Paul Kirtley

Call 1982

Clerks

Ian Spencer
0113 203 1971

Ellie Sibley
0113 203 1970

Appointments

- Recorder (1999) – Civil, Crime and Private Family Work
- Accredited Civil and Commercial Mediator (2004)
- Chairman of the Bar Conference (2006)
- Accredited Workplace Mediator (2014)
- North Eastern Circuit Representative on the General Council of the Bar (10 years)
- Former Vice Chair Public Affairs Committee and Remuneration Committee of the Bar Council
- Senior Accredited Advocacy Trainer (North Eastern Circuit)

Memberships

- The Professional Mediators' Association
- Personal Injury Bar Association
- Employment Law Bar Association
- Professional Negligence Bar Association
- Employment Lawyers Association
- Industrial Law Society

Education

Employment

Paul is considered one of the leading civil practitioners on the North Eastern circuit.

He is particularly well regarded for his employment law practice and has appeared in a number of high profile cases. Renowned for his personable manner, Paul delivers practical, solutions-based advice on the full range of employment matters and provides clients with expert legal and strategic advice.

As an experienced advocate, Paul regularly appears on behalf of clients in the Employment Tribunal, the Employment Appeal Tribunal and the Civil Courts.

He advises in Trade Union, Police Federation and similar matters, both on internal union arrangements, internal membership disputes and wider Union/ Employer issues relating to terms and conditions and the interrelation with regulatory obligations.

He has substantial experience in the public sector dealing with the police, local authority, NHS and PC trusts with reference particularly to discrimination, public interest disclosure, data protection, freedom of information and disciplinary issues.

Paul can provide bespoke in house training on all aspects of employment law and has lectured at seminars and training events arranged by the Employment Lawyers Association and Industrial Law Society.

As an accredited mediator with over fifteen years' experience, Paul has successfully developed the use of mediation and ADR in appropriate employment cases. Renowned for his personable and down to earth manner, he has the ability to communicate effectively with both the legal and lay parties. He has specific experience of workplace mediation – seeking to resolve the dispute before the onset of legal proceedings.

- MA (Cantab). Downing College, Cambridge
- Called to the Bar July 1982: Middle Temple
- Harmsworth Scholar

Employment Cases

Paul's expertise covers all areas of employment law, including:

Breach of contract

Whistleblowing

Business reorganisation

Bonus/Share option disputes

Contracts of employment

Data protection

Discrimination

Equal pay

Executive terminations

Redundancy

Restrictive covenants

Statutory employment rights

Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE)

Trade union law

Unfair and wrongful dismissal

Working time regulations

Recommendations

Legal Directories

"Paul is so good with clients, really personable, takes the time to really engage with the client and they really warm to him, which is not a quality all barristers. A really effective counsel."

"Paul is an exceptional advocate with very strong people skills. On a recent case for a respondent, his handling of the claimant and the tribunal panel were first-class."

"Paul Kirtley is an extremely agile mind and puts clients immediately at ease, even in the most complex and difficult cases."

"He is one of the barristers to go to for complex matters. His practice in wide ranging, and he has really good depth."

"Paul is a very strong advocate. in terms of written work he is excellent, drafting is clear and persuasive. He has a really good legal mind and great courtroom flare."
Chambers and Partners 2026

"Paul has an amazing intellect. He makes cross-examination seem effortless. A firm favourite for complex and high-value employment cases."

"Paul is decisive, with the ability to seek a practical resolution that is best for the client. He puts clients at ease."

"Paul is a very strong negotiator. He is wise and pragmatic, as well as being very good and perceptive with clients, who respect and value him."
The Legal 500, 2026

"Paul is very smart and approachable."

"Paul is a master strategist and a first-class advocate. He is the go-to counsel for complex employment matters."

"Paul's reputation precedes him."

"Paul is excellent and a very thorough advocate."

"Paul is a very strong barrister. He is good with clients and commercially aware."

"Paul is extremely attentive and professional towards meeting the needs of our clients."

"He is highly intelligent, has meticulous attention to detail and leaves no stone unturned."

"He is a very experienced barrister who handles difficult cases with skill and care. He has a very nice way with clients, which means he can address sensitive issues very well."

"Paul is fantastic with clients and opponents. He is a pleasure to work with."
Chambers and Partners 2025

"He is an excellent negotiator with an eye to the practicalities and the human aspect of situations. A calm advocate."

"A master tactician and an advocate without compare."

"A junior with a confident approach and meticulous attention to detail. He quickly builds rapport with clients."
The Legal 500, 2025

"He has a great eye for detail."

"Paul is vastly experienced but also very charming."
Chambers and Partners 2024

"Paul is very approachable. He brings a very collegiate approach to cases and is able to get a fantastic result in even the most challenging of situations."

"Paul demonstrates an immediate grasp of the issues in a case. He combines strategic and tactical awareness with great client care."

"A natural advocate, Paul is the barrister you want on your side."
The Legal 500, 2024

"Paul has a very good knowledge and appreciation for this work. His medical knowledge is vast and he has the ability to interpret complex medical expert opinion."

Chambers and Partners 2023

"Paul is pragmatic and clients love him. He presents well and is good in negotiation."

Chambers and Partners 2023

'A smooth operator and a shrewd negotiator with an open and straightforward client-friendly manner.'
The Legal 500, 2023

"He's very approachable, analytical and excellent with clients. He's very personable and works collaboratively. The quality of his advice on quantum is very good and his grasp of medical issues and ability to discuss the medical issues in conference with experts is excellent."
"A very astute and client-friendly barrister."

