

GUILDHALL CHAMBERS IN 2025 IS A BUSY, THRIVING AND SUCCESSFUL PLACE IN EVERY RESPECT

We are investing in our buildings to ensure that we have well-equipped, modern and architect-designed conference, seminar and hospitality space which works well for our clients as well as for us in this new age of hybrid working. Early 2026 will see us established in our revamped building, welcoming clients there to enjoy the benefits of all the modern facilities currently being installed.

We've increased our staffing and now have a high ratio of practice managers to barristers because we recognise that our client service levels are vitally important. We want to be very responsive to our professional clients as pressures on them increase.

In the last three years we have taken eleven pupils, we have five pupils in Chambers at the moment and another five due to begin in the Autumn – our plan to see Chambers grow by recruiting high-quality pupils and giving them supportive, thorough and rigorous training in Chambers. We very much have an eye to the long-term future in Chambers. We have also recruited a number of senior tenants both from London and more locally. Each of them has found in Guildhall a home where we foster and encourage excellence but also recognise that friendship and professional care for one another is important. We acknowledge that work in the legal sector these days is unrelenting and so aim to maintain an atmosphere in Chambers which allows for fun and nurture too.

Our engagement in 10,000 Black Interns has been so successful that one of the pupils joining us in the Autumn first met us through that programme last summer. We have a busy programme of mini-pupillages with funding available for those from non-traditional Bar backgrounds who would not otherwise be able to come and find out what we are all about.

Our members work across the country, from the Supreme Court to the District Bench – both civil and crime – and we enjoy the advantages of having a London base with some members working more from our London premises than our Chambers in Bristol, but we are very firmly rooted in our city here and proud to work alongside our local solicitors.

CRIME



With five silks and 23 juniors in our Crime team, Guildhall has one of the most prominent criminal defence and prosecution practices in the country. Dealing with everything from murder, sex crimes, slavery, terrorism and serious fraud to road-traffic cases, it is also one of the busiest; the team has taken on four barristers in the past year and this year's crime pupil is now practising. In the last couple of years, Bristol has, sadly, become rather synonymous with youth knife crime, of which one of the most notable cases was the high-profile double murder of teenagers Mason Rist and Max Dixon in a mistaken-identity machete attack; ten barristers from Guildhall have been involved in this case.

SPORTS

Members of our Sports team have a longstanding involvement with England Rugby. With the British & Irish Lions tour to Australia now underway, two of its members are also instructed as Counsel to the Lions. Later this year, we are also Counsel to the Wallaroos for the Rugby World Cup.



EMPLOYMENT AND DISCRIMINATION



Our Employment and Discrimination team has experienced significant developments over the past twelve months. After five years of incredible leadership, Julian Allsop handed the baton to Allan Roberts from 1 April. The team has grown to fifteen barristers, each specialising in this area, with three new members joining recently. Our Annual Bristol Seminar, held in March 2025 at Mansion House, returned to its pre-Covid attendance levels, with over 100 people attending in person. Given the importance of its work, the team remains committed to promoting access to justice. While many in the team actively support pro bono initiatives, we are especially proud of Lottie Mallin-Martin receiving Advocate's prestigious John Collins Pro Bono Award for her outstanding contributions.

Our investigations team has also made remarkable strides. Seven barristers in the Employment Team accept instructions in this area, regularly undertaking internal investigation processes for employer clients across various sectors, including healthcare, education, legal, and finance. We will soon be announcing an Investigations seminar programme (expected Spring 2026) to complement our existing conference schedule.



COMMERCIAL



Our Commercial Team works for clients across the country, appearing in cases of the upmost complexity in the Circuit Commercial Court, Commercial Court and Court of Appeal. We practise across the full range of commercial litigation, but with a particular emphasis on high-value contractual claims, shareholder disputes, and financial-services regulation and litigation.

Just a few of our recent highlights have been:

- URE Energy Ltd v Notting Hill Genesis – a seven-day Commercial Court trial in a claim for a £4M termination payment;
- Henderson & Jones Ltd v Salica Investments Ltd and three others – a nine-day Commercial Court trial in a £2M+ breach of confidence claim stemming from the development of a software package;
- and Kau Media Group Ltd v Hart – the defence of a claim to enforce post-termination restrictions against an advertising account manager.

BB and Others v Al Khayyat, Al Khay and Doha Bank Limited is a fascinating compensation claim by Syrian victims of terrorist acts by the Al Nusra Front against the alleged ANF funders. Alleged acts of witness intimidation, bribery and attempts by Qatar to breach the claimants' anonymity orders caused the substantive proceedings to be discontinued; we will see if the Court of Appeal takes a different view of the High Court's rejection of the application for Doha Bank to be held liable for the claimants' costs.

