Laura Johnson KC

Call: 2001 | Silk: 2022

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Laura Johnson KC has been ranked for many years in the legal directories in the fields of personal injury, clinical negligence, inquests & inquiries and police claims.

She was nominated for Personal Injury Silk of the year in the Legal 500 Awards 2026, Clinical Negligence Silk of the year in the Legal 500 Awards 2025 and Personal Injury Junior of the year at the Chambers UK Bar Awards 2021.

Laura has substantial experience of major inquest and public inquiry work. Recent work includes the Heaton Park Synagogue attack, the Southport Inquiry and the Manchester Arena Inquiry. Laura was appointed an independent panel member of the Horizon Shortfall Scheme Appeals process in 2025 and is a former assistant coroner.

Laura's civil practice is focused on claims that are high value, complex or sensitive, acting for both claimants and defendants. She is an experienced advocate, equally comfortable advancing appellate arguments on points of law as she is addressing a civil jury. Many of Laura's cases are resolved through ADR and she frequently represents parties in JSMs and mediations.

Laura enjoys working as part of a team. Her client care skills are commended in the legal directories. Whether acting for injured or bereaved individuals, or representing institutions facing public scrutiny in controversial cases, she is focussed on understanding the needs of the client and providing thoughtful advice setting a clear strategy. Many of her cases involve multiple experts and she is used to dealing with and advising on complex medical and quantum evidence.

Laura is a Bencher of Gray's Inn. She is a member of the Gray's Inn Scholarship committee and of the Honorary Bencher committee.

Areas of Expertise

Personal Injury

Laura has long been recognised as a leader in the field of personal injury and she was shortlisted for Personal Injury Junior of the Year at the Chambers UK Bar Awards 2021. She is co-head of the Deka Chambers Personal Injury Group.

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Laura's current claimant work encompasses serious brain and spinal injury, amputation, functional neurological disorders, complex psychiatric and fatal claims. She is instructed in a range of claims of substantial value involving serious injury to children, including traumatic brain injury necessitating full time care for life with associated accommodation and MDT cost claims. She has considerable experience of managing cases involving large numbers of medical experts and complex medical issues. Laura's expertise in clinical negligence work means that she is well placed to advise on such issues.

Laura is a popular and experienced trial advocate, regularly acting for defendants in a range of work, often involving significant legal complexity and reputational sensitivity. She is very experienced in cases concerning the existence and scope of the duty of care, vicarious liability and those that intersect with discrimination and human rights law (for work involving public bodies, human rights and discrimination see Laura's profile for Public Sector and Human Rights work).

Laura is recognised for her expertise in cases of occupational stress, bullying and harassment with recent instructions for leading universities, a high profile investment bank, FTSE 250 companies, police forces, the BBC, local authorities, the NHS and educational institutions.

She has expertise in education claims, instructed by schools and leading universities in cases involving quality of education, care and welfare of children with special educational needs, religious, disability and gender discrimination, physical and sexual abuse and novel questions of the duty of care owed by universities to students in respect of their mental health. Laura is regularly instructed by high profile fee paying schools to advise on claims concerning safeguarding, recent and historic sex abuse allegations and peer on peer bullying.

Laura acts for public bodies, religious organisations and charities in a range of work and has expertise in claims arising out of allegations of neglect and physical and sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults. She is also instructed in civil cases involving allegations of fraud.

Notable Personal Injury cases

Tunstall v London Borough of Lambeth [2023]

Laura acted for the Defendants in a long running complex claim for occupational stress brought by a primary school federation "super head" involving a counterclaim for a breach of fiduciary duty and misuse of LA funds.

Piepenbrock v London School of Economics [2022] EWHC 2421 (KB)

Strike out for abuse of process of a claim for harassment, discrimination and data protection breaches. Laura was instructed on behalf of the LSE.

M v Tesco PLC [2022]

£4.2m settlement of a traumatic brain injury claim arising out of a motorcycle accident. Laura advised on complex issues of liability before going on to secure settlement of the quantum claim. C was a serving military officer at the time of the accident and the claim involved questions of medical causation as well as quantification of contested military earnings, benefits and pension issues.

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Rosario-Sanchez v University of Bristol [2022]

Successful defence of a high profile trial arising out of a dispute between trans activists and gender critical feminist students. C complained about the University's complaints process and alleged a duty of care to protect students from the harassing acts of third parties. The claim was brought in negligence and under the Equality Act 2010

Advising and representing a leading public school on a claim arising out of peer on peer bullying and sex assault [2022]

Paul v Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust [2022] 2 WLR 917

Case concerning the striking out of secondary victim claims brought by two children who witnessed their father's heart attack and death 14 months after alleged negligent medical treatment.

