# Peter Burns KC



Called: 1993
Silk Date: 2019

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## Practice Overview

**Personal Injury (Band 1)**
Peter Burns KC specialises in personal injury and industrial disease claims, with additional expertise in insurance matters. He is very able to handle cases related to injuries of some severity, including high-value claims for brain and spinal injury. He primarily represents defendants, and is regularly instructed in cases involving complex medical causation issues.

Strengths:
*"Peter has an excellent manner with clients, experts and lay witnesses and razor-sharp attention to detail. He quickly distils the key issues and provides sound, commercially-focused advice."* [Chambers & Partners, 2027]
*"Peter is extremely intelligent and very effective at delivering results."* [Chambers & Partners, 2027]
*"Peter is exceptional, loved by insurers, exceptionally bright, very astute in his advice and commercially very sound."* [Chambers & Partners, 2027]
*"Peter is a very thorough and detailed KC who is able to cut through complex issues in a concise and understandable way."* [Chambers & Partners, 2027]
*"Peter is fantastic to work with. He provides calm, sensible advice and is really approachable. His drafting is exceptional and he is always on top of the detail of a case."* [Chambers & Partners, 2027]
“*He's a top level KC. Peter has an ability to break down even the most complex aspects so they are manageable, and he is very user-friendly.”*
“*He is calm, sensible and measured and concentrates on the essential points.”*
*“He is excellent. Peter is mostly on the defense side. He is very pragmatic and finds solutions to problems and finds solutions for his clients.”*
*“Peter really adds value with his approach and clients like his manner. He is very accessible and adds real value to every case.”*
*“Peter is excellent on high-value matters. He gets the best result for the clients working multiple angles.”*

**Legal 500**
**Personal Injury (1)**
*"He has superb attention to detail, excellent advocate, great intellect and immediately grasps the issues, commercial awareness and great with clients."* [Legal 500, 2027]
*"Intelligent silk who can cut through complex issues in an incisive way."*

## PRACTICE AREAS

Personal Injury

Insurance Law
Professional Liability
Multi Party Litigation
Inquiries and Inquests

**ASSOCIATIONS**
Personal Injury Bar Association

## Insurance Litigation

Peter is regularly instructed in disputes concerning construction of insurance contracts, coverage and repudiation of policies for non-disclosure or misrepresentation. He has particular expertise in claims relating to motor insurance.

## Personal Injury

Peter has extensive experience of the whole spectrum of catastrophic injury and large loss claims, including spinal injury, brain injury and amputation. His caseload consists predominantly of claims valued at several million pounds, if capitalized. He has extensive experience of Joint Settlement Meetings and mediations

**Concluded cases**
Brain injury:
B v H & E (2020). B suffered a severe traumatic brain injury when he fell from a lorry. Pleaded at £8.7m; settled for £2m.

J v B (2020). J suffered a severe traumatic brain injury in an accident as a child. He made good progress but was left with significant care needs. An application to adduce social media material and surveillance material made shortly before trial was successful, to illustrate his day to day function. Pleaded at £11m & provisional damages ; settled at £3.8m & provisional damages

M v RJS (2020). M fell from height, suffering a severe traumatic brain injury. Pleaded at £2.7m; settled at £1.85m.

R v M (2020). R fell from a platform, suffering a severe traumatic brain injury. Pleaded at £1.5m; settled at £650,000.

J v GL (2020). J suffered a head injury and developed epilepsy. He complained of a constellation of typical head-injury symptoms, but there was an issue as to whether his symptoms were of organic origin or psychologically mediated, impacting on prognosis. Pleaded at £6m; settled at £2.59m.

O v B (2020). Severe head injury. Pleaded at £1.9m; settled at £675,000.

C v B (2019). C suffered a severe head injury, against a background of pre existing Autistic Spectrum Disorder and parental neglect. Pleaded at £11.2m; settled for £5m.

W v CM (2019). W fell from a ladder. There were significant issues as to the circumstances of the fall, impacting on liability, for which engineering evidence was obtained. Settled at £890,000, against a full liability value of £2m.

H v P (2019). Severe head injury. Pleaded at £1.3m; settled at £1m.

O v T (2019). Severe traumatic brain injury. Pleaded at £6.2m; settled at £2.7m.

G v CB (2019). Explosion in a hotel in Spain gave rise to a severe traumatic brain injury. Quantified under Spanish law. Pleaded at £3.5m; settled at £1m.

