

## Christopher Edwards

**CALL: 2006**

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### Overview

Christopher Edwards specialises in clinical negligence, costs law, employment, personal injury, product liability and inquests/public inquiries.

Christopher acts for Claimants and Defendants in personal injury cases, with a particular focus on high-value workplace and road traffic accidents, industrial disease and multi-party litigation. His expertise encompasses all types of personal injury claims, public liability, employers' liability, occupiers claims, highways claims, injuries caused by or involving housing disrepair, etc. He acts in high-value and complex cases where there is major ongoing disability or inability to work. He also has extensive experience in product liability claims under the Consumer Protection Act 1987 and travel/holiday claims under the Package Travel (etc) Regulations 1992.

Christopher acts for both patients and doctors or other medical professionals in clinical negligence cases. His experience includes acting in traditional claims against the NHS and private medical practitioners and dentists, as well as similar types of professional negligence claim against beauticians, hairdressers, tattooists and such individuals. He has a particular specialism in cases involving cosmetic surgery.

Christopher has a very wide and varied experience in employment and discrimination claims. He acts for employers and employees from a varied client base which includes public services (in particular the NHS), City and blue chip companies, educational institutions, local authorities, charities, the construction industry, manufacturers, the police, trade unions, as well as individuals from a wide range of different employment backgrounds. He appears in the High Court, Employment Appeal Tribunal, Employment Tribunal and County Court.

Christopher has a busy costs practice and regularly appears in the High Court, SCCO, and County Court, arguing points of principle as well as undertaking detailed assessments. He is a high capable choice to instruct when difficult costs points arise. He also has wide experience of costs in the employment tribunal jurisdiction. He gives talks and lectures on costs law.

### Clinical Negligence

Christopher has practised in clinical negligence for most of his practising career. He is instructed in a wide variety of mostly high-value claims and regularly acts in claims following fatalities and on behalf of protected parties. His experience includes negligent diagnosis and treatment of cancer, cases involving major operations to almost every internal organ in the human body, undiagnosed or negligently treated spinal cord or brain injuries, as well as negligent orthopaedic treatment such as hip replacements or improperly removed metalwork.

Christopher has particular expertise in claims involving cosmetic surgery, including cosmetic dentistry, and cases with a dramatic cosmetic effect such as facial paralysis. He is instructed in distressing and difficult cases involving negligence in geriatric care or the death of patients who already have significant and life-limiting conditions ranging from dementia to COPD. He has represented many claimants with psychiatric symptoms, including cases involving patients committing suicide after premature discharge from mental health facilities, as well as claimants who have suffered psychiatric injuries.

He is instructed in difficult cases involving MRSA, clostridium difficile and other hospital infections. He has a detailed understanding of the difficult causation and

### Expertise

- Clinical Negligence
- Costs
- Employment & Discrimination
- HR Professional Support
- Inquests & Public Inquiries
- Personal Injury
- Product Liability
- Travel

### Recommendations

"Provides an excellent service and is a solid performer at trial. He is sharp and always well prepared." "A robust and fair opponent who is very easy to get along with." Chambers & Partners 2022

"An excellent advocate who is able to distil complex issues into the relevant key components. He provides consistently pragmatic advice and is always realistic about the prospects of success – very good client management skills that inspire confidence in witnesses." "He gives good pithy advice with the confidence of someone who is both extremely bright and on top of his brief." The Legal 500 2022

"Old Square are my preferred set of chambers and have been throughout my career. They will always try to accommodate needs and the set are very down to earth and approachable. We have developed very good working relationships with the team over the years." The Legal 500 2021

### Key contacts

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#### William Meade

**Senior Clerk**

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Christopher regularly represents families at inquests (see separate tab).

#### A sample of recent instructions includes:

- Acting for patient whose laryngeal nerves were negligently cut during a thyroidectomy, resulting in serious difficulties and a permanent tracheostomy;
- Acting for plastic surgeons alleged to have negligently performed liposuction;
- Secured settlement after service of proceedings for 17-year-old patient whose symptoms of appendicitis were repeatedly ignored leading to serious peritonitis, resulting in missing A-levels and damage to university and career prospects;
- Acting for patient who suffered serious delay in treatment for TB leading to serious ongoing concerns;
- Acting for a patient who sustained significant burns during a negligently performed NHS surgical procedure, securing an early admission of liability after service of proceedings;
- Advised patient on complicated clinical negligence case in Gibraltar involving multiple alleged failings;
- Acting for a patient who received sub-standard dental treatment following injuries sustained during a road traffic accident whilst being transported in custody;
- Acting for a patient who sustained burns and significant scarring during a negligently performed laser hair removal operation performed by a high street beautician;
- Acting for customer who experienced significant hair loss when a well-known hairdressing chain negligently performed highlights;
- Representing the family of the deceased at an inquest following negligent medical treatment.

