

Tom Vonberg

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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Personal Injury, Clinical Negligence, International & Travel, Insurance, Product Liability, Professional Negligence, Fraud

Tom is a highly regarded barrister in serious and catastrophic injury. He is also respected for his handling of matters arising from fatality, defective products, clinical and professional negligence and in damages claims involving multiple parties.

Tom is comfortable advising in and presenting the most challenging cases at Court and he has worked alongside some of the country's best-known lawyers in his areas of work.

Over the last twenty years of practice, Tom has been involved in many technical and high value cases both on his own account and with leading KC's.

His work has included claims on behalf of both adults and children for brain or spinal injury, as well as complex orthopedic injury and polytrauma. He is also involved in litigation against healthcare providers for clinical negligence as well as frequently acting against producers of defective products both in the UK and overseas.

Tom routinely deals with difficult liability and quantum issues, including those arising out of group litigation, and he is adept at working with expert witnesses.

Tom is known for his ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with professional and lay clients and for the strength of his written and courtroom advocacy on their behalf.

He travels all over the country to meet and act for his clients.

Tom is identified as a leading barrister in the legal directories Chambers and Partners and Legal 500. The 2024 editions report that:

"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."

“He is well known for his handling of high-value personal injury claims.”

“Tom is adept at handling product liability cases” and has “experience of appearing in multi-party litigation.”

Recent previous directory entries have described Tom as:

“A highly approachable and impressive advocate”, who is “calm under pressure with a logical approach to cases and a great client manner”, “Excellent on points of law and advice, strong with clients and very approachable and accessible”, “able to simplify complex technical issues”, “Very good on his feet”, “Bright and good on tactical issues”, “pragmatic with an excellent eye for detail”, “very good with clients”, “organised and meticulous in his attention to detail” and who has a “commercial attitude and impeccable manner with clients”.

Before coming to the independent bar, Tom was a barrister at the leading offshore law firm Walkers Global.

Personal Injury

Tom has significant experience of the full range of catastrophic and fatal injuries.

The 2024 edition of Chambers and Partners recognises him as *“a respected barrister, well known for his handling of high-value personal injury claims.”*

He routinely appears in cases involving traumatic brain injury, spinal injury and in large dependency claims following fatal accidents.

Tom has also worked on a number of multi-party actions in relation to product liability, air and road accidents and in respect of injury and illness abroad.

The following is a selection of past and current cases:

Traumatic Brain Injury

Occupiers' liability claim following a fall at hotel premises. The claim settled at JSM for £1.4m. Led by Rob Weir KC. Instructed by Foot Anstey LLP.

Acting for a Claimant who lacks capacity following severe brain injury including bilateral frontal lobe and diffuse axonal injury. Lifetime care required. Instructed by Switalskis, Doncaster.

Acting for two Claimant's following an RTA resulting lifechanging brain injury. Both Claimant's lack capacity. Instructed by Slater & Gordon, Manchester.

Acting for claimant who sustained head and bowel injuries when riding pillion on a motorcycle. Instructed by Stewarts Law LLP, Leeds.

Acted for a Claimant who sustained polytrauma including brain injury when her son-in-law deliberately drove into collision with her in the grounds of a hotel and in respect of which he was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell, Newcastle. [News item here](#).

Acting for the Claimant in the High Court following severe diffuse axonal brain injury and intraventricular, petechial and subarachnoid haemorrhage. Claim value in the region of £10m. With Andrew Axon. Instructed by Slater & Gordon, Manchester.

Acted in the Isle of Man for the claimant on a public access basis in a claim for post-concussion syndrome brought

against an employer. The claim settled for £775k at mediation.

Defending a claim for £1.25m following 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 including of her running and weightlifting at the gym. Instructed by Kennedys Law LLP.

