

David Knifton KC

Call 1986



Clerks' Details

Neil Wright
0151 242 8814

Appointments

- Accredited Mediator (2006)
- Recorder - Crown and County Court (2002)

Memberships

- Northern Circuit
- Personal Injury Bar Association
- Professional Negligence Bar Association
- Northern Circuit Medico-Legal Association

Education

- LLB (Hons), University of Nottingham (Class II.i, 1985)
- Inner Temple, Duke of Edinburgh Entrance Scholarship

Overview

David specialises in high-value personal injury and clinical negligence cases, particularly those involving brain or spinal cord injuries, amputations, serious psychiatric injuries and historical sex abuse claims. He acts almost exclusively on behalf of claimants, where his abilities as an outstanding advocate are widely recognised. He is consistently recommended as a leading barrister in Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500.

As a junior, he was regularly instructed, with or without a leader, in claims of the utmost severity. His highest award in that capacity was £5.85m, and he consistently achieved settlements totalling around £20m per year.

Since taking silk, his catastrophic injury practice has continued to develop, and his enormous experience, meticulous preparation, excellent client skills and pragmatic approach are highly-valued by clients.

David generally only accepts new instructions in cases with a value in excess of £1m.

He has acted at a number of high-profile Inquests and public inquiries, including the North Wales (Waterhouse) Child Abuse Inquiry and the 'Blue 25' Inquest concerning the deaths of 5 UK servicemen shot by a rogue Afghan policeman.

Recommendations

“David is very technically astute and knowledgeable. He has been very helpful in steering the medical evidence.”

“He grapples with complex cases with apparent ease and confidence.”

“David is very talented and highly impressive for his attention to detail.”

“He is thorough and articulate. He has excellent interpersonal skills and a great ability to put clients at ease.”

“David has many years of experience. He is effortlessly knowledgeable in personal injury matters of the utmost severity and complexity.”

“His skills in serious personal injury cases are second to none. He is my go-to silk for the most complex matters.”

Chambers and Partners 2024

“David is extremely bright and his ability to grasp complex matters is second-to-none. He is the best there is, he has excellent communication skills, and he is able to express himself very clearly.”

“David is an excellent barrister who is always prepared for a fight. He is a great advocate who has the confidence to cross-examine and also to challenge defendants on difficult points, and he is the first port of call for a difficult case.”

The Legal 500 2024

“David’s preparation skills and creativity are really fantastic.”

“He is an exceptional tactician and strategist.”

“He meticulously analyses cases.”

“David is outstanding.”

“He identifies the key issues in any case with pinpoint accuracy.”

“David is incisive when dealing with evidence.”

“He is very organised and responsive with a friendly client manner.”

“He is brilliantly persuasive.”

Chambers and Partners 2023

“Clients trust in him completely and he will fight tooth and nail to get the best result possible. He has a forensic, yet down-to-earth, relaxed approach; he meticulously analyses cases and explores all avenues to ensure excellent results are achieved. He has an abundance of experience with clinical negligence catastrophic injury claims. He works tirelessly and is always available to provide prompt, clear, effective advice. His attention to detail is second to none. A thorough silk with unrivalled determination and skill.”

“David’s grasp of the primary material and evidence is beyond impressive. He is able to drill down into the granular detail of every important point, because he has absorbed and analysed the relevant medical records, witness evidence and expert reports. He is able to use that attention to detail to steer conferences with experts and clients through the important areas with efficiency and skill. His lay clients trust and respect him. They feel reassured by his ability to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of their case and he is able to talk them through the litigation (including complex points and difficult concepts) in a way which they are able to easily understand and engage with. David has secured some excellent results for his clients.”

The Legal 500 2023

“He is technically excellent, and his attention to detail is second to none.” “He is extremely effective and very energetic. He is clear with clients, caring and very responsive.”

“Forensic, accessible, innovative and great with clients.” “He is able to distil complex clinical negligence cases down to the key issues, and his advice is well prepared, well structured and well delivered.”

Chambers and Partners 2022

“Talented silk who specialises in acting for claimants who have suffered catastrophic brain and spinal injuries and amputations, notably those with complicating factors such as disputed liability and contributory negligence. He is skilled at preparing schedules of loss.” “His attention to detail and client care skills are excellent.” “He is very organised and communicative.” “He conducts his cases with skill and has excellent judgement.”

“An excellent strategist who is completely trusted by clients and will fight tooth and nail to get the best result possible. He is bright, sharp and has excellent attention to detail.” “He is very approachable and good at explaining difficult issues to clients.”

Chambers and Partners 2021

“He’s a good negotiator and is very thorough.” “He’s always well prepared and has very good attention to detail.”

Chambers and Partners 2020

“He is able to deal with huge amounts of detail and quantum elements very quickly. He is organised in his approach and in conferences he will provide a detailed plan, which clients appreciate.”

Chambers and Partners 2019

“Technically excellent. He takes a pragmatic approach to cases and is very approachable.” “He has a keen eye for detail and gets excellent results. Clients like him.”

Chambers and Partners 2018

“Just supreme in his technical ability, though his best asset is the way he can take something that appears indecipherable and break it down into manageable terms, not only for the solicitor but for the client.” “He takes no nonsense and gets the job done. Meticulous in his preparation and strong in negotiation, he is a calm but strong and reassuring presence.”

Chambers and Partners 2017

“A highly-experienced senior junior who acts primarily for claimants on cases involving serious injuries, with notable expertise in military claims... He is meticulous in his approach. He’s calm and patient with clients, with a reassuring and confident demeanour. He is efficient, accessible and approachable. He has excellent technical skills together with a superb manner with clients.”

Chambers and Partners 2016

“Focuses in particular on claimant work, with notable skills in dealing with matters involving brain, spinal injury and military claims. Interviewees particularly praise his excellent client skills.” “He is fiercely intelligent whilst also being tactically brilliant.” “He is very practical, and has a very nice manner with clients and opponents.”

Chambers and Partners 2015

“An excellent communicator and fantastic technician, with a lovely rapport with the most seriously injured clients.”

“Chris has skills well beyond his call and manages to build meaningful and valued relationships with those who instruct him as well as his lay clients. He is uber-efficient and distils even the most complex cases to the crucial, case deciding core issues.”

The Legal 500 2022

“David is calm, patient with families who have seen the worst things happen to them, and a determined and able advocate. He will fight difficult cases and is able to quickly determine the right approach on any case. He is not shy of taking on the most difficult cases and successfully navigates them.”

The Legal 500 2021

“A true claimant specialist who is determined to fight for clients.”

The Legal 500 2020

“He argues his points with a steely charm.”

The Legal 500 2018/19

“Thorough, quick and tactically astute.”

The Legal 500 2017

Beyond the Bar

David is married with 4 children, 3 of whom have autism spectrum disorders. He was responsible for setting up a pro bono alliance between Exchange Chambers and the National Autistic Society to provide advice and representation in the field of special educational needs. This alliance has provided invaluable assistance to parents struggling to secure appropriate education to meet their children's needs. Away from work, he is a keen musician, singing in a choir and occasionally playing guitar and keyboards in a band. He enjoys cycling, and was a member of the Chambers' team which raised nearly £30,000 following a trans-Pennine charity ride.