## Costs

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Christopher has a busy costs practice and regularly appears in the High Court, SCCO, and County Court, often being brought in to argue points of principle on appeal or after litigation has otherwise concluded. He is a highly capable choice to instruct when difficult costs points arise in any context. He also has wide experience of costs in the employment tribunal jurisdiction. He gives talks and lectures on costs law, and has provided a paper at the PIBA winter conference 2013.

Christopher also regularly undertakes detailed assessments and form H/costs budget hearings. He fully understands the importance of costs recovery to instructing solicitors from both a commercial and practical perspective.

## Employment & Discrimination

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Christopher practises across the range of employment cases. He regularly appears in the High Court, County Court, at Employment Tribunals and in the Employment Appeal Tribunal on behalf of both employers and employees, and advises on non-contentious matters.

Christopher undertakes all types of employment work. His practice includes discrimination (disability, race, sex, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment), unfair dismissal, contractual disputed (such as bonus claims), equal pay (in particular part-time pensions cases), provision of employee references, redundancy, remedies (including loss of pension benefits), trade union law, TUPE, whistleblowing, claims under EU law, etc. He is frequently instructed in complex and high value discrimination cases, particularly when there is an overlap with personal injury such as cases in which stress at work or psychiatric injury is a factor. His personal injury and clinical negligence experience also gives him invaluable experience in complicated disability discrimination cases.

Christopher has particular experience in sensitive cases, in particular in the healthcare and education sectors. He is regularly instructed to defend cases on behalf of NHS trusts.

#### Notable cases

- *Langford v. Department of Health* HQ12X05170: acting for Department of Health in high value breach of contract claim brought by a former Chief Executive of an NHS trust (led by [Mark Sutton QC](#)).
- *Edwards v. Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Trust* (HC): acting for Trust in continuation of claim in High Court after Supreme Court ruling (led by [Mark Sutton QC](#)): limitations of 'Gunton exclusion zone' in breach of employment contract claims.

- *Hall v. ADP* UKEAT/0390/13/SM (EAT): tribunal's duty to set out reasons when holding it not 'just and equitable' to extend time under the Equality Act 2010.
- *Chikwe v. (1) Mouchel Group PLC (2) Clark* Eq LR 1040 (EAT): whether a claim was brought in time under the Equality Act, 'just and equitable extension' and employee's reliance on solicitor's errors.
- *Andrews v. Kings College NHS Trust and Secretary of State for Health* Eq LR 1032 (EAT): legal entitlement of a part time worker's eligibility to join a pension scheme.
- *Mustafa v. Guys & St Thomas' NHS Trust* UKEAT/0516/11/CEA, Lawtel AC0130880 (EAT): test for non-compliance of unless orders is the same in employment tribunals as the civil courts; sufficiency of reasons when considering relief from sanctions.
- *Barreto v. Wincanton* UKEATPA/0659/10, Lawtel AC0128752 (EAT): route of appeal when grounds of appeal rejected on by EAT: whether Court of Appeal or EAT; appealing to Court of Appeal is not good reason for missing time limit to request oral hearing.
- *Lafferty v. EPI Coaches* UKEAT 0065/09, Lawtel AC0120590 (EAT): rules of procedure and requirement for witness statements in reviewing strike out of a response
- *Bussert v. Hitachi* (ET) led by Tess Gill acting for Respondent in highest value gender reassignment discrimination claim to date.

Christopher has also successfully acted for clients whose cases have been widely reported in the press (including by the BBC, the Guardian, the Daily Mail, Metro, Private Eye, and others) and has been lead by several of chambers' QCs.

#### Examples of other recent instructions include:

- Defended lengthy, complex, and highly emotive race and sex discrimination claim brought by current employee against major public sector healthcare provider in employment tribunal;
- Defended multi week disability and age discrimination claim brought against international construction company by former employee claiming more than £250,000 damages;
- Represented multiple Claimants at tribunal resulting in settlement of claims in excess of £300,000 arising out of bankruptcy of international airline based in an unrecognised state;
- Appearing in EAT for major blue chip logistics company in claim of relating to ongoing wider litigation regarding accrued annual leave under the Working Time Regulations;
- Defended disability discrimination claim brought by former employee acting for famous luxury car manufacturer;
- Directly advising solicitor's firms and barrister's chambers which have had claims brought against them by former workers;
- Advising several famous public schools on contentious and non contentious employment matters;
- Representing major high street fashion chain in pregnancy and indirect sex discrimination claim

#### Publications

Christopher is a contributor to forthcoming Equality & Discrimination Looseleaf, to be published by Oxford University Press. His main chapters are gender reassignment and trade union discrimination.

