

David Knifton QC

Call 1986



Clerks' Details

 Rachel Williams
 0151 242 8840

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

Personal Injury

Overview

David practises exclusively in high-value personal injury and clinical negligence cases, primarily on behalf of claimants. He is recommended as a leader in those fields by both Chambers & Partners and The Legal 500. He will generally only accept new instructions in cases with a value in excess of £1m, and typically achieves settlements each year totalling over £20m.

His personal injury practice covers the following areas:

- brain injuries
- spinal cord injuries
- claims for loss of a limb
- other catastrophic injuries

Described by the Head of PI at a major UK firm as “*a terrific advocate with a great natural bedside manner*”, and by a partner at another leading firm as “*simply excellent*”, solicitors consistently praise his superb advocacy, thorough preparation, attention to detail, approachable and accommodating nature, clear and well-reasoned advice, excellent negotiation skills, and great empathy with lay clients, whom he involves in every part of the litigation process. Chambers & Partners describes him as “*technically excellent...He has a keen eye for detail and gets excellent results*”, whilst The Legal 500 describes him as “*thorough, quick and tactically astute.*”

He has a particular interest in difficult liability issues, such as failures to wear seatbelts or cycle helmets, claims brought by injured servicemen against the MOD, claims arising from aircraft accidents, and claims arising from historic sexual and physical abuse.

He has extensive experience of drafting complex Schedules of Loss in high-value claims, and invariably produces a spreadsheet indicating settlement parameters for any joint settlement meeting, providing the client with clear advice to enable them to make difficult decisions. His experience and proven track record in negotiations consistently leads to outstanding results.

Recommendations

“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

“He argues his points with a steely charm.”

The Legal 500 2018/19

“Thorough, quick and tactically astute.”

The Legal 500 2017

“He has a fantastic eye for detail, and is always calm and rational under pressure.”

The Legal 500 2016

“Takes a thorough and forensic approach to quantum.”

The Legal 500 2015

Cases

O'Malley v Powertherm (2009): A claim for catastrophic brain injury and resultant quadriplegia sustained by a 28 year-old man who fell from scaffolding at work, which was settled at a global value in excess of £8.2m

Borowski v Sands & MIB (2009): Believed to be the highest ever award against the MIB, this was a catastrophic brain and spinal injury claim, brought by a passenger who was not wearing a seatbelt, which settled (after a 20% deduction for contributory negligence) at a global value of £8.125m

Pearson v Mohammed (2015): A tetraplegia claim for a taxi passenger, who was not wearing a seatbelt, where a settlement (after a preliminary trial resulting in a 25% deduction for contributory negligence) with a global value of £7.31m was negotiated

M v MOD (2018): A claim for severe brain injuries suffered by a Navy pilot who fell from the deck of an aircraft carrier, in which David negotiated a total award valued at over £7.1m

MW v Hussain (2017): Catastrophic brain injury suffered by a blind member of the traveller community deliberately run down by a car, in which David's collaborative approach led to a settlement worth over £7.16m, including provision for a farmhouse with space for caravans

Carver v Bingham (2014): Damages totalling £6.85m recovered for severe brain injury sustained by a pedestrian in a hit and run accident

Black v Barrett (2012): A claim for T5 paraplegia and brain damage sustained by a cyclist, which settled for £6m despite an ongoing dispute as to contributory negligence

Re S (2012): Criminal injuries compensation claim for catastrophic brain injury sustained by an 11 week-old baby thrown across the room by his birth mother. Acting without a QC, David secured an award of compensation of £5.85m at the Tribunal hearing

Fargher v Webb (2014): Claim for catastrophic brain injury sustained in the Isle of Man by a car passenger whilst not wearing a seat-belt, where a 100% liability judgment was nevertheless obtained, leading to settlement for £5.5m.

