Christopher Melton KC



Called: 1982
Silk Date: 2001

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Practice Overview

Chambers & Partners
Personal Injury (Star Individual)
Christopher Melton KC is a standout silk who excels at representing claimants in high-value catastrophic injury and fatal accident cases, particularly those involving minors. He does a significant amount of appellate advocacy and has appeared in the Supreme Court numerous times.

"Christopher is very pragmatic and intellectually extremely strong and hugely experienced in this area of litigation." Chambers & Partners [2027]
"Christopher is warm and friendly to solicitors and clients alike, with a clear analysis of complex issues and effortless on his feet, even when faced with the most complex of issues." Chambers & Partners [2027]
"Christopher is able to asses case strengths and weaknesses clearly and to develop a clear and coherent strategy to progress them." Chambers & Partners [2027]
"Christopher is excellent with client care, building rapport with clients and taking complex information and delivering it in a way they understand." Chambers & Partners [2027]
"Christopher is prepared to fight for the right outcome and is clear in his vision for the case. He is good with clients of all walks of life, and is a smart, tenacious advocate." Chambers & Partners [2027]

Clinical Negligence (Band 1)
Christopher Melton KC regularly handles major cerebral palsy cases alongside wrongful birth and spinal injury claims, as well as claims which address complex mental health issues. He has been instructed in a number of multiparty claims, including those arising out of sexual abuse by medical practitioners and abuse in care homes. He has earned an impressive reputation for his experience in high-profile inquiries or cases that test novel points of law before the Supreme Court.

"Christopher is excellent with clients, very approachable, incredibly knowledgeable anbd great tactically, especially when it comes to negotiating." [Chambers & Partners, 2027]
"Christopher has excellent teactical skills and is great on his feet." Chambers & Partners [2027]
"He is incredibly good with clients and creates a good relationship with them; his personal skills are outstanding." Chambers & Partners [2027]
"Christopher has excellent tactical skills and is great on his feet." Chambers & Partners [2027]

Strengths:

“He is a brilliant counsel with a wealth of knowledge and experience.”
“He has a huge wealth of experience and is an excellent negotiator with great empathy for clients.”
“He is excellent at getting the best out of medical experts and is a strong negotiator with a focus on getting the right outcome for the client.”
“He is approachable and collaborative in his working and is fantastic with clients, putting them at ease and giving them confidence.”
“Christopher builds a great rapport with clients, whether in person or remote. He is approachable, extremely knowledgeable and he cuts through the legal issues whilst explaining his thought process.”
“He is unflappable in court and his advocacy is impressive, both written and oral. Christopher is my preferred silk.”

"Christopher is a formidable legal representative, with excellent client care and attention to detail. His input is always of incredible value. He is analytical and a superb advocate.”
“Christopher guides you to the best possible route to success and is not afraid to take cases to trial. He has an almost photographic memory for detail and is well prepared.”
“His depth of knowledge and experience in child brain injury work makes him the go-to man for that work. Christopher has a natural ability and excellent communication skills.”

Legal 500

Personal Injury (1)
"Always available, approachable, and totally pragmatic to meet clients' needs. Chris is hugely personable, always mindful of the bigger picture, and has a wealth of experience to rely upon." [Legal 500, 2027]

"He is hugely experienced in maximum severity claims. He cuts to the absolute core of a case, ignoring the noise around irrelevant issues, and gets the absolute best outcome for claimants."

"He is superb on his feet. An absolute star performer."

Clinical Negligence (1)

"Christopher is at the top of his game. He is also lovely, personable, and good with all manner of clients, but firm with opponents when required." [Legal 500, 2027]

"A brilliant counsel. He has a huge wealth of experience and is an excellent negotiator, with great empathy for clients. Willing to take on and fight difficult cases."

PRACTICE AREAS

Personal Injury
Clinical Negligence
Industrial Disease
Professional Liability
Multi-party Litigation
Inquiries and Inquests
Criminal Law

Chris Melton KC was born and educated in Manchester which is where his Chambers has its main base. His clients live all over England and Wales and he spends much of his time on the road visiting them.

