

Chris Barnes KC

Call 2000 | Silk 2022



Clerks

 Rachel Williams
 0151 242 8840

Appointments

Junior Counsel to the Crown (2011)

Clinical Negligence

Chris is head of the Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence department and a Deputy Head of Chambers. He represented the claimant in the recent case of *EXN v Alder Hey Children's Hospital* [2021] EWHC 2989 (QB) (recovery of damages with a capitalised value of £27,300,000 for a child following the Defendant's failure to identify, and treat, the herpes simplex virus). He recently recovered damages of £2,750,000 including the costs of commercial surrogacy for a claimant rendered infertile following inappropriate bowel surgery. He has significant experience of clinical negligence claims in a range of settings, including:

OBSTETRIC NEGLIGENCE

Hypoxic injuries at birth and the failure to adequately monitor foetal distress and CTG tracing;

Shoulder dystocia and resulting hypoxia;

The failure to offer, and carry out, C-section where it was appropriate and/or mandated by the claimant's condition (e.g. in the case of a morbidly obese claimant where chronic and longstanding infection arose from the resulting emergency, botched, C-section);

Failure to adequately advise a claimant on the likely effects on foetal health of her anti-epileptic medication;

Wrongful birth following failed sterilisation;

Wrongful birth following the negligent failure to advise on or carry out Down's syndrome testing.

GENERAL HOSPITAL CARE

Failure to recognise, and diagnose, spinal cord compression resulting in incomplete tetraplegia (settlement £3,800,000).

Pressure sores, some with very serious consequences (including death);

Failure to identify, adequately investigate and treat an aggressive encephalitis (with fatal consequences);

Negligent anaesthetic provision during surgery resulting in patient awareness (with very serious psychological consequences);

Failure to provide for, and treat, a claimant's diabetic condition whilst on the orthopaedic ward resulting in hypoglycaemic attack, significant brain damage and, ultimately, death;
Nursing failures including the failure to complete management plans and assessments relating to falls, pressure sores and other risks;

Failure to adequately plan a claimant's discharge from hospital, with inadequate OT assessment resulting in the provision of inappropriate mobility aids, a fall, catastrophic injury, and death;

Negligent anaesthetic provision resulting in stroke and death;

Negligent management of a claimant's vascular condition resulting in multiple amputations of both legs (initially below-knee and subsequently above-knee);

Surgical negligence with the perforation of the bowel and failure to identify, and treat, the resulting problems;

Surgical negligence resulting in excessive removal of the bowel and, subsequently, Short Bowel Syndrome;

Surgical negligence in which forceps were left within the surgical cavity;

Failure (by an ENT team) to identify and appropriately treat a developing cancer of the larynx.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER

Failure to identify a developing sarcoma and to refer the Claimant on for further treatment;

Failure to identify other cancers (with a corresponding failure to refer on for further investigation);

Negligent prescription of inappropriate medication;

Negligent reporting of hospital testing (confusion as to the date of testing and, in one case, as to the identity of the claimant being tested).

ORTHOPAEDIC NEGLIGENCE

Failure to adequately treat a fractured scaphoid resulting, eventually, in wrist fusion;

Negligent knee replacement surgery with the misplacement of the prosthesis and the failure, thereafter, to recognise and correct the defect;

K-wiring of bilateral fractures of the humerus where internal fixation was required, resulting in an almost complete loss of use of the upper limbs;

Failure to identify interspinous widening following a soft tissue injury to the neck resulting, eventually, in cervical surgery.

MILITARY PERSONNEL

Claims relating to inappropriate or negligent management of rehabilitation regimes;

Claims relating to the inappropriate treatment of post-tour PTSD;

Claims arising from and relating to treatment abroad, both in MOD facilities and civilian ones;

Failure to identify an emerging Cauda Equina syndrome (concurrently, by both military and civilian medical personnel).

Recommendations

“Christopher is the very definition of the ideal barrister. He is approachable, makes himself available and has the ability to simplify the most complex matter, which is an essential skill when trying to negotiate a highly complex clinical negligence claim.”

“Christopher is the perfect barrister in many respects. He is both approachable and knowledgeable, he has the ability to break down and simplify the most complex of matters, he has a great manner with claimants, their families and professionals alike, and he is an exceptional advocate.”

The Legal 500 2025

“The best KC I have instructed.”

“Chris is a genius. He’s insightful and with a warmth and an exquisite sense of the right values and words at exactly the right time.”

“Chris is my ideal barrister. He is easy to contact, readily available and makes the most complex appear simple. He’s also effective in court, clear and concise.”

“He is fast becoming a leading PI silk. He’s forensic, with a fearsome knowledge of the key issues.”

“My go-to silk. He puts clients at ease and provides straightforward advice on complex issues. He identifies the future core issues in the case early and advises practically and proportionately.”

Chambers and Partners 2025

“Christopher is extremely knowledgeable in relation to military and catastrophic claims generally. He is very calm under pressure and is decisive, which is reassuring to mutual clients as well as the instructing solicitor.”

The Legal 500 2024

“Christopher is a leader in his field. He is extremely knowledgeable, tactically astute and a fantastic negotiator.”

“Christopher has the full set of skills honed over many years of practice.”

“Christopher has a great ability to identify the key issues early and provides practical and proportionate advice.”

Chambers and Partners 2024

“Chris is an outstanding barrister and someone that instructing solicitors trust completely with the most serious clinical negligence cases. He has a great ability to simplify the most complex issue which is exactly what you want when dealing with clinical negligence claims. He is thorough, analytical and responsive. He is a strong advocate and an excellent and safe pair of hands in this particular area. He is the complete barrister.”

“Christopher is extremely knowledgeable in relation to military and catastrophic claims generally. He is very calm under pressure and is decisive, which is reassuring to mutual clients as well as the instructing solicitor.”

The Legal 500 2023

“Christopher is very pragmatic in negotiation.”

Chambers and Partners 2023

“He is excellent in court and with clients.” “He sees the correct way forward in any situation and is very good in settlement negotiations.”

Chambers and Partners 2022

“His client care skills are excellent and he has very good attention to detail.” “He is very sharp, incisive and able to get to the nub of the problem very quickly. He always provides very sound and practical advice.” “He is a highly skilled, organised, technical and forward-thinking barrister.”

Chambers and Partners 2021

“Thorough, highly intelligent, gets fantastic results and clients love him.”

Chambers and Partners 2020

“He is an exceptional advocate in court and is a safe pair of hands on serious injury work.”

“He explains things very well to clients, gets a good grip on matters and understands the issues quite quickly. He works very efficiently and turns paperwork around incredibly quickly.”

Chambers and Partners 2019

“A good, sensible advocate who does not take bad points.” “One of the best military injury barristers.”

Chambers and Partners 2018

“Christopher is an outstanding operator.”

The Legal 500 2022

“Chris is extremely switched on, organised, confident, prepared and alert of all the issues in any case. He is an excellent negotiator who is able to secure maximum compensation for those he represents.”

The Legal 500, 2021

“Has an excellent manner with vulnerable clients. “

The Legal 500, 2020

“He is excellent on both tactics and strategy.”

The Legal 500, 2018/19

“Very hardworking and good with clients.”

The Legal 500, 2017

“Extremely professional and impressive.”

The Legal 500, 2016

“He has a particular interest in military injuries, including combat-related deafness and non-freezing cold injuries.”

The Legal 500, 2015

Beyond the Bar

Away from work, Chris enjoys fell running and was a member of the British Ski Mountaineering Team at the 2013 World Championships and 2014 World Cup.

Chris won the 2017 British Mountain Marathon Championships.