



HELEN COMPTON

Year of call
2011

Helen Compton has developed a broad mixed common law practice which reflects the multidisciplinary ethos of chambers.

Clients have described Helen as 'calm, collected and focussed', she 'quickly gets to grips with complex facts' and is a 'fierce and tenacious advocate'. Helen has successfully appeared alone in the High Court, Employment Appeal Tribunal and the Court of Appeal.

In all areas of Helen's practice she advises in legally complex and challenging cases. She provides strategic insight at all stages and gives clear and tactical advice. She is frequently asked to consider novel points of law. Helen applies the same conscientious and thorough approach to all her cases. Helen's considerable experience in the criminal and family courts has honed her advocacy skills. She is a formidable cross-examiner and her submissions are persuasive and realistic. Her written advocacy is regularly praised by judges as being 'clear and concise'.

Helen's practice areas complement one another; as all require confident client care, assimilation of large amounts of material, consideration of expert reports and incisive cross-examination.

Helen represents both individual and corporate clients. She tailors her approach to best suit the needs of each client and the particular case. In her employment, clinical negligence and family work she often represents very vulnerable clients and is sensitive and re-assuring.

Outside of her work in chambers Helen gives talks and offers training. Most recently Helen provided training to twenty newly qualified police officers at the Old Bailey. In her personal life Helen takes an interest in the education system, acting as a school governor. Helen is committed to promoting and advocating for the most disadvantaged in society.

Helen is qualified to accept instructions directly from clients and is registered under the Bar Council's Public Access Scheme, meaning that members of the public who seek specialist advice can come direct to her. In addition, she welcomes instructions from solicitors, in-house law departments, qualified foreign lawyers, and

clients licensed by the Bar Council to give instructions direct to barristers under the Bar Council's Licensed Access Scheme. For more information please visit our Direct Access page [here](#).

LEGAL EXPERTISE

Family Law

Helen is regularly instructed in both public and private Children Act proceedings. Helen has considerable experience of lengthy care proceedings which investigate allegations of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. As a result of her clinical negligence and inquest work Helen is able to assimilate large amounts of complex medical information and conduct incisive cross-examination. Helen's client base includes parents and guardians, as well as intervening grandparents or other family members.

Helen is an extremely approachable advocate who builds a good rapport with those she represents. She is aware that all proceedings involving children are distressing for the parties and require great sensitivity. She is able to provide robust advice whilst being sympathetic to the issues raised. Helen frequently works with vulnerable clients, often with learning and mental health difficulties. Helen fearlessly defends their interests. Helen is a calm and thorough advocate. Her regular instruction in both family and criminal cases makes her a fearless cross-examiner and persuasive advocate.

Helen recently succeeded in the Court of Appeal on behalf of the Appellant mother in G (Children: Fair Hearing), Re [2019] EWCA Civ 126. The case raised a number of important legal principles and reminders; including addressing the circumstances where Judges go beyond robust case management and stray into improper pressure such as to overbear a party's will to consent.

Selected Cases

G (Children: Fair Hearing), Re [2019] EWCA Civ 126

2019

Helen successfully represented a grandmother in a nine day case where the Local Authority alleged that the grandmother, with whom the children were residing, were at risk of harm. Case resolved with children remaining in her client's care.

2019

Helen represented the children in a High Court case involving multiple experts and allegations of fabricated illness.

Employment

Helen is very experienced in Employment Law. She has acted in many lengthy Tribunal hearings on behalf of Claimants and Respondents. Helen has been instructed to appear in the EAT on a number of occasions. Helen is very familiar with the Equality Act 2010 and has acted for both Claimants and Respondents. She has undertaken work involving all aspects of equality legislation and is attune to equality and diversity issues. She has been involved in claims against service providers under the Equality Act and has provided advice in such matters.

