

A calm and down-to-earth barrister, who
is also a shrewd negotiator.

Legal 500



Helen Hobhouse

Called in 1990 +44 (0)20 7583 9241

Helen Hobhouse was called to the Bar in 1990, having previously worked as a Junior Underwriter for a Lloyds of London underwriting syndicate. She joined Chambers on the completion of her pupillage and in her early years had a broad based common law practice, appearing regularly in both the criminal and civil courts.

In recent years Helen has specialised in personal injury work with an even split of work between claimants and defendants.

Helen is listed in Legal 500 as a leading personal injury junior.

In 2014 Helen was appointed as a Chairman of the Showmen's Guild Appeals Tribunal, the first woman to be appointed to that role.



Location

Farrar's Building,
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Clinical Negligence

Helen undertakes clinical negligence work and has a particular interest in cases involving negligent treatment and care during child birth and the failure to diagnose orthopaedic injuries.

Costs

Helen is regularly instructed to appear at Costs and Case Management hearings and has a good working knowledge of the costs issues that arise during such hearings.

Disciplinary

Helen sits as a Chairman of the Showmen's Guild Appeals Tribunal and is an active member of the Professional Disciplinary and Regulatory Group within Chambers.

Inquests

Helen has experience of appearing at Inquests both on behalf of bereaved families and for insurers. The majority of Helen's work at inquests has been in relation to fatal road traffic accidents but she has also appeared at inquests concerning deaths at work and deaths in hospital.

Personal Injury

Helen's personal injury work is split fairly evenly between claimants and defendants. She undertakes all types of personal injury work but has a particular interest in, and experience of, cases involving catastrophic brain injury, serious spinal injury and amputation. Helen also has many years of experience of handling complex liability cases with a particular focus on stress at work and industrial disease (VWF, WRULD and industrial deafness).

Helen represented a number of the Potter's Bar rail crash victims achieving significant out of court settlements on behalf of these claimants. She has also acted for the rail industry for many years and has dealt on their behalf with a number of fatal accidents and high value claims. In 2009 Helen acted for the defendants in a claim brought by the driver of the high speed train which derailed near Penrith (the Grayrigg rail crash).

Helen also has substantial experience of dealing with claims believed to be based on, or to involve, a substantial degree of fraud

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or conscious exaggeration on behalf of the claimant. On two occasions Helen has successfully applied at the conclusion of a claim to have the matter referred to the Attorney General for the contemplation of contempt proceedings against the claimant.

Helen is a regular contributor to the Farrar's Building Personal Injury newsletter. She has also written articles for the Solicitors Journal on "Fatal Accident claims and Inheritance tax liabilities" and "Passive Smoking and Employers' liabilities". She provides regular seminars to solicitors and recent papers have covered the following topics:

Fatal Accident claims and the Loss of a wife's services, Chronic pain syndromes, Personal injury claims and CRU benefits, Sexual abuse claims – Limitation and Vicarious Liability, Discovery and Disclosure, Stress at Work, Pension Loss claims, Occupiers' Liability and Expert Evidence.

Professional Negligence

Helen has been instructed in claims against solicitors and barristers arising out of the negligent conduct of personal injury and employment litigation. As an experienced personal injury and employment practitioner Helen is ideally placed to advise in such cases and this is an expanding area of her practice.

Examples of cases undertaken

Helen acted for a claimant who had been the defendant in a high value Fatal Accidents Act claim. The claimant's former solicitors failed to advise him that the matter had been listed for an assessment of damages hearing and failed to arrange for representation at the hearing. The claimant was subsequently ordered to pay damages in excess of £1 million. The claimant's case was that if he had been properly represented the damages award against him would have been very significantly lower. In pre issue negotiations liability was admitted and Helen was asked to advise as to the likely level of the award had the claimant been properly represented at trial. The case settled at an early stage with the claimant receiving a very substantial six figure sum from his former solicitor's insurers.

In **Newman v Thompsons solicitors** Helen acted for a claimant in connection with a claim where it was alleged that inadequate legal advice had been given in relation to the effect of a compromise agreement on the claimant's entitlement to benefits under an income protection policy. The case settled prior to trial.

Helen also receives regular instructions in claims against medical practitioners.

Public Access

Helen is qualified to accept work directly from members of the public under the Public Access scheme.

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Regulatory

Helen sits as a Chairman of the Showmen's Guild Appeals Tribunal and is an active member of the Professional Disciplinary and Regulatory Group within Chambers.

Notable Cases

T (A Protected Party) v S and others (2017)

C claimed damages for alleged brain injuries sustained in two road traffic accidents, one when he was aged 12 and a second when he was aged 20. C had a statement of special educational needs prior to the first accident and post accident CT scans demonstrated congenital brain abnormalities. Issues of causation were complex and contentious. Helen was instructed on behalf of the Defendant driver in the first accident. Settlement agreed and approved.

