Sally Hatfield KC



Called: 1988
Silk Date: 2013

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Practice Overview

Clinical Negligence (Band 1)
Sally Hatfield KC is among the most popular silks for child brain injury and fatal cases that require sensitive handling of clients. She has a broad practice that includes highly complex secondary psychiatric harm cases, claims arising from the delayed diagnosis of spinal injuries or cancers, and birth injury cases, including those relating to cerebral palsy. She is also well equipped to take on cases where compensation is sought for injury or disease sustained by the mother in childbirth.

"Sally is first rate on complex, high-value clinical negligence cases. She is an engaging and precise advocate who is very attuned to the client's needs and she stands out for her knowledge and technical ability." [Chambers & Partners, 2027]

"Sally is a safe pair of hands. She is always quick to respond and she is willing to explore all avanues to pursue a case and is very compassionate." [Chambers & Partners, 2027]

"Her preparation and analysis of cases are excellent." [Chambers & Partners, 2027]

"She is quite outstanding. She has a lovely personality, is excellent with clients and is a wonderful communicator." [Chambers & Partners, 2027]

Personal Injury (Band 2)
Sally Hatfield KC is recognised for her expert handling of severe or fatal personal injury cases, often involving complex medical causation and disputed liability. She has handled complex accident cases and abuse claims.

"Sally is very compassionate with clients, being tactful and diplomatic in her handling of advices." [Chambers & Partners, 2027]

"Sally has a great eye for detail." [Chambers & Partners, 2027]

Strengths:
“Sally is very approachable and knowledgeable. She is fantastic with clients and addresses all of their concerns.”
“Sally is great with claimants.”
“She is sympathetic, but her level of knowledge and years of experience really set her apart from others.”
“Sally Hatfield is excellent with clients and is always thoroughly prepared.”
“Sally is an excellent lawyer and her client care skills are extremely good.”

Sally has a great intellect and a pragmatic approach. She always gets to the nub of the issue without wasting time.

Personal Injury (2)
She has masses of experience in leading in high value personal injury claims. She has a thorough approach to the evidence and a marvellously calming and emotionally intelligent way with clients.

PRACTICE AREAS
Clinical Negligence
Personal Injury
Inquests

APPOINTMENTS
Recorder 2004
Assistant Coroner (Manchester) 2008

ASSOCIATIONS
PNBA
AvMA
PIBA
Inquest Lawyers' Group

Clinical Negligence

Sally has specialised in clinical negligence cases for many years, acting predominantly for Claimants. She now concentrates on cases of very severe damage, particularly resulting from birth or paediatric injury, wrongful birth claims, neurological or orthopaedic injury (including cauda equina cases), cancer, stroke and cardiac cases. She is interested in the psychiatric and psychological issues which frequently accompany serious injury and seeks to ensure that totality of the impact on the lay client is acknowledged, so far as the litigation process can do so.

The generally separate stages of liability and quantum of damages in a complex clinical negligence claim involve different approaches. The former requires a forensic and technical interrogation of the clinical records and witness evidence, experts' argument and analysis, but without loss of sight of the family tragedy at the heart of the case. Once liability is established, the focus can finally shift to the assessment of, and provision for the needs of the client. This can be an overwhelming and intrusive period for the client and their family, with the involvement of multiple experts, and it requires careful handling. Sally works closely with her instructing solicitors in tackling both stages of the litigation to build up and test the evidence needed to support the Particulars of Claim and Schedule of loss, to maximise the prospects of success at trial, and, possibly more importantly for the client, to maximise the prospect of securing a good outcome in negotiation before trial.

Sally has lectured extensively on practical trial litigation, and draws upon that together with long experience of complex medical analysis to advance the optimum case for her clients, and advise them accurately about the prospects of their claims.

As an Assistant Coroner and editor of the BPILS chapter on fatal accidents, Sally is also experienced in cases involving a terminal or fatal outcome.

<u>Sample representative cases</u>

Claims causing cerebral palsy with profound injury arising from:

- Antenatal failures to heed a fall-off in fetal growth, to manage maternal illness or infection;

- Intrapartum failures of management of induction of labour, of monitoring of the fetal heartrate in labour, of the management of caesarean section;
- Post natal failures to heed signs of the development of malnutrition or jaundice.

