

Old Square Chambers at the forefront of #metoo related cases

Old Square Chambers have been involved in numerous cases relating to the #metoo movement, which shot into the public domain in 2017 following the sexual abuse allegations against film producer, Harvey Weinstein. The movement raises awareness around sexual assault and harassment.

The #metoo hashtag was popularised by actress Alyssa Milano on Twitter, who encouraged victims of sexual harassment to tweet about it and “*give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem*”. Thousands have since taken to social media using the hashtag #metoo and #timesup to indicate if they too have suffered sexual harassment or assault. The campaign has shone a light on the prevalence of sexual harassment generally but particularly in and around the workplace.

Old Square Chambers have been at the forefront of handling #metoo related cases, from employment matters to personal injury cases, in particular relating to assault cases and psychiatric injury. As these cross the core focus of Chambers’ specialisms, our breadth of counsel and expertise in this area are second to none. We have considerable expertise in dealing with high profile claims and investigations, including those involving historic allegations.

Our barristers act on behalf of Claimants, Respondents and Defendants and undertake specialist investigations. Our sector expertise spans the entertainment field, sport, financial services, law firms, charities, universities, private schools and across the public sector. Here is a small selection of Old Square Chambers’ #metoo related cases:

Acting for Claimants

- Acting for a Claimant who alleged she was sexually assaulted by a fellow employee following a work Christmas party. During the investigation it came to light that she had taken Class A drugs and given them to colleagues during and after the party. Her employer dismissed her and the ET upheld her claims for unfair dismissal, victimisation, and whistleblowing and this was upheld on appeal.
- A case involving allegations of historic sex abuse against a male GP who was in prison. Counsel was asked to advise two female Claimants on the acceptability of Part 36 offers made to conclude litigation in a personal injury claim, where the clients had different priorities and expectations.
- Acting for a Claimant against a regulator in a case in which serious allegation of harassment and victimisation were made, which was resolved at a mediation.

Acting for Respondents/ Defendants

- Acting for a Respondent in a case which involved allegations of sexual harassment, sex discrimination and other claims, spanning 12 years with harassment allegations made against a company director. All claims were dismissed, and the case is under appeal.
- Appearing for an investment firm at the Employment Tribunal defending sex discrimination, sexual harassment and constructive dismissal claims brought by a female employee who alleged three managers sexually assaulted her in the workplace. Successfully defended claims and secured costs against the Claimant.

- Representing Russian and UK banks and all of the individual Respondents in a high-profile and long-running sexual harassment case brought by a highly paid Claimant. It was repeatedly in the press and was, at the time, thought to be the highest value case of its sort in the ET system.
- Acting for a fire brigade in which it was alleged that a senior fire officer had touched young visitors inappropriately during specially arranged school days.

Conducting Investigations

- Undertaking a grievance investigation for a multinational professional services firm where an employee alleged that a partner had sexually harassed her following her rebuttal of his advances, and subsequently sought to side-line her career.
- Acting as an independent investigator on behalf of a Premier League Football Club to investigate a collective grievance brought by multiple employees who alleged the actions of senior managers led to serious safeguarding failures. The investigation necessitated a wholesale review of safeguarding practices and interviews with over 15 witnesses.
- Undertaking an independent investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct, bullying and harassment against a well-known bank and its Chief Executive. Investigating allegations of safeguarding failures made by an employee against the lead for safeguarding of a well-known UK charity.
- Acting in a wide ranging and highly sensitive investigation into alleged sexual harassment and was instructed by the Management Committee of a very well-known law firm.
- Conducting a complex independent investigation commissioned by a major private school to investigate serious allegations of peer on peer abuse against their male pupil by a female pupil from a different private school, arising from a school trip abroad.

This is a brief insight into some of the #metoo related cases that Old Square Chambers have been involved in recently over the employment and personal injury domain. Our clerking team and counsel are here to assist and advise you on any issues you may have on a strictly confidential basis so please do not hesitate to contact us.

Contact us on 020 7269 0300 or email us at clerks@oldsquare.co.uk