Amin v Legg (2017)

C suffered a whiplash injury in a road traffic accident. An MRI scan taken a year after the accident revealed an unstable C2 fracture. C was advised that he faced the risk of paralysis or death in the event of a further accident or trauma to his neck. C suffered a severe psychological reaction to this diagnosis. It was common ground that C's fracture pre dated the accident and may have been present for many years. Expert opinions diverged as to whether the fracture would have remained symptomless in the absence of the accident. Legal opinion was divided as to whether C was entitled to recover damages in respect of the "unmasking" of his underlying condition. Helen was instructed on behalf of D. The case settled shortly before trial.

O v HM (2017)

Helen acted for C in a professional negligence claim against his former solicitors. C had been a defendant in a fatal accident claim and it was alleged that as a result of the negligent conduct of his defence he had been ordered to pay damages very significantly in excess of those which would have been awarded had he been properly represented. The central issue between the parties was the correct valuation of the fatal accident claim. Case settled at JSM.

Groarke v Fontaine (2014) EWHC 1676

Represented the defendant/appellant in a case which considered the principles governing late amendment of pleadings post Mitchell. D applied on the morning of trial to allege contributory negligence in a road traffic trial where both parties were blaming each other for the accident. The application was refused and C was awarded 100% of his damages, although trial judge conceded that if contributory negligence had been formally pleaded he would have apportioned liability two thirds one third in C's favour. D appealed successfully to the High Court, Mr Justice Eady ruling that justice and fairness required that the amendment be allowed so that 'the real dispute' between the parties could be adjudicated upon.

Mark Harding (Executor of the Estate of Jane Harding) v Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd (2014)

Represented D in a Fatal Accident claim where liability was not in issue. Claim raised interesting issues as to the valuation of the deceased services, both as a wife and mother, but also as a carer and companion to her mother and parents in law. Led by Jonathan Watt Pringle QC. Case settled.

Goldin v Erith Holdings Ltd, Intersteels Ltd & Morgan Wheel Contracting Ltd (2014)

C was a cyclist who was struck on the head by a falling scaffolding pole as she was cycling to work in Oxford. Primary liability conceded but contribution claims brought by main contractors against sub contractors. Nature and extent of C's head injury also in dispute. Represented Ds at contested interim payment application and also instructed to represent main contractor in contribution proceedings. Claim settled 3 days prior to trial.

AB v H (2013)

Represented C who had been raped by a school caretaker whilst a young school girl. The perpetrator was convicted at his criminal trial and C brought a civil claim against the local education authority. The claim raised interesting issues as to vicarious liability and limitation. Claim settled at JSM.

Faulkner Bryant v Griffiths (2012)

Represented D in a case where C was an officer in the Royal Engineers who sustained a head injury in a car accident. Liability was not in dispute. The claimant returned to regimental duties after the accident but then failed to progress and his service was terminated. The claimant claimed damages in excess of £1 million for the loss of his army career. Claim settled at JSM.

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Khan v Sainsbury's Plc (2011)

Representing D. The claimant contended that he had sustained a catastrophic brain injury. The claim was pleaded in excess of £3 million. The defendants obtained video surveillance evidence which suggested that the claimant and his father in law/litigation friend had misled the court about the true extent of the claimant's disabilities. Claim settled.

Hoggart v Network Rail (2011)

Representing D. The claimant's wife and grandson were killed when they were crossing a railway line near their home in Nottinghamshire. Primary liability was admitted but contributory negligence remained a live issue. The claimant widower's dependency claim settled shortly before trial.

Paterson v Surrey Police Authority (2008) EWHC 2693

Representing C. The claimant suffered a nervous breakdown following years of working long hours and being required to be on call 24/7. The case raised questions about the foreseeability of injury in the context of a breach of the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Montgomery v Brown (2008) EWHC 3441

Representing D. The claimant, an off oil shore worker, claimed damages in excess of £500,000 for past and future loss of earnings. 3 days prior to trial the defendant discovered that the claimant had in fact been working and earning substantial sums since his accident. The defendant's application to refer the matter to the AG pursuant to CPR 32.14 was granted by Mr Justice Eady.

If you would like to instruct Helen Hobhouse or would like help or advice in doing so, please call and talk to our excellent clerking team, led by senior clerk Alan Kilbey MBE. Our phone number is +44 (0)20 7583 9241. Alternatively, please email us at chambers@farrarsbuilding.co.uk

For more information about our clerking team, please [click here](#) for the clerks page.

Appointments & Memberships

- Inner Temple
- South Eastern Circuit
- Personal Injuries Bar Association

Education & Qualifications

- BVC (Outstanding), College of Law, London
- Dip Law (2:1), City University
- B.Soc Sci (2:1), Bristol University

Directory Quotes

Helen is listed as a leading junior for personal injury law in the Legal 500.

'She specialises in brain injury, chronic pain, stress at work and industrial disease cases.'

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Legal 500 2018

'She understands the issues and thinks outside of the box.'

Legal 500 2016

'Her ability to analyse detailed evidence is excellent.'

Legal 500 2015



Personal Interests

In her spare time Helen likes hill walking, playing tennis, watching football, and reading.

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