"His grasp of detail is very good, he's very passionate and he is empathetic to clients as well."

"A consummate advocate with a real presence."
Chambers and Partners 2022

Paul regularly appears as a leader in his field in the list of Expert Advisors, Chambers and Partners Guide and The Legal 500 publications:

"Really experienced, and confident and calm in his approach. You really feel in safe hands when you're working with him." "He is an excellent and persuasive advocate. His client skills are unparalleled on the Northern Circuit."

"An experienced junior – he's very knowledgeable, pragmatic and good with vulnerable clients."

"He is very good with clients and is very reassuring." "Experienced and very polished."
Chambers and Partners 2021

"He really knows his stuff." "He is excellent and very experienced."

"Paul's client care skills are second to none; he has a gentle, professional manner and gets good results."
Chambers and Partners 2020

"It is a joy to watch him cross-examine. He is very experienced and really knows his stuff." "Paul gets to the key issues very quickly and is an excellent and persuasive advocate."

"He's very good at dissecting a case and looking at the pros and cons on liability very quickly. He is also very good with clients." "Very knowledgeable and excellent with clients."
Chambers and Partners 2019

"He is bright and meticulous, with a great client manner and just the right amount of gravitas." "He is an exceptionally clever man, incredibly engaging and generally very highly regarded by everyone."

"His service level is excellent and he turns papers around quickly. He is approachable and has a very good manner with clients."
Chambers and Partners 2018

"He's a very well-thought of and experienced practitioner who has a very good manner with clients." "He has a thoughtful approach to complex claims and excellent client-care skills."
Chambers and Partners 2017

"He's very good in writing, amiable and good with clients."
Chambers and Partners 2016

"A superb barrister. He is extremely friendly and builds great rapport with the client."

"Paul is a highly-skilled negotiator who pays careful attention to detail in complex and high value cases. His passion, drive and enthusiasm shines through."

"A senior junior who operates at the level of a silk."
The Legal 500, 2022

"Very experienced junior. Also sits as a recorder and therefore has a wealth of experience. Very knowledgeable, pragmatic, caring and compassionate with vulnerable clients. Lots of brain injury and amputation injury experience. His eye for detail and considered manner make him perfect for high value serious injury work."

"In my opinion he is an unrivalled advocate and a master of cross-examination. One of, if not the best employment barristers on the circuit. Paul combines a mastery of subject knowledge with a keen sense of commercial awareness and a focus on practical outcomes. He is a favourite of every client and the barrister I would want representing me If ever I needed one."

"Extremely empathetic with clients, kind and insightful. Excellent analysis of complex medical and legal issues. Collaborative and just generally a really strong team player."
The Legal 500, 2021

"He has an excellent way with clients."

"Bright and well-prepared."

"Vastly knowledgeable and experienced with workplace claims."

"Delivers his advice in a straightforward and concise manner."
The Legal 500, 2020

"Very experienced in representing clients before the Employment Appeal Tribunal."

"An insightful, knowledgeable and meticulous barrister."

"Well known for acting for police forces in regulatory matters."

"An excellent mediator".
The Legal 500, 2018/19

"He builds good rapport with clients"

"A superb analyst."

"He has an insightful eye for the heart of a case."
The Legal 500, 2017

"A superb advocate with excellent client skills."

"He provides superb attention to detail and great empathy."

"He frequently leaves witnesses lost for words in cross-examination."
The Legal 500, 2016

"His no-nonsense attitude makes him a firm favourite with clients."
The Legal 500, 2015

"He manages experts well."

"Paul is a skilled and committed barrister who shows great empathy towards clients.

"He leaves no stone unturned and gives the Claimant confidence.

"His attention to detail is first rate and his turnaround time is always impressive.

"A natural communicator, Paul is outstanding in settlement meetings.

"The complete barrister, Paul is streets ahead of a number of silks."
The Legal 500, 2014

Client Testimonials

"Paul Kirtley (barrister) was simply outstanding." (Full Trustpilot review here)

"Paul is excellent on his feet – clear and concise. He also have a great manner with solicitors and clients alike, being approachable and user-friendly."
Emma Gaudern, Managing Director, EMG Solicitors

"Paul gave a sterling talk which was very informative."
Endorsement following a talk for The Industrial Law Society

"He is proactive in his approach to cases, meticulous in his attention to detail and excellent in conference. All round, an impressive advocate."
Andrew Armstrong, Armstrong Luty Solicitors

"Paul's greatest strength is his empathy for clients. He is also technically excellent, helpful and approachable."
Helen Shakespeare, Thompsons Solicitors

"Paul's breadth of knowledge, eye for detail and meticulous preparation make him an outstanding advocate."

"Above all, he is genuinely interested in the case and really does care about the client."
Harry Eyre, Solicitor to the National Union of Mineworkers

"Paul is the ultimate professional."

"He quickly gains the confidence and respect of clients who appreciate his unwavering commitment to their case."

"Friendly, approachable and committed to excellence in every case he takes on, Paul's excellent analytical skills and attention to detail set him apart."
Samantha Clark, Irwin Mitchell

Beyond the Bar

Paul is a classic car enthusiast, holds an International Rally Drivers Licence and both a Heavy Goods Vehicle licence and PSV licence. He also enjoys hill walking and skiing, notwithstanding his knee replacement operation! He is the former Chair of a national children's charity 'Dreams Come True'.