He took silk in 2001 when he was 19 years' call. He then became Senior Counsel to the Shipman Inquiry for four years until normal service resumed in 2005. Since that time he has acted exclusively for very seriously injured Claimants and for bereaved families.

Chris has appeared on four occasions before the Supreme Court and in a large number of Court of Appeal and litigated first instance cases.

He is a member of PIBA and APIL and is on the APIL discount rate working party.

Chris is an advanced advocacy trainer for the Northern Circuit and for the renowned Keble College International Advocacy Course

His Supreme Court cases are:
Armes v Nottinghamshire CC where the Appellant is seeking to establish that a LA owes a non-delegable duty or is vicariously liable in respect of sexual abuse perpetrated by a foster parent.

Woodland v Essex CC where the Claimant successfully established that a LA owed a non-delegable duty to a child brain damaged by the negligence of a non-employee swimming teacher.

Dunhill v Burgin where the Claimant successfully established that the settlement of a claim was invalid where the Claimant lacked litigation capacity, even where the Defendant had no knowledge of her incapacity.

Sienkiewiz v Greif where the Claimant successfully established liability on the basis that her mother's mesothelioma was caused by negligence, even though the risk of contracting the disease was only slightly increased by the relevant exposure.

His CA cases include:
Sabir v Osei-Kwabena, where the Claimant successfully resisted the Defendant's appeal against a 25% contributory negligence finding against a pedestrian;

McCracken v Bell, where a brain injured pillion passenger on off road trials bike being unlawfully ridden on cycle path successfully resisted an appeal by the third party driver;

Waterhouse v Welsh, where the CA rejected a surgeon's appeal against findings of negligence

Nunnerley v Warrington HA, where the CA refused the Defendant's application for permission to appeal in a twin wrongful birth case, holding that damages were recoverable beyond the child's age of 21.

The reported first instance cases include**:**
Paul Tate - five day High Court trial for brain injured Claimant where the main issue was the cause of his behavioural problems. The court determined that it was his brain injury, not his background that was the main cause and awarded £6m, allowing £165,000 for continuing care costs

Chelsea Armstrong - a three day liability trial in the High Court where liability was established in favour of a teenage girl who ran onto a Newcastle dual carriageway in darkness and was knocked down by the Defendant's vehicle, travelling at 30mph.

Tom Buckett - a difficult and ultimately unsuccessful five day trial run on behalf of a teenage boy who fell through a school skylight suffering a devastating brain injury.

Russell v Partington - two High Court trials where the Claimant obtained a substantial interim payment where there was no admission of liability and then went on to obtain a 100% liability finding for the accident that caused his high level complete tetraplegia

Sedge v Prime - two High Court trials where the Claimant won a liability trial and went on to obtain a substantial interim payment to fund a best interests hearing and community living where the Defendant had argued for institutional care.

Marcel Beasley - two High Court trials where the Claimant motor cyclist recovered 100% damages and went on to obtain a substantial interim payment to fund community living where the Defendant had again argued for institutional care.

More generally other cases relating to**:**
the recovery of substantial future care costs for the heroin addict passenger in road accident; numerous cases involving the MIB and the interpretation of its agreements; the successful claim by a 2 year old child who crept unnoticed from a vehicle and walked into the path of another; the claim by a 14 year old girl rendered paraplegic for whom an interim payment was obtained and a suitable property purchased within 9 months of the accident; the recovery of substantial damages for a teenage boy with complete personality change; the settlement of the liability aspects of a claim in which the insurer alleged contributory negligence of a passenger in a vehicle in which no seat belts were fitted; the claim of a senior manager with an airline who suffered a personality change

and brain injury as the result of a carotid stroke in a road accident; the pursuit of damages for an elderly man who prior to his accident had looked after his severely disabled wife; several claims for motorcyclists suffering amputations, brain injuries and/or spinal cord injury in which allegations of contributory negligence were either defeated or diminished; three cases involving CRPS (chronic regional pain syndrome); a case involving severe leg injury as the result of infection following a wakeboarding accident; several cases involving fall from height at work, two involving defective scaffolding; a claim involving a defective skylight at a school.