Spinal injury:
M v L (2020). M suffered complete paraplegia when he fell over a low wall when attending a house party. Substantial liability issues. Pleaded at £3.5m; settled at £1m.

C v M (2020). C developed tetraplegia following attending a barbers. M denied negligence and denied C's tetraplegia arose from his treatment at the barbers, alleging it arose from an unrelated constitutional transverse myelitis. Settled for nominal payment (£50,000).

B v B (2020). B fell into a garden balustrade, which collapsed, leading to her falling from height and suffering complete paraplegia. Serious liability issues. Settled for £500,000, representing approximately 10% of the full liability value of the claim.

O v S & W (2020). O suffered spinal injury in an accident suffered during a space hopper race. Settled for £525,000.

E v S (2019). E suffered complete paraplegia in a road traffic accident. A consensual approach led to early resolution at a JSM within 2 years of the accident. Pleaded at £11m; settled for £5.7m.

K v S (2019). K cycled into a vehicle which had been parked blocking a cycle lane on double yellow lines, rendering him tetraplegic. Substantial liability issues. Pleaded at £12m; settled at £2m.

A v A (2019). A fell over a low balustrade at a hotel when drunk, giving rise to complete paraplegia. Substantial liability issues. Settled prior to a trial of preliminary issue of liability for a lump sum of £1m.

H v ES (2019). H developed a severe conversion disorder presenting itself as a complete paraplegia. Pleaded at £5m; settled at £1.4m.

Amputation.
M v D & C (2020). Lower limb amputation. Pleaded at £9.2m; settled for £3.6m

M v F (2020). Lower limb amputation and severe traumatic brain injury to an elderly claimant. Pleaded at £1.6m; settled for £900,000

L v C (2020). Scalping injury. Recovery against health & safety advisors. L's claim settled on confidential terms.

R v M (2020). Upper limb amputation. Settled on confidential terms.

K v S (2020). Upper limb amputation. Liability settled on 62% basis in K's favour; quantum settled on confidential terms.

G v A (2019). Lower limb amputation treated by osseointegration. Pleaded at £10m; settled at £3.3m.

A v MP (2019). Lower limb amputation. Pleaded at £5m; settled at £2.45m.

H v J&R (2019). Lower limb amputation. Pleaded at £6m; settled for £2.1m.

F v H (2019). Lower limb amputation suffered following a fall while gilding the ceiling of a bedroom in an Emir's Palace in the Middle East. Pleaded at £4m; settled at £2.5m.

M v I (2019). Elective upper limb amputation as treatment for severe CRPS. Pleaded at £1.5m; settled at £1m.

Other notable injuries:

S v J (2020). S developed myotonic dystrophy type 1 (DM1) following a road traffic accident. Issues concerning the causation/acceleration/ exacerbation of his condition. Pleaded at £9.6m; settled at £2m.

J v LA (2020). J suffered a devastating stroke, which she alleged was caused by an incident on a ladder, which was said to have been due to LA's negligence. Serious issues on liability and causation. Pleaded at £3.2m; settled for £525,000.

H v W (2020). H, who was a paraplegic, suffered a serious wrist injury which impacted on his ability to self-care. Pleaded at £2.6m; settled at £950,000.

P v W (2020). Fatal Accident Acts claim, the principal aspect of which was a services dependency claim for care provided to a disabled child. Pleaded at £1.8m; settled for £790,000.

M v W (2019). Serious orthopaedic injuries. Pleaded at £1.8m; settled at £800,000.

B v C (2019). Serious orthopaedic injuries. Pleaded at £1.5m; settled at £545,000

Reported cases
Cockerill v CKX [2018] EWHC 1155. High Court trial. Instructed by the Defendant. Occupier's liability; section 69 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. C fell down a step, which it was alleged was not adequately marked. Claim dismissed.

Maylin v Dacorum Sports Trust [2017] EWHC 378. High Court trial. Instructed by the Defendant. Occupier's liability. M fell from a climbing wall suffering a spinal injury. Claim dismissed, applying the observations made in Poppleton.

Fox v Foundation Piling [2011] EWCA Civ 790. Court of Appeal. Instructed by the Defendant. Case concerning costs consequences of Part 36 offers.

Goundry v Hepworth [2005] EWCA Civ 1738. Court of Appeal. A child Claimant, who was crossing a road in a group, stopped in the centre of the road to let a vehicle pass before running out in front of the Defendant's vehicle, suffering catastrophic brain injury. Successfully represented the Defendant on appeal, the Claimant's claim being dismissed.