#### Professional Memberships

- Employment Law Association;
- Employment Law Bar Association;
- Industrial Law Society.

## Inquests & Public Inquiries

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Christopher acts for bereaved families and other properly interested persons in inquests and inquiries. He has acts in a range of matters, from one day hearings before a Coroner sitting alone to hearings with a jury lasting many months. He undertakes inquests and inquiry work instructed by families and insurers directly, and as part of clinical negligence and personal injury cases.

#### Recent work includes:

- At a pre-inquest review and subsequent inquest, Christopher represented a family of a woman with COPD who was wrongly given pure oxygen when admitted to hospital, leading to her death, and secured a narrative verdict highly critical of the hospital from the coroner. He subsequently represented the family in subsequent clinical negligence proceedings
- *Lakanal House Fire*: three month long inquest into the fire at a 14-storey council housing block in Camberwell, south London, which killed six people. Acting on behalf of families of all six deceased (lead by [John](#))

### **Hendy QC).**

- Representing the interests of a medical supply company in circumstances where an elderly and terminally ill lady's death was precipitated by an oxygen cylinder catching fire whilst she was in hospital.
- Representing driver of large crane who struck a motorcyclist.
- Representing bereaved family of a pedestrian struck while crossing road at crossing obscured by trees.
- Represented the family of a pedestrian who was struck a glancing blow by a vehicle; he was admitted to an NHS hospital via a private ambulance service and discharged without proper investigations into his apparent head injury, despite being reviewed by both junior doctors and a consultant. Christopher secured a narrative verdict from the coroner which was highly critical of the hospital in circumstances where the hospital were denying any responsibility and attempting to blame the ambulance service for a poor hand over.
- Representing the teenage driver of a car which struck another vehicle killing the occupant.
- Representing the driver of an HGV vehicle involved in a collision which killed a young girl.

## **Personal Injury**

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Christopher has broad personal injury expertise. He acts for both Claimants and Defendants. His practice ranges over all the established areas of personal injury such as employer's liability, occupiers' liability, highways claims, road traffic accidents (including claims involving the MIB, fraud, and low-velocity impacts), and many other areas.

He has particular experience in travel/holiday claims under the Package Travel Regulations 1992, claims following injuries sustained in aircraft under the Montreal Convention etc, injuries sustained on ships, and personal injury claims with a cross-border element.

He also has extensive experience in product liability claims under the Consumer Protection Act 1987, and in industrial disease claims.

Christopher has considerable experience in claims brought by armed forces personnel against the MOD, and claims brought by current and former police, ambulance personnel and firefighters.

His experience in employment and discrimination law gives him useful expertise in dealing with mixed employment and discrimination cases, and cases involving stress or where psychiatric injuries arise out of workplace harassment.

Christopher is equally at home appearing in coroners' inquests (on behalf of the deceased's estate and third parties) and acts in CICB/CICA claims.

### **A sample of recent instructions includes:**

- Represented Defendant insurer in multi-Claimant industrial poisoning claim
- Secured high-value settlement for families of six individuals who died in Lakanal House fire
- Advising 18-year-old Claimant who sustained traumatic brain injury
- Represented Defendant in a three-day trial in a claim brought by a customer allegedly assaulted by a bouncer in the course of his employment
- Advising Claimant who sustained brain damage and an increased risk of epilepsy in a road traffic accident
- Significant settlement of stress at work claim involving individual unable to work again
- Settlement of claim involving significant injuries sustained by a Claimant whilst in custody
- Representing Claimant whose career was ended at age 50 after accident at work with complex causation issues
- Represented Claimant pedestrian who broke leg falling on pothole in pavement resulting in amputation of lower leg claiming career loss for manual work.

Christopher advises on fraudulent claims by Claimants, including RTA "phantom" passengers, exaggerated or fraudulent claims, "staged" accidents and employer's liability cases. He also advises on occupiers' liability claims, such as alleged injuries caused by slipping and tripping. Christopher also advises clients on steps to be taken when a claim is suspected of being fraudulent.

Christopher is an active member of the Personal Injury Bar Association.

## Product Liability

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Christopher has extensive experience in product liability claims under the Consumer Protection Act 1987. He advises Claimants and Defendants on product liability generally, as well as the often difficult issue of expert evidence.