Helen has considerable experience representing local authorities. She recently represented Nottingham Council in a five day reasonable adjustments and unfair dismissal claim. Helen succeeded in the EAT for Leicester City Council and also recently worked for the council for two days a week. This role involved advising and managing a wide range of cases from the earliest stages, affording her practical experience in case preparation and negotiation. She was frequently required to review and draft settlement agreements and contracts.

Helen's recent cases include successfully representing a Claimant in a nine-day direct race discrimination and victimisation trial. She secured damages in excess of £55,000, a large proportion represented the Claimant's injury to feelings and psychiatric harm following his treatment at work.

Helen successfully represented the Claimant in her claim against an accountancy firm for automatically unfair dismissal and unlawful deduction from wages. The Claimant received over £40,000 following a contested remedy hearing.

Helen successfully represented two Respondents in a claim for sex discrimination. Helen also secured costs due to the Claimant's conduct.

In March 2020 Helen succeeded in a five-day case representing a forensic scientist in her claims for constructive unfair dismissal and sexual orientation discrimination. The remedy hearing is awaited. This case was reported in the national press.

Selected Cases

Helen successfully represented the Respondent in a two day unfair and wrongful dismissal claim

Helen represented the Respondent in five day pregnancy discrimination and victimisation claim

Helen represented the Claimant, a postal worker, in a three day unfair dismissal and disability discrimination claim

Helen successfully represented a forensic scientist in her claims for constructive unfair dismissal and sexual orientation discrimination. The remedy hearing is awaited

Helen represented the Respondent in a five day trial which concerned allegations of pregnancy discrimination and automatically unfair dismissal.

Helen successfully represented a teaching assistant in a five day case alleging direct disability discrimination.

Helen successfully appeared on behalf of the Respondent in a sex, age and race discrimination claim and secured costs due to the Claimant's unreasonable conduct.

Helen successfully represented the Claimant in a six day unfair dismissal and unlawful deduction of wages claim.

Helen successfully represented the Claimant in a nine day direct race discrimination and protected disclosure case against a major hotel chain. The Claimant secured over £55,000 in respect of injury to feelings, personal injury and aggravated damages.

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

Helen has substantial expertise in personal injury litigation. Her practice covers the full range of accidents from slipping and tripping, to workplace incidents resulting in serious injury. She is regularly instructed to advise on issues of liability and quantum. She appears in many Fast Track trials and is frequently instructed in Multi-Track cases.

Helen has acted in a number of cases concerning birth injuries, failure to diagnose and failure to perform competent surgical procedures. She has also been involved in unusual cases; such as a surgeon leaving medical equipment in a patient's womb. She has advised as to the appropriate level of quantum in complicated cases concerning vulnerable Claimants with on-going medical complaints.

Helen has experience of working with the bereaved. She has advised on liability and quantum in a number of claims pursuant to the Fatal Accidents Act 1976 and Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1934. Helen has also represented families at inquests and has experience cross-examining medical experts.

Helen has particular experience in relation to inquest proceedings; representing bereaved families, including for clinical negligence and claims under the Human Rights Act 1998.

In 2018 and 2019 Helen undertook secondment work with the Adult Brain Injury Team at Bolt Burdon Kemp solicitors. This involved assisting in complex, high-value claims.

Helen has developed a practice acting for defendants in cases involving historic sexual abuse and 'failure to remove' cases. She has been instructed by local authorities in a number of such cases. Helen has succeeded in strike out applications and defending applications for pre-action disclosure. Helen has completed research and assisted leading silks in cases where a breach of duty has been alleged in novel circumstances.

Helen's experience in care proceedings affords her a valuable insight in the area. Similarly her criminal practice has honed her skills in cross-examining complainants in relation to allegations of sexual abuse, providing a strong platform to advance quickly in defendant abuse cases.

Selected Cases

2019

Helen advised in a case involving a severe traumatic brain injury which resulted in the claimant being paralysed.

2019

Helen secured settlement in a case involving negligent medical treatment of a haematoma.

2018

Helen assisted in a road traffic accident case which resulted in the child claimant sustaining a traumatic brain injury.

Memberships

- Inner Temple