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King's Bench Walk

Tom Vonberg



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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Personal Injury, Product Liability, Group Litigation, Insurance, International & Travel

Tom is highly regarded for his technical ability in valuable and complex litigation and for his track record of achieving excellent results through negotiation and at trial.

He is a Band 1 barrister in Chambers UK. The latest editions of the directories highlight that in injury work he is ***"well known for his handling of high-value personal injury litigation"*** with ***"a great knowledge of brain injury claims"***.

He has longstanding experience of product liability and group claims where he is described as ***"adept at handling product liability cases", "able to simplify complex technical issues"*** and with ***"experience of appearing in multi-party litigation"***.

Tom is repeatedly recommended for his ability to ***"build an instant rapport with clients"***, his ***"commercial attitude and impeccable manner"***, and his willingness to collaborate with instructing solicitors. They describe him as ***hugely responsive and approachable"*** and in the court room as ***"a highly impressive advocate"*** and ***"very robust in court."***

Tom is the Author of the Chapter on the structuring of settlements and Court awards for Butterworths Personal Injury Litigation Service (LexisNexis UK).

Tom lives in North Yorkshire and London. He travels nationwide to represent his clients. Before coming to the independent bar, he was a barrister at the leading offshore law firm Walkers Global.

Personal Injury

Tom routinely appears in cases involving traumatic brain injury, spinal injury, polytrauma and in large dependency claims following fatal accidents. He has worked on several group claims in relation to product liability, defective medical devices and toxic torts as well in multi-party injury claims.

Tom appeared for the successful insurer in the first ever Court of Appeal decision on fundamental dishonesty; *Howlett and another v Davies and Ageas Insurance Ltd* [2017] EWCA Civ 1696

Some of the serious injury cases Tom has been instructed on include.

Traumatic Brain Injury

£1.4 million; settlement in an Occupiers' Liability claim for a Claimant employee.

£5 million; approved settlement following RTA and resultant severe diffuse axonal brain injury.

£1 million; acting in a claim for post-concussion syndrome. Settled at mediation in the Isle of Man.

£2.5 million; for the insurers of a nightclub after the Claimant was struck with a single punch by a doorman. Dispute surrounded the causation of catastrophic brain injury as between the punch and subsequent neurosurgery.

£3 million; for loss of armed forces career following widespread neurotrauma after a motorcycling accident.

£discontinuance; defending a claim pleaded at £1.2m for subdural haemorrhage requiring craniotomy. The Claimant alleged profound cognitive disability and an inability to leave home unattended. She discontinued her claim and agreed to repay all interim payments following surveillance.

£2 million; claim for a junior registrar doctor following frontal lobe injury.

Spinal Injury

£1.5 million; Crush injuries at work requiring percutaneous stabilisation.

£1.9 million; Spinal and urological injuries as a passenger in an RTA.

£1 million; Cauda equina syndrome following a disc prolapse at work.

£1.7 million; Failed diagnosis of cauda equina syndrome following disc prolapse during a professional sporting event.

£4 million, Construction site accident involving C4 incomplete tetra paresis with complete loss of motor and sensory neurology below C4.

£3 million; Pleaded value. Defending a high-speed collision on grounds of illegality due to the criminal purpose of the journey.

Fatality

£1.05 million. Claim by the young widow and child of a high earning steeplejack killed in a motorcycle accident.

£1 million. Claim by dependents, including four protected parties, in a High Court action following a fatal accident at work. The settlement included substantial Court of Protection costs.

£2 million; Claim by widow following husband's death in a workplace explosion.

£substantial settlement; following freak accident in Berwick-Upon Tweed when a rail station sign snapped in high winds and killed a family man.

£2 million; Man crushed by farm machinery after it fell from jacking points.

Contested life expectancy evidence; Tom appeared at the Defendant's contested application for life expectancy evidence made in light of the decision in Dodds v Arif [2019] EWHC 1512. The claim settled and was approved by the court for twice the sum offered by the Defendant at a failed joint settlement meeting one year earlier.

£1.7 million; claim by the surviving partner of a same sex marriage. Claim involved overseas dependency.

Claim by a mother following a gang related death charged as an attempted murder after a car drove into an e-bike.