Hazlewood v Control Risks (2013): Damages of £5m recovered for incomplete tetraplegia suffered by a close protection officer working in Iraq

Dexter v McCambridge Group (2011): A claim for catastrophic brain injury sustained in a road traffic accident, which was complicated by difficulties in establishing a suitable support regime for a client with severe cognitive difficulties, but was settled for £4m

A v Wood (2018): Settlement of £3.9m was negotiated on behalf of a motorcyclist who

suffered severe brain and brachial plexus injuries in a collision with an oncoming car, despite evidence that he had failed correctly to fasten his helmet

R (a protected party) v Vieira (2016): Damages of over £3.8m were recovered for a woman who sustained a brain injury and above-knee amputation in a devastating car accident

TP v Watson (2016): Catastrophic brain injury claim, where David's Schedule of Loss (described by the judge at approval as "fabulous") enabled rapid re-calculation of settlement parameters when the discount rate review was announced on the eve of the JSM, leading to negotiation of a £3.5m settlement

B v MOD (2015): A claim for severe brain injury sustained by an Army recruit struck by a pace stick thrown by his drill sergeant, where a settlement worth over £3.28m was approved

Stagnell v Jenkinson (2013): Damages of £3.25m were recovered in respect of a very severe brain injury suffered by a vehicle passenger who was not wearing a seatbelt

Craddock v Hardman (2014): Catastrophic spinal cord injury claim on behalf of 5 year old boy injured in road traffic accident, where settlement of £3m was achieved

Syme v Traditional Stone & Slate Supplies (2012): A settlement of £3m was negotiated for a young man rendered paraplegic when struck by the forks of a fork lift truck whilst at work in a stoneyard

S v E-On (2018): David negotiated a settlement of £2.75m on behalf of a young woman who underwent a below-elbow amputation as a result of suffering an electrocution at work

Williams v Manor Bakeries (2014): A claim for catastrophic brain injury suffered by a fitter whilst dismantling a steel column at work, where a settlement of over £2.5m was negotiated, ensuring that his future care needs would be met if his marriage failed

Speed v MOD (2016): A settlement worth over £2.35m was negotiated for an Army captain who suffered severe brain and orthopaedic injuries in a mountaineering exercise

Talbot v Durham CC (2013): An award of £2.3m, including a future prosthetics claim of around £1.5m, was negotiated for a young man who suffered a traumatic amputation of his left arm in a wood-chipping machine

Bond v Ascroft (2012): A claim for an above-knee amputation suffered by a female motorcycle pillion passenger in a collision. The settlement of £2.1m included provision for suitable equipment and support to enable her to continue her many outdoor sporting activities

Browne v Ward & Burke (2017): Damages of £1.85m were recovered on behalf of a

construction worker who suffered bilateral below-knee amputations when his legs were crushed by steel piles, despite a firm denial of liability

Hawkin v Mid Yorks Hospitals (2018): Above-knee amputation, due to negligent delay in diagnosing critical limb ischaemia, resulting in a settlement of £1.7m in a case where the Claimant's life expectancy was reduced

Re B (2013): Acting without a QC, David secured an award of over £1.7m from the CICA for a girl who suffered brain damage when shaken as a baby

A v Patel (2018): Damages of £1.5m on a provisional basis obtained on behalf of a young man who was struck by a car which mounted the pavement, resulting in severe orthopaedic injuries to both legs, requiring extensive surgical reconstruction

Haines v Stobart (2018): Damages of £1.4m negotiated on behalf of an HGV driver who suffered a functional neurological symptom disorder, leading to significant disability, following a minor back injury when the step of his cab collapsed

Wickenden v Mehmood (2017): A below-knee amputation to a motorcyclist, in which David negotiated a settlement of £1.4m

Moran v Buffaload (2017): Damages of £1.4m negotiated on behalf of a coach driver who suffered incomplete tetraplegia in a road traffic accident

Barlow v Josseph (2010): A claim for severe orthopaedic injuries suffered by a promising management trainee in the John Lewis partnership, leading to the loss of her chosen career and the need for single-storey accommodation, in which David negotiated a settlement of £1.04m against a highly-experienced QC seeking over £1.7m

Le Marinel v Henry (2013): A difficult liability case involving a young girl struck by a car whilst attempting to cross the road, in which a settlement of over £1m was negotiated on the morning of the trial

Bradshaw v Bessant (2011): An unusual claim involving spinal injuries leading to chronic somatisation disorder in a young woman, causing her to be wheelchair-dependent, with significant bowel and bladder problems. Settled at a JSM for £1m

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.