Drinkall v Whitwood [2004] 1 WLR 462. Court of Appeal. Instructed by the Defendant. An agreement made by insurers with a Claimant who was a protected party but which had not been approved was not binding and could be resiled from at will.

Tomlinson v Congleton [2004] AC 14. Instructed by the Defendant in the House of Lords in a landmark case concerning occupiers' liability arising from natural dangers. Guidance given as to the importance of free will and the social utility of activities when addressing breach of duty. (With Raymond Machell QC).

Jones v JLA [2002] EWCA Civ 1120. Court of Appeal. A dry cleaning machine exploded due to inappropriate oil being used. Scope of duty for the supplier of the oil. Claim dismissed on appeal. (With Mark Turner QC).

Oldham MBC v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions [2002] R(CR) 1-02. Tribunal of Commissioners. Right of compensator to appeal certificate of recoupable benefits on the ground that the recipient of the benefits was not entitled to receive them. (With Mark Turner QC).

## Professional Liability

Peter's professional negligence practice relates primarily to actions against legal advisers arising out of failed or inappropriately compromised personal injury and clinical negligence claims.

## Directory Comments

Chambers & Partners 2025 (PI) - Band 1
Peter Burns KC specialises in personal injury and industrial disease claims, with additional expertise in insurance matters. He is very able to handle cases related to injuries of some severity, including high-value claims for brain and spinal injury. He primarily represents defendants, and is regularly instructed in cases involving complex medical causation issues.

*"Peter provides a high level of client service and is popular with clients as a result."*

*"For high value brain and spinal cord cases Peter is one of the go-to silks. He's very easy to get on with, easy to talk to and calms the situation."*

*"Peter is one of the leading KCs in the region, if not the country. Exceptional talent. You can be absolutely reassured by his advice."*

*"He is highly innovative on his strategy, incredibly user-friendly and super easy to work with: this is a real bonus. The way that he marshals expert opinion is also supremely impressive."*

Chambers & Partners 2024 (PI)
Peter Burns KC specialises in personal injury and industrial disease claims, with additional expertise in insurance matters. He is very able to handle cases related to injuries of some severity, including high-value claims for brain and spinal injury. He primarily represents defendants, and is regularly instructed in cases involving complex medical causation issues.

"He has an incredible ability of being able to quickly sift through the detail to pick out the issues that really matter, He is a great strategic thinker who can always be relied upon to help navigate the most difficult of cases."

"Peter is very focused and his commercial awareness in this area makes him a solid leader on high value cases."

"Peter is an excellent all round silk: very knowledgeable, always well-prepared and great with clients."

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"Peter offers considered and well thought-out advice."

"He is at the top of his game. His ability to navigate some of the most complex cases is unrivalled."

"Nothing fazes him."

"His approachable manner makes working with him a pleasure."
Chambers & Partners 2023 (PI) - Band 2

**Strengths:** "He is pragmatic but also robust and has an excellent negotiating style. He understands how clients work well and the issues and strategic and tactical steps that need taking." "A really effective barrister who comes up with very sensible strategies. He is very user-friendly and cuts through the issues very effectively."

**Recent work:** Instructed in a case in which a teenage pedestrian suffered a lower limb amputation after being struck by a vehicle.

Chambers & Partners 2022 (PI) - Band 2

Specialises in personal injury and industrial disease claims, with additional expertise in insurance matters. He is very able to handle cases related to injuries of some severity, including high-value claims for brain and spinal injury. He primarily represents defendants, and is regularly instructed in cases involving complex medical causation issues.
**Strengths:** "His legal knowledge is second to none, but what really sets him apart from his peers is his ability to see the wood for the trees on a case and take a commercial view." "He is technically excellent, extremely thorough and impressive in conference."
**Recent work:** Instructed in a case involving an individual who suffered a spinal injury following a fall from a climbing wall.
Chambers & Partners 2020 (PI)

Specialises in personal injury and industrial disease claims, with additional expertise in insurance matters. He is very able to handle cases related to injuries of some severity, including high-value claims for brain and spinal injury. He primarily represents defendants. "He is extremely intelligent and able to absorb vast amounts of information quickly." "He is one of the best juniors in the North of England for complex personal injury claims; it's hard to fault him."
**Recent work:** Acted in a case involving a cyclist who was rendered tetraplegic after a collision with a vehicle that was parked obstructing a cycle lane and on double yellow lines. The case concerned difficult liability issues.
Chambers and Partners 2019 (PI)