Claim by the dependents of a man killed in a high-speed collision whilst he was the passenger of a driver and relative he knew to be drunk. A discount of 20% for contributory negligence was agreed in line with the authority of *Owens v Brimmell* [1977] QB 859 and the liability and quantum settlements were approved by the High Court.

Serious injuries

£1.4 million; CRPS secondary to right ankle pilot fracture.

£1.2 million; Rider and pillion passenger who each sustained leg fractures preventing them from carrying on in their teaching roles.

£1.2 million; Acting for the Claimant rider and the Claimant pillion passenger who each sustained leg fractures preventing them from carrying on in their teaching roles. Claim settled at JSM. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell LLP, Newcastle.

£1 million; severe lower limb crushing injuries to a pedestrian pinned against a brick wall by a reversing car.

Secondary victim claim; in respect of the death of her 10-year-old daughter killed by an uninsured driver.

£1.5 million; Amputation at work by the rotating arm of a waste silo.

£2 million; Amputation following motorcycle collision with 4X4.

Product Liability and Group Litigation

Chambers & Partners identifies that Tom *"has experience of appearing in multiparty litigation and he is also adept at handling product liability cases."*

Tom is comfortable working with liability and causation experts on the difficult technical issues which often arise in such claims.

Interesting recent cases include the following:

Manufacturing; Defence of the UK importer of glass mass produced at a factory in China which contained an inherent defect and resulted in large scale product failure.

Products; claims against *NutriBullet LLC* and the parent company based in the United States. Multi-party claims brought for liquid expanding vapor explosions – the circumstances of which mirror multiple suits in the US.

Medical devices; *Advanced Bionics* group claim against the Californian-based manufacturer of defective cochlear implants. Parallel litigation is underway in the US.

Products; *"vaping"* group claims against e-cigarette sellers following the explosion of Lithium-ion batteries.

Medical products; claims regarding methylisothiazolinone (MIT) chemicals contained in cosmetic products and the liability of producers under the Consumer Protection Act 1987.

Products; claims against Indiana Ophthalmics LLP. Cluster of Burkholderia cenocepia bacterial infections caused by AaCarb Carbomer Eye Gel.

Products; Acted for multiple claimants who were supplied a bodily piercing aftercare solution contaminated with pseudomonas aeruginosa. Claims have been issued against the supplier and producer under the Consumer Protection Act 1987.

Property damage and fatality claims; arising from defective products and construction issues. Tom was instructed by Defendant insurers following the Buncefield fire in 2005. Since then, he has acted for Claimants and Defendants in a range of cases. More recently, he has been instructed to act following a biosolid explosion at the Avonmouth water treatment works, Bristol which resulted in four fatalities.

Insurance

Tom undertakes work on points of discrete insurance law but also frequently where the underlying claims concern injury.

Chambers UK recognises his experience of insurance coverage disputes relating to personal injury claims.

He is also well used to handling cases where there are issues of dishonesty in relation to the policy.

Some examples of his work include the following:

Allocation of damages; Advising the Insurance Corporation of the Channel Islands as to the allocation of damages in a negligence claim against the local authority following child abuse. The claim was presented for £238 million and is thought to be the largest personal injury claim in British history. Issues concerned occurrence of damage, policy trigger wording and aggregation. News item here.

Non-disclosure; Appeal to the Financial Ombudsman Service against the insurer's refusal of indemnity under a household policy on grounds of non-disclosure. The underlying claim against the policyholder was as an occupier of premises where the claimant's injuries had led to an upper limb amputation.

Pre-action disclosure; Acting for Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance in a pre-action disclosure application for documents against a third-party insurer following avoidance of a policy of motor insurance in a catastrophic injury claim.

Business-interruption; Defending a claim for business interruption due to flooding. The claim was pleaded at more than £1m and settled, following interim hearings, for £20,000 costs inclusive.

Motor insurance; Action to join a party out of time at the compulsion of an Article 75 insurer pursuant to Clause 14.1 of the Uninsured Drivers' Agreement 1999.

Home insurance; Claim against home insurer following contamination by penicillium aspergillus spores after a sewage escape. Claim included a direct action for breaches of ICOBS (Insurance Conduct Business Sourcebook).