Wrongful birth claims resulting from failures to detect profound fetal abnormality.

Claims involving paediatric injury from untreated meningitis, or from the performance of surgery.

Claims involving catastrophic injury resulting from cauda equina syndrome, from spinal or other surgery, or from a failure to heed and investigate metabolic disorders or signs suggestive of cancer.

Examples of particular cases of interest:

Cerebral palsy claim involving child born to teenage mother, in care herself. Issues at quantum stage relating to foster care, local authority and maternal involvement.

Hypoglycaemic brain injuries caused to children where mother sought to establish breast feeding but where a language barrier limited her communication with midwives, or where midwives failed to heed signs suggestive of ongoing difficulty in establishing a feeding pattern

Claim involving catastrophic bladder injury in surgery with profound ongoing sequelae, but complicated by unexplained cognitive impairment of the claimant

Claim arising from late manifestation of rare genetic disorder. Significant difficulty in establishing causation of a different outcome, necessitating discounted settlement and consideration of possible alternative Defendants in order to achieve full compensation.

Liability admitted cerebral palsy claim where care of the child divided equally between separated parents. Issues involving appropriate model of care within the families with their competing interests.

Personal Injury

Sally's Personal Injury practice focuses particularly on cases with difficulties in medical causation, those with complex physical or psychiatric sequelae, or with fatal outcome. She has experience in both accident work and in personal injury claims involving issues of vicarious, or institutional liability.

Sample representative cases

Accident cases:

Claim on behalf of child suffering burns to 40% of body area in rented accommodation from unguarded fire. Very severe physical and psychological injury.

Secondary victim claims by parents whose children died in school bus crash.

RTA claim causing paraplegia in young woman; complex issue of capacity.

Spinal cord injury following horse-riding accident; complex issues surrounding management of the riding lesson and of the handling of the Claimant following the fall.

Claim involving injury sustained in Karate exercise, and brought against karate club and referee.

Abuse cases:

Zolla v Goad: HHJ Sullivan Winchester County Court: trial of claim against Defendant in person for historic sex abuse, liability established in full.

Claim on behalf of approximately 20 women subjected to rape or sexual assault by consultant psychiatrist over many years.

Claim on behalf of 2 women subjected to rape or sexual assault by psychotherapist in private hospital.

Claim by inmate against Home Office in respect of rape by prison officer -settled favourably during the trial.

Inquests

Sally has extensive experience of representation at inquests involving complex healthcare issues in the community or in prison.

Sample representative cases

Suicide of patient under active psychiatric management

Neonatal death in midwifery led unit; evidence of systemic failings in the unit raising Article 2 issues.

Deaths of mother and baby in childbirth

Death of patient following cranial surgery; evidence of systemic failings in post operative care

Death of patient in hospital awaiting routine surgery for hernia; evidence of multiple failures to heed signs of developing bowel obstruction

Death originally described by hospital as stillbirth; evidence that child was born with a heartbeat. Representations to coroner resulted in decision to hold inquest 5 years after death

Directory Comments

Chambers & Partners 2025 (Personal Injury) - Band 2
Sally Hatfield KC is recognised for her expert handling of severe or fatal personal injury cases, often involving complex medical causation and disputed liability. She has handled complex accident cases and abuse claims.

Chambers & Partners 2025 (Clin Neg) - Band 1
Sally Hatfield KC is among the most popular silks for child brain injury and fatal cases that require sensitive handling of clients. She has a broad practice that includes highly complex secondary psychiatric harm cases, claims arising from the delayed diagnosis of spinal injuries or cancers, and birth injury cases, including those relating to cerebral palsy. She is also well equipped to take on cases where compensation is sought for injury or disease sustained by the mother in childbirth.

"Sally is at the top of her game. She is a leader in catastrophic injury: astute, master of her brief, practical and compassionate."

"Sally is tactically very good, very good with clients and an excellent advocate."

"Sally is exceptionally good with clients, hugely experienced and a wonderful communicator. Her service is unsurpassed, she's easy to work with and always wonderfully prepared."

"Sally is always thoroughly prepared, her client care is excellent and her analysis of cases is very thorough."

"Sally is an exceptional barrister. She has it all - empathy with clients and attention to detail. She is also an excellent advocate and easy to deal with, which makes the life of a solicitor easier."

