

CHRIS CANNING

Year of call
2014



Chris Canning practises in clinical negligence, personal injury, employment and related areas of law. He is an all-rounder who is ranked as a “leading junior” in the directories in both clinical negligence and employment work, and he is described in the Legal 500 2024 as “*an outstanding advocate with a brilliant legal brain*”.

His clinical negligence and personal injury work features claims of medium and high value. In addition to complex and sensitive inquest work, he is currently instructed in several claims valued in excess of £1 million. In employment work, Chris frequently appears in multi-day and multi-week trials, and he has acted in cases of national significance. He is also authorised to act for HM Government as a member of the Attorney-General’s ‘C’ Panel of Counsel.

LEGAL EXPERTISE

Clinical Negligence

Chris specialises in clinical negligence. He acts mainly for claimants. He appears on behalf of families at inquests into the deaths of loved ones; and he has been instructed in hundreds of claims against clinicians and institutions in the County Court and the High Court.

Chris’ recently concluded cases in clinical negligence include several matters involving misdiagnosis of cancer and heart disease; resulting in early death or shortened life expectancy, in which claimants have obtained substantial settlements.

In 2023, he has acted for claimants in several high-severity clinical injury cases including:

- a liability-disputed claim arising out of an operation leading to total blindness to the claimant;

- a claim arising out of mismanagement of glaucoma resulting in the claimant losing sight in one eye;
- a claim concerning wrongful diagnosis and treatment for cancer resulting in numerous other injuries and complications;
- several claims on behalf of families who lost their children shortly after their birth;
- a liability-disputed claim for the early inducement of medical menopause on behalf of a woman of child-bearing age.

Other recent cases have featured liability disputes relating to alleged orthopaedic negligence, including intra-operative negligence in knee and ankle replacements and failures to diagnose and treat fractures; dental negligence cases; claims against GPs for mismanagement of chronic conditions and failures to refer; and claims on behalf of vulnerable claimants arising out of falls in care homes and hospitals, and diabetic care.

Chris is also an experienced inquest barrister, and inquests make up a significant part of his court practice. He is experienced in dealing with institutions and families in acutely stressful situations, and he has a close knowledge of the law of the application of Article 2, causation in coronial law, the ambit or Coroner's discretion, and conclusions.

In 2023, his concluded inquest work included:

- representing HM Prison Service in a 5-day jury inquest arising out of the death of a prisoner;
- representing a family who lost their new-born daughter in a multi-day inquest;
- representing the family of a young woman who died following misdiagnosis of a pulmonary embolism;
- successful judicial review of a Coroner's causation conclusion resulting in the record of inquest being revised in accordance with his client's case.

Chris' other recent inquest work includes acting for: HM Government in other cases of death in custody cases; the families of those who lost their lives whilst in-patients in mental health institutions; and parents of children who have died in hospital settings. Chris also recently appeared for the family of a lady who was killed by her husband after he had warned his religious leader that he intended to kill, in which a verdict of unlawful killing was recorded. Chris is often instructed in civil claims arising out of deaths after the inquest process, in common-law and HRA claims.

Whilst Chris is instructed alone in most of his clinical negligence work, including in cases valued at over £1 million, he is also instructed as junior counsel in very high value or complex claims.

Personal Injury

Chris acts for claimants and defendants in personal injury claims of medium and high value. He is experienced in a range of public and employers' liability work. Examples of recent work include acting successfully for a claimant at trial where a car park barrier descended to cause a brain injury; in another case for an electrician who lost sight in one eye following an industrial accident; and in many cases where claimants have been injured at building sites. Chris is also instructed for defendants, in particular in defending Highways Act claims, and government agencies and the military in his work for the Government Legal Department.

In addition to general personal injury work, Chris practises in claims arising out of abuse and allegations

against state bodies and contractors for breaches of the Human Rights Act 1998. His recent work includes acting in cases where damages have been claimed for historic sexual abuse; and advising and appearing for prison operators in claims by prisoners for assault, sexual assault, and breaches of prisoners' human rights. He has experience in advising clients on the legal issues raised by such claims, including duties of care, vicarious liability, and the scope of various HRA claims.

Chris is also instructed in a series of claims by injured people for damages arising out of modern slavery and trafficking. Before specialising in injury work, Chris also practised in crime, prosecuting major modern slavery cases including *R v Rooney and Ors*, the largest slavery prosecution ever brought in England. He is now instructed as part of a team of barristers in claims for damages by some claimants who have suffered serious psychological injuries due to trafficking. The claims raise the new applications of duties of care and vicarious liability.

Inquests & Inquiries

Chris is an experienced inquest barrister, and inquests make up a significant part of his court practice. He is experienced in dealing with institutions and families in acutely stressful situations, and he has a close knowledge of the law of the application of Article 2, causation in coronial law, the ambit or Coroner's discretion, and conclusions.

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Employment

Chris has practised in employment and discrimination law since he was called, and employment work typically accounts for most of his contested trial work every year. He is experienced in advising and acting at trial in cases alleging all employment torts, including discrimination, whistleblowing, and unfair dismissal. Recent examples of Chris' concluded cases include those below:

- Acting successfully in a two-week employment tribunal and resisting permission applications to the EAT and the Court of Appeal, on behalf of five claimants who brought claims of indirect and disability-

related discrimination and constructive unfair dismissal (2019-22).

- Appearing for a claimant in a five-day final hearing against an NHS trust involving issues of redundancy and offers to re-engage (2021).
- Representing Respondent companies in a six-day final hearing in a claim for whistleblowing-related dismissal and discrimination, in which the Tribunal held that basic and compensatory awards fell to be reduced by 100% due to the claimants' conduct (2022).
- Advising claimants and respondents in cases relating to sexual or physical abuse in the workplace; allegations of criminality and fraud; and other issues of reputational harm (2021 and 2022).

Some of Chris' employment work is on behalf of the Government, and he is instructed by HM Prison Service, the Ministry of Defence, and other government departments and agencies.

Appointments

- CPS Advocate (Grade 2)

Memberships

- Action Against Medical Accidents
- Criminal Bar Association
- Employment Lawyers Association
- Personal Injuries Bar Association
- Young Fraud Lawyers Association
- Gray's Inn

Education

- Bar Professional Training Course (Outstanding – top of the year), Manchester Law School (2014)
- Graduate Diploma in Law (Distinction – top of the year), Manchester Law School (2013)
- BA Modern History (First Class), Keble College, Oxford (2010)