestos exposure when working for many years on the world's largest model railway in a bespoke / unique 1980s building at the Beaulieu Motor Museum.
- Acting for the widow and family of a former printing press engineer at the Mirror newspaper. Dealing with issues arising from the insolvency of the Mirror Group businesses and then a complex quantum claim arising from the deceased's various business interests and his family's dependency on him when he undertook the management of, and all practical work relating to, various business ventures based in the stables and land they owned.
- Regularly acting for claimants in mesothelioma cases where immunotherapy treatment is or may be provided, and negotiating terms of settlement which provide for payment of those ongoing treatment costs.
- Acting for claimants in asbestos claims where the defendant's historic liability insurer is insolvent and the FSCS / Capita are involved.