APPOINTMENTS

Recorder 2005

ASSOCIATIONS

PIBA
PNBA
Northern Circuit Medical Law Association

Personal Injury

Chris Melton has practised in all aspects of medical and personal injury law throughout his career. He was Senior Counsel to the Shipman Inquiry between 2001 and 2005, appointed by the Treasury Solicitor. He is instructed by specialist firms nationwide and spends a significant proportion of his time appearing and advising in London as well as in the regions.

Chris Melton specialises in advising and appearing in cases involving the seriously, catastrophically or fatally injured. He regularly appears in Court, both at first instance and at the highest appellate level. His current caseload encompasses the whole range of issues that arise in these cases. He has a particular interest in the analysis of medical, financial and scientific expert evidence and exploring the interface between the law and science. Although the mainstay of his practice involves brain, spinal and fatal injury, particularly cerebral palsy in the clinical negligence sphere, he has an ongoing interest in cases involving upper and lower limb amputations and problems of the digestive tracts. He has been recognised as a leading practitioner in his chosen fields over many years. He occasionally ventures into the criminal courts, both prosecuting and defending, where medical or scientific evidence is at the fore. He also appears at Inquests, an area of the law in which he gained in-depth knowledge on the Shipman Inquiry. He has advised or appeared in numerous multi-party claims, including group actions arising out of product liability for asbestos, sexual abuse by medical practitioners and physical and sexual abuse in care homes. The professional liability work undertaken is against medical professionals and lawyers; the claims against lawyers involve multifarious failures appropriately to prosecute clinical negligence and personal injury claims.

In order to give an idea of Chris Melton's personal injury cases, we have listed the cases in which he has appeared since 2009.

The sample is not wholly representative of the breadth of his practice because of the unpredictable nature of litigation. Other cases involve a wide range of issues involving Chris Melton's practice areas. These range from cases involving a challenge to the conventional method of assessing accommodation damages (Roberts v Johnstone) and many cases involving issues surrounding periodical payments. Specific injuries/ and clinical negligence issues covered in the last three years have included: frontal lobe injury, other brain injury, spinal injury at all levels, pelvic fractures in men and women, arm and leg amputations, meningitis, severe burns; motor cycle contributory negligence, accident reconstruction evidence, tachograph evidence, seat belt contributory negligence, causative potency, ice or water on roads, factory accidents, claims against hoteliers, security of continuity of periodical payment, local authority funding, PCT funding, alternative funding of care in partial recovery cases, Motor Insurers' Bureau liability, interpretation of insurance policies, recovery under personal health/accident policies, establishing the true dependency in high value Fatal Accident Claims, volenti and ex turpi causa.

Recently concluded reported cases

Dunhill v. Burgin (2014)
Supreme Court, acting for the successful Claimant
A compromise on behalf of a brain injured Claimant who lacks litigation capacity is of no effect even where the relevant incapacity was unknown to her legal advisers and the Defendant. The test for legal capacity is to be assessed by reference to the whole of the underlying claim and not the claim as formulated by her legal team.

Thompson v Renwick (2014)
Court of Appeal, judgment awaited
Whether a parent company is liable for the acts or omissions of its subsidiary when the subsidiary's employee contracted asbestos disease.

Woodland v. Essex County Council (2013)
Supreme Court, acting for the successful Claimant.
The obligation of a school to take reasonable precautions for the safety of its pupils in the provision of swimming lessons is non-delegable.

McCracken v. Smith and MIB (2013)
QBD Keith J, Lawtel, acting for the successful Claimant over six days. Appeal to Court of Appeal pending.
The pillion passenger on an uninsured off road motor-cycle was entitled to recover damages for sever brain injury from the negligent driver of a mini-bus and his claim was not defeated by the ex turpi causa doctrine. He could not recover against the MIB because he ought to have known that the cycle was uninsured. The MIB took but at the court door abandoned the argument that such a motor-cycle was not a motor vehicle for the purposes of the Road Traffic Acts.