Sports; Claim by former premiership and international rugby player against his income protection provider regarding an indemnity dispute.

Sports; Acted for a former premiership rugby player against his mutual insurer regarding an indemnity dispute following the player's retirement on account of injury. The claim settled for the full value of the policy amounting to 8 years final salary earnings.

Sports; Acted for a former British Lions rugby player in his COVID-19 pay dispute with an Australian National Rugby League club over the terms of his coaching contract.

Directories

Tom Vonberg's pleading style is straightforward and tells it how it is. He is down to earth, good with clients, very responsive and very clear on summarising. – Chambers & Partners, 2026

He is a very measured, understated advocate. He is very intelligent, picks up on details and is a safe pair of hands. – Chambers & Partners, 2026 (Band 1)

Tom has really good client care skills and he was a dream to work with. He is both amenable and a good communicator. – Chambers & Partners, 2026 (Band 1)

Tom is a very astute barrister who is able to deal with cases with ongoing and complex injuries with ease, as well as cases with complex liability issues. – Legal 500, 2026

Chambers & Partners, 2025 – Personal Injury (Band 2) –*"He is commercially aware and makes pragmatic decisions."*

Chambers & Partners, 2025 – Personal Injury (Band 2) – *"He is accessible to his instructing solicitors and works collaboratively on finding solutions for clients."*

Chambers & Partners, 2025 – Personal Injury (Band 2) – *"He is an excellent advocate."*

Chambers & Partners, 2025 – Personal Injury (Band 2) – *"He is hugely responsive and approachable."*

Legal 500, 2025 – Personal Injury (Band 2) – *"A very organised junior, with a great knowledge of brain injury claims. He is an effective negotiator."*

Chambers & Partners, 2024 – Personal Injury (Band 2) – *"Tom is a respected barrister, well known for his handling of high-value personal injury claims and insurance coverage disputes. He has experience of appearing in multiparty litigation and has appeared unled before the Court of Appeal. He is also adept at handling product liability cases."*

Legal 500, 2024 – Personal Injury (Tier 2) – *"Tom is liked by the clients and highly regarded for his technical skill and reliable advice. His eye for detail really stands out, and he is very robust in court."*

Legal 500, 2023 – Personal Injury (Tier 2) – *"Tom is liked by the clients and highly regarded for his technical skill and reliable advice. His eye for detail really stands out, and he is very robust in Court."*

Chambers & Partners, 2022 – Personal Injury (Band 2) – *"Excellent on points of law and advice, strong with clients and very approachable and accessible."*

Legal 500, 2022 – Personal Injury (Tier 2) – *"Tom is calm under pressure with a logical approach to cases. He has a great client manner."*

Chambers & Partners, 2021 – Personal Injury (Band 2) – *"He is very detailed in his approach." "He has a no-nonsense and commercial attitude and an impeccable manner with clients. His organisational skills and meticulous attention to detail are very impressive."*

Legal 500, 2021 – Personal Injury (Tier 3) – *"Pragmatic with an excellent eye for detail."*

Chambers & Partners, 2020 – Personal Injury (Band 2) – *"A respected junior, well known for his handling of high-value personal injury claims and insurance coverage disputes. He has experience appearing in multiparty litigation and has appeared unled before the Court of Appeal. He is also adept at handling product liability cases."*

Legal 500, 2020 – Personal Injury (Tier 3) – *"Pragmatic with an excellent eye for detail."*

Chambers & Partners, 2019 – Personal Injury – *"A highly approachable and impressive advocate." "He's very bright and good on tactical issues. He always goes the extra mile, is very easy to deal with and is very good with clients." "He's professional and performs well even under pressure."*

Legal 500, 2019 – *"He has an excellent eye for a realistic prospect and is very good on his feet."*

Publications

Howlett v Davies – interview with Lexis Nexis following Tom's success before the Court of Appeal arguing fundamental dishonesty. Please follow this link to view the article. This article was first published on Lexis®PSL Personal Injury on 15 November 2017.

Appointments & Memberships

Personal Injuries Bar Association.

International Bar Association.

Professional Negligence Bar Association.

Qualifications & Awards

LLB, University of Durham.

Authorised by the Bar Standards Board to conduct litigation.