Advising an Oxford University College on the management and settlement of a claim arising out of an incident of peer on peer sexual assault [2022]

Advising a leading public school on a strategy for managing civil claims arising out of a high profile issue of historic sex abuse following publication of an independent review [2022]

Manchester Arena Inquiry [2020] to [2022]

Laura represented the interests of Greater Manchester Combined Authority on behalf of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, led by Andrew Warnock QC.

N v University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Foundation Trust [2021]

Laura acted for the claimant in a £5.6m capitalised settlement of a claim for spinal injury. The claim involved complex issues of care, accommodation and lost earnings.

KW v Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust [2019]

Laura acted for the claimant achieving a £3m settlement of a claim arising out of an injury to the sciatic nerve sustained by a mother during the birth of her first child.

Piepenbrock v The London School of Economics & Political Science [2018] EWHC 2572 (QB)

Successful defence of a £4.5m occupational stress / harassment claim led by Andrew Warnock QC.

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KL v Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust [2018]

Substantial six figure settlement achieved in a novel claim under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976 for a child who was in the care of the Deceased under a Special Guardianship Order and therefore not obviously a dependant under the Act.

Jenkins v Chief Constable of Essex Police [2018]

Finding at trial of gross exaggeration against an officer claimant who was claiming £750,000 for a knee injury sustained at work.

KXL v Murphy (1) Society of Missionaries of Africa (2) [2016] EWHC 3102 (QB)

Leading decision on the application of the Foreign Limitation Periods Act 1984. Laura acted for the successful First Defendant alongside John Ross QC and Matthew Chapman QC who were instructed for the Second Defendant.

Steele v Governing Body of the Lakes School LTL 23/10/2015

Successful defence of a claim against a school for racial discrimination.

Boyle v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis [2013] EWCA Civ 1477

Late admission of expert evidence (and successful defence at trial of a claim brought by a catastrophically injured claimant who had fallen into the path of a police vehicle). Led by Edward Bishop QC.

Bristol Alliance Ltd Partnership v Williams (1) EUI Ltd (2) [2013] 2 WLR 1029

Case concerning the correct interpretation of s. 151 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Pennington v Surrey County Council [2007] PIQR P11

JD v East Berkshire Community Health [2005] 2 AC 373

Clinical Negligence & Healthcare

Laura has long been recognised as a leader in the field of clinical negligence. She acts for claimants and defendants and is very experienced in cases involving catastrophic injury, including brain and spinal injury. She is a popular and confident trial advocate, regularly instructed in substantial seven figure claims. She has a particular interest in novel legal issues and has appeared recently in the Court of Appeal and High Court in leading cases involving questions of consent and the duty of care owed to secondary

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victims.

Laura's work encompasses all areas of clinical practice. She has particular expertise in claims involving obstetrics and gynaecology (including birth injury / cerebral palsy of the utmost severity) and spinal injury claims including neuro and spinal surgery and cauda equina. Recent instructions span emergency care, oncology, opthalmics, general surgery, colorectal surgery, cardiology and cardiac surgery, mental health and cosmetic surgery. She has experience of claims involving prison healthcare and with a cross border element.

Notable Clinical Negligence & Healthcare cases

LXD v East Suffolk & North Essex NHS Foundation Trust [2024]

Approved settlement of a clinical negligence case brought by a child who suffered skull fractures during delivery by caesarean section necessitating life long 2:1 care. The claim had a full value of £30m but settled for a capitalised sum of £17m (lump sum + PPO) following a 55% liability compromise. With Ed Bishop KC.

Paul v Wolverhampton NHS Trust [2024] 2 WLR 417

Supreme Court decision concerning the scope of secondary victim claims in the context of clinical negligence, brought by two children who witnessed their father's heart attack and death 14 months after alleged negligent medical treatment.

C v Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust & Anr [2023]

£2m settlement on behalf of a claimant who had been misdiagnosed with a psychiatric disorder and sectioned when in fact she was suffering from NMDA encephalitis. This failure led to her being deprived of her liberty without treatment for many months. Complex medical evidence (including from the world leading research neurologist in the Netherlands) was involved concerning whether a relapse had been contributed to by the delay in treatment and, if not, what difference it made.