Chambers & Partners 2024 (Clin Neg)- Band 1
"Sally Hatfield KC is among the most popular silks for child brain injury and fatal cases that require sensitive handling of clients. She has a broad practice that includes highly complex secondary psychiatric harm cases, claims arising from the delayed diagnosis of spinal injuries or cancers, and birth injury cases, including those relating to cerebral palsy. She is also well equipped to take on cases where compensation is sought for injury or disease sustained by the mother in childbirth."

"Sally is an all-round excellent advocate and she is always thoroughly prepared."

"She's astute and forward-thinking. She also has a calm and measured manner which is very reassuring to clients."

"Sally is excellent. Her client care is very good and she is always thoroughly prepared. Her analysis of cases is excellent."

Sally Hatfield KC is among the most popular silks for child brain injury and fatal cases that require sensitive handling of clients. She has a broad practice that includes highly complex secondary psychiatric harm cases, claims arising from the delayed diagnosis of spinal injuries or cancers, and birth injury cases, including those relating to cerebral palsy. She is also well equipped to take on cases where compensation is sought for injury or disease sustained by the mother in childbirth.

"Sally is excellent with clients in particularly upsetting and distressing cases."

"She has a great depth of experience, which she can employ tactically to great effect."

"She is highly skilled at getting the best out of experts and defendants and is a pleasure to work with."

"Sally is extremely bright and capable, brilliant on paper and in person. She is a first-rate advocate and is always approachable and sincere in negotiations."
Chambers & Partners 2023 (Clin Neg) Band 1

Strengths: "She is just delightful with clients and very down to earth - she puts them at ease and is very sharp technically." "She is phenomenally talented and has an incisive intellect balanced with a tactical pragmatism that ensures that cases are brilliantly prepared for trial, but likely to secure fantastic settlements for clients without going to trial. She is also highly compassionate and fair."
Chambers & Partners 2022 (Clin Neg) Band 1

Among the most popular silks for child brain injury and fatal cases that require sensitive handling of clients. She has a broad practice that includes highly complex secondary psychiatric harm cases, claims arising from the delayed diagnosis of spinal injuries or cancers, and birth injury cases, including those relating to cerebral palsy. She is also well equipped to take on cases where compensation is sought for injury or disease sustained by the mother in childbirth. She has been appointed as an assistant coroner.

Strengths: "She has a fierce intellect and very good client manner." "Her recall is excellent when dealing with multiple experts." "Her written documentations are excellent and she is fantastic on her feet."
Chambers & Partners 2020 (Clin Neg)

Among the most popular silks for child brain injury and fatal cases that require sensitive handling of clients. Has a broad practice that includes highly complex secondary psychiatric harm cases, claims arising from the delayed diagnosis of spinal injuries or cancers, and birth injury cases, including cerebral palsy. She is also well equipped to take on cases where compensation is sought for injury or disease sustained by the mother in childbirth. "She is superb - really sharp and incredibly compassionate" "A highly intelligent and incisive leader. whose excellent legal skills combine admirably with a direct, pragmatic and empathic approach to clients needs" "She has excellent medical knowledge and forensic skill and deals well with experts in conference and is a strong negotiator and advocate".
Chambers & Partners 2019 (Clin Neg)

Among the most popular silks for child brain injury and fatal cases that require sensitive handling ofclients. Has a broad practice that includes highly complex secondary psychiatric harm cases, claims arising from the delayed diagnosis of spinal injuries or cancers, and birth injury cases, including cerebral palsy.

Strengths: "Her mastery of the detail in trial was just something to behold." "She's sympathetic and understanding. She really does go the extra mile so that clients understand what we are trying to achieve."
Recent work: Represented the claimant in a cerebral palsy claim that was caused by asphyxia in labour.
Chambers & Partners 2018 (Clin Neg)

Lectures, Seminars and Publications

Editor Fatal Accidents Act chapter, Butterworths Personal Injury Litigation Service

Co Author, Butterworths New Law Guide to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (2008)

Regularly lectures to lawyers and to healthcare professionals. Recent titles include:

"*Cauda equina syndrome: notes from a lawyer's practice"*

"What happens at the trial? Lessons from recent clinical negligence reports"

APIL 2019 update: lessons from recent case law

"Inquests: how effective are they in healthcare deaths?"