Berry v Star Autos and others (2013)
QBD KIng J, Lawtel, acting for the successful Claimant over six days. Appeal to Court of Appeal on interlocutory point concerning interim payment application.
The Claimant was entitled to recover damages relating to catastrophic injury suffered when he was electrocuted when working on the set up of the Kendal Calling Musuc Festival. Those who ran the festival were uninsured and their Health and Safety adviser had limited insurance cover. He recovered (with a 25% reduction for contributory negligence) from his employers and from the owners of the temporary accommodation that he was delivering using a Hi-ab.

Sedge v. Prime (2011)
QBD Royal Courts of Justice (HHJ Burrell QC, sitting as a Deputy High Court Judge) January 2011. Lawtel.
In a claim for damages for catastrophic brain injury sustained by a pedestrian who stepped into the Defendant's path, liability was established with a reduction of damages on account of 25 per cent contributory negligence. The case involved detailed analysis of expert accident reconstruction evidence. Indemnity costs awarded, Claimant having equalled his Part 36 offer. The claim subsequently was resolved.

Russell v Partington (2009 and 2010) (QBD)
In a claim for damages arising from personal injuries sustained in a road traffic accident, a substantial interim payment was made even though liability was in issue because the judge was satisfied that liability would be established, albeit with a reduction of damages on account of 50 per cent contributory negligence, and that the eventual trial judge would probably capitalise the loss of earnings claim in the event of a finding of substantial contributory negligence. In July 2010, after a four day trial on liability, the Claimant tetraplegic motorcyclist established liability on a 100% basis. The case involved the interpretation of digital tachograph evidence. The claim subsequently was resolved.

Devoy v Doxford & Stuntbrand [2009] EWHC 1598 (QB)
In a FAA claim, how should the Court value the necessary replacement of services provided by a deceased

husband to his severely disabled widow. The Claimant successfully argued that she was entitled to recover the actual financial cost involved.

JC v TP (2009)
Three days into the trial of the Claimant's claim for damages for stress at work, the claim was compromised on confidential terms.

Agg v MOD (2009)
The Defendant was not entitled to resile from an admission made prior to the commencement of proceedings

LA v BB and AB (2009)
After a five day contested trial on liability the Claimant motor cyclist established 85% liability, with damages to be assessed for his catastrophic injury, against two Defendants arising essentially out of the negligent siting of a construction site entrance. Damages were later agreed. Expert accident reconstruction evidence was central to the case.

GB v MIB (2008)
After a three day trial the Claimant motorcyclist successfully recovered 100% of his damages and his advisers then progressed to agree one of the earliest MIB PPOs. The main issue was as to the causative potency, if any, of the Claimant's speed as he overtook a line of standing traffic.

Industrial Disease

Chris Melton's expertise and experience in the area of Industrial Disease is demonstrated by the important reported cases in which he has been involved. He is the independent trustee of the Turner and Newall Asbestos Trust. His practice primarily involves mesothelioma and other cancer cases but includes all aspects of industrial disease.

Thompson v Renwick (2014) Court of Appeal, judgment awaited
Whether a parent company is liable for the acts or omissions of its subsidiary when the subsidiary's employee contracted asbestos disease.

Karen Sienkiewicz (Administrartrix of the Estate of Edith Costello (Deceased)) v Greif (UK) Ltd [2011] UKSC 10
Asbestos disease: causation of mesothelioma. Appropriate test for determining causation. Impact of s.3 Compensation Act 2006.

Kathleen Banks v Jones and Lewis (2010)
After a six day trial, the Claimant succeeded in establishing liability in relation to her husband's death from mesothelioma.

Doreen Browne (2009)
The Claimant argued successfully that she was entitled to a visual inspection of the insurance records, including the electronic records, held by the alleged former insurers of her deceased husband, in order to test their assertion that they had not been on cover at the relevant time.

Gorham v Plessey (2009)
The Claimant was entitled to substantial damages for asbestosis and his symptoms were more than minimal and were not attributable to other causes.

Cox v Rolls Royce Industrial Power (India) Ltd [2007] EWCA Civ 1189
The Claimant successfully resisted the Defendant's appeal, lodged on the grounds that it was necessary in some way to quantify the material increase in risk before causation in a mesothelioma claim could be established.