Paul v Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust [2022] 2 WLR 917

Case concerning the striking out of secondary victim claims brought by two children who witnessed their father's heart attack and death 14 months after alleged negligent medical treatment.

N v University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Foundation Trust [2021]

Laura acted for the claimant in a £5.6m capitalised settlement of a claim for spinal injury. The claim involved complex issues of care, accommodation and lost earnings.

Metcalf v Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust [2019] EWHC 3549 (QB)

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Successful defence of a claim arising out of an admitted failure by the Defendant Trust to diagnose lung cancer. The claim failed on factual causation.

Buckley v Guys & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust LTL 9/4/2019 EXTEMPORE: [2019] 4 WLUK 104

Circumstances in which the court will adjourn the trial of a celebral palsy case where the child claimant was facing a major life event that may impact on prognosis.

Diamond v Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust [2019] EWCA Civ 585

Successful resistance of an appeal by the Claimant in a case concerning consent for medical treatment. The Court of Appeal held that the judge was entitled to conclude that even if properly advised the Claimant would have elected to undergo the same procedure as in fact occurred and rejected the Claimant's arguments that the ordinary principles of causation should not apply in consent cases. Led by Lord Faulks QC.

KW v Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust [2019]

Laura acted for the Claimant achieving a £3m settlement of a claim arising out of an injury to the sciatic nerve sustained by a mother during the birth of her first child.

Matthews v Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust [2017] (QB)

Successful defence at trial of a £1m claim alleging delayed diagnosis of cancer of the cervix and failures in the administrative systems of the Trust said to have caused the death of a young mother of three children.

Mulholland v Medway NHS Foundation Trust [2015] EWHC 268 (QB); (2015) 144 BMLR 50

Successful defence of a claim against a Trust for an alleged delay in diagnosing a brain tumour.

JD v East Berkshire Community Health [2005] 2 AC 373

Inquests & Inquiries

Laura is currently instructed on behalf of parties with an interest in the Thirlwall Inquiry (Lucy Letby) and Module 7 of the Covid Inquiry (Test and Trace).

Between 2020 and 2022 Laura was instructed in the Manchester Arena Inquiry, representing the interests of Greater Manchester

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Combined Authority on behalf of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, led by Andrew Warnock QC.

Laura is a former assistant coroner for East London and represents both families and other interested persons in inquests.

Laura has experience of acting in inquests involving, amongst other issues, allegations of inadequate medical care, neglect, deaths due to defects in the highway, road traffic accidents, prison deaths and the suicide of a senior police officer whilst under investigation for sexual harassment.

Notable Inquests & Inquiries cases

Re Asiah Kudi 2022

Laura is representing the organisation that provided supported accommodation to Verphy Kudi, Asiah's mother. Asiah, a toddler, died when her mother left her alone for six days whilst she celebrated her 18th birthday.

Manchester Arena Inquiry 2020-2022

Representing and advising the Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service. The inquiry examined the emergency response to the terrorist attack which killed 22 people and injured many more in May 2017. Laura was led by Andrew Warnock KC.

Re Christopher Miller 2022

Laura represented the London Borough of Waltham Forest in the inquest into the death of a Metropolitan Police Officer who died when the motorcycle he was riding collided with light cycle lane segregation that was under construction.

Re Charles Stringer 2022

Laura represented the family of Mr Stringer who died when his bicycle collided with a pothole that had been reported on a number of occasions by members of the public prior to his death.

Police Law

Laura has long been recognised as a leading junior in the field of actions against the police, acting exclusively for police forces.

Laura's work encompasses misfeasance in public office, malicious prosecution, Human Rights Act claims for failing to conduct an adequate investigation, allegations of excessive force resulting in serious personal injury, wrongful arrest, vicarious liability claims for police officers accused of serious sexual misconduct, employers' liability, occupational stress / harassment and claims concerning novel duties of care.

Recent work includes:

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- defending a police force accused of malicious prosecution and misfeasance in public office in an investigation into an allegation of coercive control
- defending a police force accused of vicarious liability for an officer said to have harassed and bullied another, allegedly procuring the criminal conviction of the claimant's son
- defending a claim for occupational stress and bullying brought by a former undercover officer
- defending a claim for excessive use of force and wrongful detention in circumstances that were said to be racially motivated
- advising on multiple claims of sexual abuse by an officer of children in respect of which a police force was said to be vicariously liable

Notable Police Law cases

Transport Arendonk BVBA v Chief Constable of Essex Police [2022]

Trial of a novel issue: a haulier alleged that the police owed a duty of care to its locked, parked lorry whilst the driver was detained under lawful arrest. The contents of the lorry were stolen. Laura successfully defended the Chief Constable, succeeding on both the facts and the law. See also Chief Constable of Essex Police v Transport Arendonk BVBA (2020) LTL 28/1/2020 EXTEMPORE : [2020] 1 WLUK 192 – Appeal of a refusal to strike out a claim in negligence brought by a haulier whose lorry was robbed whilst the driver was lawfully under arrest

Jenkins v Chief Constable of Essex Police [2018]

Finding at trial of gross exaggeration against an officer claimant who was claiming £750,000 for a knee injury sustained at work.