### Recent instructions include:

- Acting for a well-known domestic kitchen supply company alleged to have caused injuries by faulty supply, design and fitting of gas hob resulting in burns to user;
- Acting for Claimant injured when her washing machine exploded causing serious nerve damage to her hand;
- Acting for child seriously injured by defective play equipment;
- Acting for patient fitted with defective prosthesis which suddenly gave way leading to life-changing injuries.

## Travel

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Christopher has particular experience in claims under the Package Travel Regulations 1992, other holiday claims, claims following injuries sustained in aircraft under the Montreal Convention, etc., claims following injuries on ships including under the Athens Convention, and personal injury claims with a cross-border element. He regularly advises on accidents aboard ships and aircraft. He acts for both passengers/employees, and carriers/travel companies/employers and their insurers.

### Recent instructions include:

- Secured high-value settlement for a Claimant who sustained a fractures spine when on a package holiday in Spain;
- Acting for a cabin crew member who suffered serious injuries on a flight forcing her to give up her job;
- Secured settlement for woman who slipped on water in a restaurant on a Turkish resort when on a package holiday;
- Advising employer's insurer following serious personal injury on luxury yacht undergoing sea trials;
- Providing long-running advice to a woman in complicated clinical negligence case in Gibraltar involving multiple alleged failings;
- Advising employer's insurer following accident aboard cross channel ferry;
- Secured settlement for man who suffered traumatic amputation of toe when injured on a package holiday in Greece;
- Acting for a child injured by excessively powerful swimming pool water chute firing her into the edge of the pool in Egypt;
- Acting for a man who suffered a broken ankle by slipping by the swimming pool in the Canary Islands;
- Acting for a woman who suffered serious cosmetic injuries to her face after walking into a plate glass door in Dubai;
- Acting for a pilot's union (led by [Jane McNeill QC](#)), seeking injunction and damages for around 40 airline pilots arising out of incorrect placement of cabin equipment;
- Secured settlement for retired pilot who suffered injury as a result of incorrect placement of cabin equipment;
- Acting in a Montreal claim where a first-class passenger suffered injury to her finger after it was shut in an aircraft door;
- Athens convention trial in a high-value case for a woman who suffered serious injury on a cruise ship.

## HR Professional Support

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Christopher is a barrister who practises in all aspects of discrimination and employment law. He has extensive experience advising in disciplinary and grievance matters. Christopher has conducted grievance and disciplinary investigations into a variety of employment-related issues, including investigating whistleblowing allegations, conducting grievance investigations into discrimination, bullying and harassment allegations, and acting as an adviser to disciplinary and appeal panels. He has a varied employer client base which gives him a wealth of experience in different sectors: clients include FTSE 100 companies, banks, major manufacturers, technology start-ups, national logistics companies, trade unions, healthcare, the public sector (in particular NHS trusts and local authorities), and many others. He also advises employees and is thus readily able to see both sides of any issue.

Christopher currently sits on the management committee of the Employment Lawyers Association (ELA).

## Recent and current work

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- *Norman & Douglas v National Audit Office* IRLR 634
- *Chikwe v. (1) Mouchel Group PLC (2) I Clark*
- *G Andrews v. (1) King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (2) Secretary of State for Health*
- *Langford v. Department of Health* HQ12X05170 (HC): acting for Department of Health in high-value breach of contract claim brought by a former Chief Executive of an NHS trust (led by [Mark Sutton QC](#)).
- *Everett v. LFEPA* HQ11X04083: circumstances in which solicitor who has come off the record may recover costs, the High Court's interpretation of whether a claimant has "won" at trial and which line of CA authorities to follow.
- *Edwards v. Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Trust* (HC): acting for Trust in continuation of claim in High Court after Supreme Court ruling (led by [Mark Sutton QC](#)): limitations of "Gunton exclusion zone" in breach of employment contract claims.
- *Cervi & ors v. London Borough of Southwark, LFEPA & ors* HQ13X01981: settled high-value fatal accident claims in the High Court.
- *Lakanal House fire inquests*: acting for families of deceased in three month inquest following which the coroner made a number of significant rule 43 recommendations in respect of the London Fire Brigade, the London Borough of Southwark, and the government (led by [John Hendy QC](#)).
- *Hall v. ADPUKEAT/0390/13/SM*: extent to which an employment tribunal must set out reasons when holding it not 'just and equitable' to extend time under the Equality Act 2010.
- *Chikwe v. (1) Mouchel Group PLC (2) I Clark* Eq LR 1040: whether a claim was brought in time under the Equality Act, "just and equitable extension" and employee's reliance on solicitor's errors.
- *Andrews v. Kings College NHS Trust and Secretary of State for Health* Eq LR 1032: legal entitlement of a part-time worker's eligibility to join a pension scheme.