George Smith v Bolton Copper Ltd (QBD) (Master Whitaker) (2007)
The Claimant succeeded in establishing that the deceased's septuagenarian twin was a dependent of the deceased and that the general damages awarded for his mesothelioma should not be at a level lower than the range recommended by the JSB, notwithstanding their short duration.

Directory Comments

Chambers & Partners 2025 (PI)
Christopher Melton KC is a standout silk and the head of chambers who excels at representing claimants in high-value catastrophic injury and fatal accident cases, particularly those involving minors. He does a significant amount of appellate advocacy and has appeared in the Supreme Court numerous times. He is also praised for his personal commitment to providing training for up and coming barristers.

"Chris is an outstanding silk who can tackle the most complex of cases with a calm authority. He cuts through everything, and keeps focused on the big issues."

"Chris leads on injuries of maximum severity. There is nothing Chris does not know about these cases. He is charming and impressive in conference, with clients and in court."

"Chris Melton KC combines a thorough and detailed approach to his cases with a warm and approachable manner, which makes it easy for clients, experts and solicitors to engage with him."

"Chris brings a thoughtful, considered, calm approach to any case, regardless of complexity. He places the client at the heart of the case, achieving excellent results even on the most difficult cases."

Chambers & Partners 2025 (Clin Neg) - Band 1
Christopher Melton KC regularly handles major cerebral palsy cases alongside wrongful birth and spinal injury claims, as well as claims which address complex mental health issues. He has been instructed in a number of multiparty claims, including those arising out of sexual abuse by medical practitioners and abuse in care homes. He has earned an impressive reputation for his experience in high-profile inquiries or cases that test novel points of law before the Supreme Court.

"Christopher is very experienced, very affable with clients and very good at negotiation. He is an all around good performer who goes the extra mile and offers clever advocacy."

"Christopher is a calm and pragmatic counsel who can be tough when necessary. He is excellent on complex cases."

Chambers & Partners 2024 (PI)
Christopher Melton KC is a standout silk who excels at representing claimants in high-value catastrophic injury and fatal accident cases, particularly those involving minors. He does a significant amount of appellate advocacy and has appeared in the Supreme Court numerous times.

"Chris is highly skilled and approachable."

"Chris is the perfect silk. He is charming with all clients at all levels. His advocacy is masterful and he always finds a solution to a problem, even some very sticky ones."

"Chris is excellent. He is unflappable and is able to get the issue immediately."

Chambers & Partners 2024 (Clin Neg) - Band 1
Christopher Melton KC regularly handles major cerebral palsy cases alongside wrongful birth and spinal injury claims. He has been instructed in a number of multiparty claims, including those arising out of sexual abuse by

medical practitioners and abuse in care homes. He has earned an impressive reputation for his experience in high-profile inquiries or cases that test novel points of law before the Supreme Court.

"Christopher is extremely experienced and has a calm and detailed approach to the evidence in complex cases."

"He can distil complex cases down and get right to the heart of the key issues. Chris is also excellent in the courtroom and commands respect."

"He has a great ability to get to the crux of a case. His expertise is formidable and he employs it tactically to great effect."

Christopher Melton KC is a standout silk who excels at representing claimants in high-value catastrophic injury and fatal accident cases, particularly those involving minors. He does a significant amount of appellate advocacy and has appeared in the Supreme Court numerous times.

"Christopher is excellent. He is astute and can navigate the most complex areas of a case with ease."

"He is an incredibly effective silk."
Chambers & Partners 2023 (PI) - Star Individual

Christopher Melton KC regularly handles major cerebral palsy cases alongside wrongful birth and spinal injury claims, as well as claims which address complex mental health issues. He has been instructed in a number of multiparty claims, including those arising out of sexual abuse by medical practitioners and abuse in care homes. He has earned an impressive reputation for his experience in high-profile inquiries or cases that test novel points of law before the Supreme Court.

"He has a very calm and considered manner and is very reassuring with clients."