Boyle v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis [2013] EWCA Civ 1477

Late admission of expert evidence (and successful defence at trial of a claim brought by a catastrophically injured claimant who had fallen into the path of a police vehicle). Led by Edward Bishop QC.

R (Burke) v IPCC & Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis [2011] EWHC 423 (Admin)

Public Sector & Human Rights

Throughout her career Laura has acted for public authorities in a broad range of work. She has expertise in cases brought in negligence, under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Laura has a good understanding of the pressures faced by public bodies, particularly when managing claims that attract publicity and public controversy. She is equally adept at defending these claims to trial as she is identifying a strategy to resolve them using ADR.

Laura recognises that the interests of public bodies in difficult and complex cases often go beyond financial and that representing their interests frequently involves a sensitivity of style, not only in relation to supporting her own witnesses, but also when presenting

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the defence of a case that has tragic or traumatic underlying facts.

Laura prides herself on a collaborative style, building strong relationships within the litigation team and treating witnesses with empathy.

Laura has experience in inquests (a former assistant coroner) and inquiries (having spent 18 months representing the interests of Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service in the Manchester Arena Inquiry).

Notable Public Sector & Human Rights cases

Piepenbrock v London School of Economics [2022]

Representing the LSE in an application to strike out a claim alleging a duty to protect reputation, discrimination, breaches of the Human Rights Act and data protection legislation arising out of media articles published following a High Court trial in 2018 (judgment awaited).

Defending a claim arising out of human trafficking by an organised crime group [2022]

Rosario-Sanchez v University of Bristol [2022]

Successful defence of a high profile trial arising out of a dispute between trans activists and gender critical feminist students. C complained about the University's complaints process and alleged a duty of care to protect students from the harassing acts of third parties. The claim was brought in negligence and under the Equality Act 2010.

Advising an Oxford University College on the management and settlement of a claim arising out of an incident of peer on peer sexual assault [2022]

Acting for a University in a high profile claim relating to the use of so called "gagging clauses" in settlement agreements

Advising a leading public school on a strategy for managing civil claims arising out of a high profile issue of historic sex abuse following publication of an independent review [2022]

Manchester Arena Inquiry [2020] to [2022]

Laura represented the interests of Greater Manchester Combined Authority on behalf of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, led by Andrew Warnock QC.

P v Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea [2021]

Acting for a local authority in a claim brought under A3, 4 and 8 ECHR for failing to provide accommodation and financial support to a homeless victim of human trafficking.

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Montague v Governing Body of Heavers Farm Primary School [2019]

Drafting the defence and advising in a case alleging discrimination and breach of the Human Rights Act 1998 arising out of events and teaching concerning Pride at a primary school.

Piepenbrock v The London School of Economics & Political Science [2018] EWHC 2572 (QB)

Successful defence of a £4.5m occupational stress / harassment claim led by Andrew Warnock QC.

H v London Borough of Lewisham [2018]

Acted for a local authority in a claim in negligence arising out of an age assessment of an asylum seeker and consequent social services provision.

I v Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council [2018]

Acted for a local authority in a claim brought under A6 and 8 ECHR arising out of C's accommodation by social services under s. 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Steele v Governing Body of the Lakes School LTL 23/10/2015

Successful defence of a claim against a school for racial discrimination.

Boyle v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis [2013] EWCA Civ 1477

Late admission of expert evidence (and successful defence at trial of a claim brought by a catastrophically injured claimant who had fallen into the path of a police vehicle). Led by Ed Bishop QC.

Pennington v Surrey County Council [2007] PIQR P11

Employer's liability claim by a firefighter.

JD v East Berkshire Community Health [2005] 2 AC 373

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Appointments

- Deputy District Judge 2015

Education

- BA(Hons) Philosophy, Politics and Economics, St Anne's College, Oxford

Awards

- Shortlisted for Personal Injury Junior of the Year, Chambers UK Bar Awards 2021

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