

Stephen Connolly

Call 2003



Clerks' Details

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Memberships

- Lincoln's Inn
- Northern Circuit Commercial Bar Association
- Northern Chancery Bar Association
- Chancery Bar Association

Education

- University of Buckingham, LLB
- St Thomas More High School, Preston

Beyond the Bar

Outside of work Stephen plays the trumpet, cycles and watches Preston North End.

Commercial CV

Overview

Stephen is an exceptional commercial barrister. He is highly respected and specialises in high value and complex disputes. He has over 20 years' experience in the field of commercial litigation and is recommended as a leading practitioner by both Chambers and Partners and The Legal 500. His practice comprises:

- Shareholder and company disputes
- Partnership disputes
- Commercial contract disputes
- Commercial fraud
- Professional negligence – solicitors, surveyors and accountants
- Product liability
- General commercial litigation
- Arbitration, mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution

Stephen is renowned for his hard working and no nonsense approach, for the pragmatic and strategic advice that he provides and for his ability to relate to his clients and to communicate his advice to them in an unstuffy, clear and practical manner.

Stephen's work encompasses advisory work, interim applications (very often urgent), trials and ADR. He appears regularly in the Chancery Division, the Mercantile Court and the Court of Appeal.

Recommendations

“Stephen is resilient and user-friendly and makes himself available. His work is at a very high quality.”

Chambers and Partners 2024

“Stephen is sure on his legal arguments and prepares to develop them carefully but with force in his skeleton arguments and before a judge. He is an advocate to have in your corner for a case heading for trial, and he is not distracted by new matters as they unfold and remains calm under pressure.”

The Legal 500 2024

“His communication is excellent. He is really thorough and hard-working. He is a formidable opponent. Stephen is a force to be reckoned with.”

“Stephen is pragmatic in his advice and very clear in his plan of operation.”

“Stephen is incredibly bright and incredibly commercial.”

Chambers and Partners 2023

“Stephen quickly gets to the nub of issues and is able to focus on the points that really matter. He gives clear views and delivers his messages to the client in a very user-friendly way. He also thinks outside the box and is prepared to consider all potential options at any stage.”

The Legal 500 2023

“His attention to detail is phenomenal and he’s also someone who quickly builds a very good rapport with clients. He’s very unassuming, extremely bright and very accessible despite being a senior barrister.”

Chambers and Partners 2022

“Stephen’s work, both written and spoken, is impressive. His submissions are well expressed and persuasive and he is very good on his feet.”

The Legal 500 2022

“An outstanding advocate with an extremely sharp analytical brain.” “He has a calm, measured approach and gets to the commercial side of the issues.” “His advocacy is top-draw and he has a solicitor background so he has the ability to empathise with clients and understands their challenges.”

Chambers and Partners 2021

“An outstanding advocate with an extremely sharp analytical brain. He’s succinct in his advice and doesn’t sit on the fence.”

“He’s practical, commercial and an incredible trial advocate. His attention to detail is

second to none, which ultimately is what makes him such effective counsel.”

Chambers and Partners 2020

“An exceptional advocate – he really gets into the nitty gritty of the papers and leaves no stone unturned. His cross examination skills are as good as I have seen. His client handling skills are superb.”

The Legal 500 2021

“A good commercial barrister.”

The Legal 500 2020

“He is an outstanding advocate with an extremely sharp analytical brain. He is succinct in his advice and does not sit on the fence.”

“His attention to detail, ability to talk the client’s language and his robustness are first-rate. He is able to cut through ancillary issues and get to the heart of the matter, something which is key in delivering an excellent result for the client.”

Chambers and Partners 2019

“A tough negotiator with a calm manner.”

The Legal 500 2018/19

“I’m always impressed by his ability to grasp technical matters and he is very client-friendly as well.”

“He is a very able and pugnacious litigator.”

Chambers and Partners 2018

“A first-rate legal mind.”

The Legal 500 2017

“He’s quite tenacious, very bold and technically very good.”

“Very good in court and has excellent paperwork.”

Chambers and Partners 2017

“An excellent advocate, who is particularly effective in injunctions and interim relief applications.”

The Legal 500 2016

“He’s brilliant on his feet. He’s a really good advocate. He fights the client’s corner – a force to be reckoned with.”

Chambers and Partners 2016

“Barrister with renowned advocacy skills who practices in commercial and property disputes.”

Chambers and Partners 2016

“His practice includes shareholder and company disputes, partnership conflicts and professional negligence.”

The Legal 500 2015

“Specialises in high-value and complex disputes.”

The Legal 500 2014

Cases

Stephen’s significant cases in the past few years have included the following:

Clements v Frisby [2023] EWHC 320 (Ch)

MO v CB (2016) – Acted for the Petitioner in s.994 Petition against fellow 50% shareholder in and the directors of successful trading company arising from the wrongful diversion of business to parallel company. The Respondents conceded liability on the eve of trial and consented to a purchase order at an undiscounted value, with the trial on quantum to follow later in the year.

Raymond v Young (2014 first instance 2015 Court of Appeal) – Acted for the Claimants in a 16-day nuisance and harassment trial. Stephen provided advice and representation at all stages and was successful in obtaining and, in the Court of Appeal, maintaining a claim for ‘stigma’ damages for damage caused to the value of the Claimants’ property by the nuisance and harassment of the Defendants.

VC v J (2015) – Acted for the Claimant in proceedings against its former managing director for misuse of confidential information and breach of covenant claiming losses in excess of £1 million. Proceedings began with Anton Pillar order against the former MD. Followed by series of substantial contested interim applications with former MD bringing unfair prejudice petition in response. Ultimately settled ahead of trial at mediation.

Hy-Fly v Salisbury (2015) – Acted for the Claimant in equitable fraud proceedings seeking to recover substantial sums that had been paid to the Defendant as deposit monies for the purchase and construction of commercial wind turbines which never materialised. Following trial and on the eve of hand down of judgment favourable terms of settlement agreed.

Arthur Doodson (Brokers) Limited v Whitham and Waring (2013) – Acted for the Claimant in obtaining urgent interim and subsequent final injunctive and springboard

relief against former senior employees outside their restrictive covenant period arising from their misappropriation and misuse of confidential client information belonging to the Claimant.

C&S v G4S (2013) – Trial of a preliminary issue as to the entitlement of an assignee of the benefit of Keyholding security contracts to rely upon limitation of liability clauses in those contracts as a defence to claims of negligence against them.

West Midlands Travel v Aviva Insurance (2012 first instance 2013 Court of Appeal) – Acted for Aviva Insurance in a test case as to the correct measure of damage to be applied for the loss of use of a public service vehicle and in establishing that the longstanding case of Birmingham Corporation v Sowsbery no longer represented good law. Whilst the claim was modest in isolation, its ramifications are wide ranging and will save the insurance industry upwards of £50 million a year.

LG v CTD (2013) – Acted for the Claimant in a contested and highly sensitive multi-million pound partnership dispute. Stephen provided advice and representation at all stages from the beginning of the dispute down to settlement the day immediately before trial due to have commenced.

A v B (2013) – Acted for the Claimant in a multi-million pound claim arising from the unlawful termination of A's motor franchise by B. Settled at mediation in December 2013 on confidential terms.

X v Y (2013) – Acted for X in four separate but related actions arising from her employment and subsequent dismissal as the managing director of Y. The claims included shareholder, director and employee claims and were valued at in excess of £20 million. Settled at mediation in November 2013 on confidential terms.