This summer, Hugh Sims KC, Jay Jagasia and Lottie Mallin-Martin head to the Supreme Court in KVB Consultants Ltd v Jacob Hopkins McKenzie Ltd, which will become the leading case on statutory responsibility under s.39 Financial Services and Markets Act. This will be Hugh's and Jay's second recent foray to the Supreme Court in a major financial-services case, after they appeared in the leading modern case on the Quincecare duty, Philipp v Barclays Bank UK plc.

Each year the Commercial Team hosts a conference in Bristol for around 100 delegates from across the country. This year's will be on 15 October, and will feature masterclass sessions on Financial Services, Professional Negligence and Company litigation.



INSOLVENCY

Guildhall's Insolvency Team has a national reputation for expertise in complex corporate and personal insolvency matters and recently hosted its annual seminar (its twentieth anniversary), attended by over 100 insolvency professionals.

Recent significant cases include:

- Re Ethos Solutions Ltd - the Court of Appeal clarified that aggressive tax planning does not automatically breach section 423 of the Insolvency Act;
- Marko Ventures Ltd v London Antiaging Clinic Ltd - the court granted an administration order in the face of an abuse of process challenge by the minority shareholder;
- Re Park Regis Birmingham LLP - concerning procedural defects in insolvency proceedings;
- and Kireeva v Clement Glory Ltd - the court refused permission to a Russian trustee in bankruptcy to bring proceedings against a BVI company.



PROPERTY, TRUSTS & ESTATES



Our Property, Trusts & Estates team specialises in contentious and advisory chancery work, with members involved in significant and reported cases in senior courts and specialist tribunals.

Recent highlights are:

- Winter v Winter in the High Court and Court of Appeal (Hugh Sims KC leading Michael Selway) - a high-profile proprietary estoppel dispute and one of the leading authorities on the principles used to assess detriment;
- and Friends of Becky Addy Wood v Bradford-on-Avon Town Council in the High Court (Jay Jagasia) - another high-profile dispute involving contractual and esoteric proprietary claims in relation to ancient woodland.

Other notable cases include Debra Packer v Lynn Packer (Ollie Murrell) – which will challenge involving undue influence and testamentary capacity; and Khilji v Mehers & Ors (Nicholas Evans) – a multi-party trust case involving breach of fiduciary duty and equitable remedies.





➤➤➤ Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence



Members of our team are instructed in landmark and significant cases in clinical negligence, personal injury and related inquest and regulatory work.

Lewis-Ranwell v G4S Health Services UK Ltd and Others is a claim arising out of alleged failures to provide adequate mental-health services in police custody as a result of which the claimant was released whilst floridly psychotic and killed three innocent men. He was acquitted of murder and manslaughter on grounds of insanity and brought a claim against the police and health authorities. Three of the defendants sought to strike the claim out on the basis of the illegality defence. The claimant, represented by Selena Plowden KC, defeated the application in the High Court and Court of Appeal. The Supreme Court has granted the defendants leave to appeal. The issue, concerning the limits of the illegality defence and specifically whether it applies to an insanity case, has raised very significant legal and academic interest. The Supreme Court hearing takes place this month.

Robert Sowersby (who sits locally as an assistant coroner) is instructed by the Royal College of Nursing in a number of the 'Ian Paterson inquests', which examine the deaths of more than 60 patients of a former consultant breast surgeon convicted of 20 counts of wounding and unlawful wounding and handed a 20-year custodial sentence in 2017.

In a substantial personal injury case, Anthony Reddiford was recently successful in a case which provides important guidance on the boundaries of a claimant's service obligations under CPR 6.9 in all civil cases. In *Aston v Tew and Alwyn Insurance Company*, the Court considered what, if any, steps a claimant needs to take to identify if an address that they hold for a defendant as his "last known residence" remains valid before relying on it for the purposes of serving a Claim Form. The Judge agreed with Anthony's argument that the claimant was entitled to rely on the address known to her; it is the claimant's actual state of knowledge, not constructive knowledge derived from hypothetical diligence, which governs effective service.



➤➤➤ Court of Protection

The Guildhall Court of Protection team is a rapidly growing and well-regarded team, taking on increasingly complex cases across the South of England and Wales, with work closely linked to that of our Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence and Inheritance, Wills, Probate & Estate practices. We act for persons lacking capacity by their litigation friends, family members, deputies and public bodies. Recent work the team has undertaken includes forced-marriage cases, issues of capacity to engage in sexual relations, challenging the validity of lasting powers of attorney, challenging serious restrictions imposed on the liberty of individuals, and care and residence disputes.



And finally ... Merch!

A description of Guildhall Chambers would no longer be complete without mention of our socks! Now in their third year, the Guildhall Socks undoubtedly remain the à la mode article for clients amongst all our merchandise. "Do you still have Guildhall Socks?" is a question heard increasingly at our own and even at external conferences.