Laura Elfield

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Laura Elfield has over 20 years' experience as a mixed civil practitioner, specialising in clinical negligence and personal injury work, primarily involving complex and high value claims.

Laura is instructed by the country's leading firms to act on behalf of victims of negligence.

She is an accredited mediator, and on the faculty of the London School of Mediation where she trains others to mediate.

Solicitors value her attention to detail; excellent grasp of the law; and her well-honed client care skills. She combines a sympathetic approach with the ability to give clear and commercial advice. Laura is a tough negotiator and brings years of advocacy experience, including from lengthy and complex Tribunal claims, as an added dimension to all areas of her practice.

Laura has been a contributing author to various publications including the 9 Gough Chambers Guides to: Clinical Negligence Claims; and to Asbestos Claims; and has contributed articles to JPIL on both mediation and limitation issues. Laura gives regular seminars and lectures, most recently on "Secondary Victims Claims" to APIL (January 2021). She is running a series of in-house workshops on vaginal mesh claims during 2021.

Areas of Expertise

Clinical Negligence & Healthcare

Acting mainly for claimants, Laura's clinical negligence practice encompasses a range of work including: very high value catastrophic injury claims; negligent failure to diagnose and treat ovarian cancer; traumatic amputation claims following failures to treat leg ulcers; negligent bowel and uterine perforations; and negligent cosmetic treatment. She is currently acting for a number of victims of Sling the Mesh in claims primarily involving failure to provide informed consent prior to the insertion of a TVT-O.

Laura is a contributing author to Deka Chambers' Guide to Clinical Negligence claims. She regularly lectures and provides training on clinical negligence issues, most recently to APIL on: "Secondary Victims Claims after Paul" (January 2021). She is currently running a series of in-house training sessions on how to run vaginal mesh claims.

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Laura is able to deal sympathetically with terminally ill clients and the recently bereaved and has considerable experience of claims involving serious psychiatric sequelae including loss of capacity.

Notable Clinical Negligence & Healthcare cases

Re DH

Negligent repair of umbilical hernia leading to multiple further operations; chronic pain; mixed incontinence; and psychological symptoms of sufficient severity to cause loss of capacity. Case ongoing. Pleaded at in excess of £4 million.

Numerous vaginal mesh claims currently running on behalf of victims of Sling the Mesh. All involve Montgomery issues but many also include wrongful diagnoses and/or allegations of inappropriate treatment.

Re M

Failure to diagnose and/or advise as to the risks of expectant management of a suspicious ovarian lesion. Deceased died of ovarian cancer. Claim valued at in excess of £500,000 ongoing on behalf of her estate and dependents.

Re MH

Negligent perforation to bowel, with partial thickness injury, leading to four-quadrant peritonitis. The claimant underwent numerous operative procedures including complex abdominal wall reconstruction. Permanent change to bowel habits, scarring and ongoing discomfort. Successfully settled without admission of liability in 2020.

Re LW

Failure by haematologist and chest physician to test for and/or diagnose HIV in vulnerable client who continually presented complaining that she was sick and worried that she was dying. The failures led to a significant period of hospitalisation for PCP with impact on life expectancy; and contributed to serious psychiatric symptoms including temporary loss of capacity. Successfully settled in 2021 although causation was not admitted.

Personal Injury

Laura acts predominantly for claimants, instructed by the leading personal injury firms, including those acting for the large trade unions. With over 20 years' experience in all aspects of personal injury work, Laura now focuses primarily on complex and serious injury cases.

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A significant part of Laura's practice is made up of employer's liability and occupational disease claims, including accidents in the workplace; manual handling claims; asbestos-related diseases; and work-related upper limb disorders. Laura has a particular interest in the interface between personal injury and employment law, including clams involving bullying and harassment and long-term sickness and disability. She has considerable expertise in high-value psychiatric injury claims.

Laura has a burgeoning asbestos practice. She is able to deal sympathetically with terminally ill clients and the recently bereaved. She is aware of the need to act quickly and cogently. She is able to deal with show cause hearings; advise on complex limitation issues; and to conduct conference, at short notice, with experts. She is a contributing author to Deka Chambers' Guide to Asbestos Claims.

Notable Personal Injury cases

Re J

Claim for repetitive strain and psychiatric injury arising out of use of mouse and keyboard. C had to change jobs as a result of his injuries and suffered permanent, disabling hand and arm symptoms. Breach ultimately admitted but causation in issue. Settled at JSM in 2020 for 6 figure sum.

Re SM & ors

3 family members suffered significant injuries as pedestrian victims of high speed road traffic accident. The parents' claims settled at JSM for a significant 6 figure sum. The daughter has suffered a traumatic brain injury, together with permanent facial and dental injuries and her claim is ongoing.

Various claims for psychiatric injury caused by stress at work, including bullying and harassment, overwork and unsafe working environments. In the last year, claims have involved police officers, teachers and law lecturers. Either successfully resolved by settlement or ongoing.

Re WM

C, a manager, suffered diffuse pleural thickening following office refurbishment works carried out in the early 1980's while he worked in the vicinity. Settled without admission of liability.

Re TH

clam on behalf of minor whose father was killed in a high speed road traffic collision. Complicated by the separation of the parents and the involvement of social services where the deceased suffered addiction issues. Proceeding to approval hearing after successful settlement.

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Re KP

Vaginal prolapse caused by repetitive manual handling. The injury led to the need for hysterectomy and abdominal sacrocolpopexy and permanently impacted upon employment. Settled for six figure sum to include the risk of repeat procedures for life.

Mediation

Laura is head of the mediation team at Deka Chambers. She is accredited to undertake civil and commercial mediations as well as workplace and employment mediations.

Laura can provide facilitative mediation across the range of common law disputes. Her legal practice in personal injury and clinical negligence matters provides an additional dimension to her work as a mediator and she can provide evaluative mediation in these areas if so required.

Laura regularly lectures and provides training on mediation issues. Most recently she provided a Deka Chambers seminar on "Express ADR" (2020); an article for JPIL headed "Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution: The Future is Bright" (Issue 2, 2020); and a LexisNexis Webinar entitled: "Settlement and ADR" (2019).

Laura is on the faculty of the London School of Mediation where she trains prospective mediators.

Examples of participant feedback, following successful resolution, includes the following:

"Laura was patient and professional at all times … helping us both understand the problem from the others perspective".

"… from the very beginning of the mediation, it felt like a very safe space ….".

"By the end of the meeting, both parties had agreed to a settlement agreement, which was a great outcome ….".

Education

- BA (Hons) Modern History, Oxford University (1988 – 1991)
- CPE (Distinction), Sussex University (1992 – 1993)

Memberships

- APIL
- PIBA

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Accreditation Logos

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