Acted for a junior registrar doctor who sustained traumatic brain injury by way of frontal sub-arachnoid haemorrhage when she was struck by a car as a pedestrian. The claim was premised on the basis of loss of a chance for career progression (to Consultant level) and for provisional damages associated with the epilepsy and the dementia risk. Instructed by BMA Law Limited.

Spinal Injury

Acted for the claimant who sustained crush injuries at work requiring percutaneous stabilisation. Led by Steve Killalea KC. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell LLP, London.

Acted for a claimant who sustained spinal and urological injuries following an RTA. The claim settled at JSM for £1.9m.

Acted for the Claimant who, in a construction site accident, sustained C4 incomplete tetra paresis with complete loss of motor and sensory neurology below C4. Leading counsel was Henry Witcomb KC.

Acting for a claimant tyre fitter who sustained traumatic brain injury, brachial plexus injury and spinal fractures when an HGV fell from its jacking points. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell LLP.

Fatality

Recovered £1.05 million net of contributory negligence acting for the young widow of a motorcyclist killed when a car turned across his path. Tom appeared at the inquest and later JSM. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell LLP.

Currently instructed on behalf of the family of a deceased following the Avonmouth explosion at a Wessex Water treatment plant. Instructed by Unionline, Sheffield. News item [here](#).

Recovered £500,000 net of contributory negligence for the widow of a man run down when jogging and attempting to cross a slip road of the A1. Instructed by Unionline, Sheffield.

Acting for the family of a grandmother killed whilst she was a pedestrian when the Defendant mounted the kerb at speed. 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. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell. News item [here](#).

Acted for dependents, including four protected parties, in a High Court action following a fatal accident at work when the deceased saved the life of a colleague but tragically lost his own. The settlement included substantial Court of Protection costs. Instructed by Trade Union Legal LLP. News item [here](#).

Acted for a widow following her husband's death when the uninsured Defendant performed a U-turn in the road. Tom appeared at the inquest. News item [here](#).

Acted for the claimant and dependent family in a claim following the death of their eighteen-year-old son. The settlement included damages for the family's dependency on his future earnings in light of his unique contributions to the family prior to his death. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell LLP.

Acted for the family of man killed in a freak accident outside Berwick-upon-Tweed rail station when the station "header"

sign snapped and struck him, fatally, to his head. The coroner's inquest, at which Tom did not act, failed to call relevant witnesses and omitted material facts from the narrative verdict. The claim settled after preliminary hearings for 100% liability shared between the rail network and train operator. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell LLP.

Acting for 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. News item [here](#).

Acted for the widow of a man killed in a road traffic accident. Claim initially defended on grounds of automatism (an epileptic seizure) but settled on a full liability basis. News item [here](#).

Acted for the family of a young man killed following a tyre blow out on a coach trip. At the inquest, evidence was called from a US based expert into the process of tyre degradation. The mother of the deceased successfully campaigned for the introduction of legislation as to the legal age of tyres used on public service vehicles. Instructed by Thompsons, Birmingham. News item [here](#).

Serious injuries

Acted for the Claimant who recovered £1.4 million at JSM for CRPS secondary to right ankle pilot fracture. Instructed by Minster Law.

Acted for a female motorcyclist following open book pelvic fractures. The claim was settled at JSM. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell, Newcastle.

Acting for a woman who sustained severe burns requiring skin grafting, degloving injuries, complex ankle fractures and post-traumatic stress disorder. She was an innocent bystander at a campsite when an intoxicated teenager drove a vehicle whilst uninsured into collision with her. Instructed by Irwin Mitchell. News item [here](#).

Acting for a Claimant as a secondary victim in respect of the death of her 10-year-old daughter killed by an uninsured driver. News item [here](#).

Acted for a claimant who suffered amputation at work by the rotating arm of a waste silo. Led by Rob Weir KC. Instructed by Hugh James LLP.

Acting for an American off-shore drilling contractor in respect of a claim by a roustabout for serious injuries sustained during an accident on an oil rig. Instructed by CMC Cameron McKenna Nabarro.