"Chris is extremely experienced in dealing with complex, high-value clinical negligence work. He is prepared to go the extra mile to achieve great outcomes for clients."
Chambers & Partners 2023 (Clin Neg) - Band 1

Christopher Melton QC is a standout silk who excels at representing claimants in high-value catastrophic injury and fatal accident cases, particularly those involving minors. He does a significant amount of appellate advocacy and has appeared in the Supreme Court numerous times.

Strengths: "He takes a thorough approach to case preparation and is great at advising from start to finish as the case develops." "He is vastly experienced, highly intelligent, fantastic with clients, approachable and great to work with." "Very user-friendly, approachable and willing to discuss matters with instructing solicitors."

Recent work: Instructed in a case concerning a young man who fell from a motorway flyover having been abandoned by a taxi driver.
Chambers & Partners 2022 (PI) - Star Individual

Christopher Melton QC regularly handles major cerebral palsy cases alongside wrongful birth and spinal injury claims. He has been instructed in a number of multiparty claims, including those arising out of sexual abuse by medical practitioners and abuse in care homes. He has earned an impressive reputation for his experience in high-profile inquiries or cases that test novel points of law before the Supreme Court.

Strengths: "A very personable and innovative barrister - he will find the truth and the correct way to approach things and is very resolution-focused." "Highly experienced and brave. He accepts instruction in cases that others wouldn't. He is also very calm and has great humility with clients. He's not only a formidable advocate, but clients tend to warm to him and he's very considered in his delivery."

Chambers & Partners 2022 (Clin Neg)

Standout silk who excels at representing claimants in high-value catastrophic injury and fatal accident cases, particularly those involving minors. He does a significant amount of appellate advocacy and has appeared in the Supreme Court numerous times.

Strengths: "Fantastic with clients - he's immediately reassuring, calming and able to instil confidence. He is the safest pair of hands." "An extremely approachable individual who balances the necessary formalities with the need to engage and explain complex legal and evidential principles to the layperson. He's able to really connect with his clients and gain their complete trust."
Recent work: Instructed in a case concerning a 19-year-old who suffered the amputation of his arm following an accident at work.
Chambers & Partners 2020 (PI)

Regularly handles major cerebral palsy cases alongside wrongful birth and spinal claims. He has been instructed in a number of multiparty claims, including those arising out of sexual abuse by medical practitioners and abuse in care homes. He has earned an impressive reputation for his experience in high-profile inquiries or cases that test novel points of law before the Supreme Court.
Strengths: "A stalwart in the clinical negligence field; he has a very calm approach, which is incredibly effective." "He takes a creative approach in settlement negotiations and will stand firm for his client." "He is fabulous at cutting through to the key issues in a difficult case, and is exceptional with clients."
Chambers & Partners 2020 (Clin Neg)

Standout silk who excels at representing claimants in high-value catastrophic injury and fatal accident cases, particularly those involving minors. He does a significant amount of appellate advocacy and has appeared in the Supreme Court numerous times. *"He is incredibly astute, intelligent and knows the law, but has a very calm and relaxed manner with clients." "He has enormous experience in brain and other catastrophic injury claims, including at the appellate level, and great written and oral advocacy skills."* Recent work: Instructed in Armes v Nottingham County Council, a Supreme Court case concerning whether the local authority was vicariously liable for sexual abuse committed by foster parents, even though it exercised reasonable care in the selection and monitoring of the foster parents.
Chambers & Partners 2019 (PI)

Silk who regularly handles major cerebral palsy cases alongside wrongful birth and spinal claims. He has been instructed in a number of multiparty claims, including those arising out of sexual abuse by medical practitioners and abuse in care homes. He has earned an impressive reputation for his experience in high-profile inquiries or cases that test novel points of law before the Supreme Court. *"He is very good, at the top of his game and very approachable." "Always calm and professional, he's an excellent advocate and fantastic with clients. He has a wealth of experience and knowledge." "He fights tirelessly for his clients and is an excellent negotiator who gets to grips with the finer details."*
Recent work: Acted in a claim brought against the Ministry of Justice, alleging liability for an independent prison healthcare team's delayed diagnosis of a prisoner's cancer, leading to the amputation of a leg.
Chambers & Partners 2019 (Clin Neg)