



1 CROWN OFFICE ROW

Peter Skelton QC

Call: 1997 QC: 2016



Peter Skelton QC's practice encompasses public inquiries, inquests, human rights litigation, clinical negligence, judicial review, national security and personal injury litigation, with a particular emphasis on multi-party actions and claims arising in foreign jurisdictions. He acts for both claimants and defendants.

"Very personable and pragmatic." "Very good with clients." "Excellent on his feet."

Chambers & Partners 2019

'He can plot the way through complex issues and his knowledge of coronial law is superb.'

Legal 500 2018

"He's very bright, effective and has a very nice, laid-back manner in court." "He is a really superb public lawyer."

Chambers & Partners 2018

Inquests

Peter has immense experience in inquests and coronial law, having spent over 20 years representing coroners and interested persons, from bereaved families to government departments, including the MOJ and the MOD.

He has undertaken many complex and high-profile inquests involving unlawful killing, national security, detention and medical or psychiatric treatment. Several of these cases have involved hearings in the High Court, Divisional Court and Court of Appeal.

Peter is presently counsel for the Metropolitan Police Commissioner in the inquests into the deaths of the victims

of serial killer Stephen Port. Between 2016 and 2019 he was counsel to the inquests into the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings and the sudden death of the Russian businessman Alexander Perepilichnyy.

Peter has a particular interest in inquests that engage the state's responsibilities under Article 2 of the ECHR, 'the right to life'. In 2014 and 2015, he was invited by the Chief Coroner to provide a series of lectures on this subject to the coroners of England and Wales.

"He's very bright, effective and has a very nice, laid-back manner in court." "He is a really superb public lawyer." (Chambers & Partners 2019)

'He can plot the way through complex issues and his knowledge of coronial law is superb.' (Legal 500 2018)

"A confident advocate and good communicator." (Legal 500 2017)

"He comes up with novel ideas, provides a realistic and sensible evaluation of cases and deals with difficult clients well. He just navigates the course through." "Great on his feet, thinks quickly, sharp as a razor and very articulate." (Chambers & Partners 2017)

"Simply excellent." (Legal 500 2016)

Selected Cases

- **Stephen Port Inquests.**
- **Birmingham Inquests (1974)**
- **Coroner for Birmingham Inquests (1974) v Hambleton [2018] EWCA Civ 2081.**
- **Alexander Perepilichnyy Inquest**
- **Secretary of State for the Home Department v HM Senior Coroner for Surrey [2017] EWHC 3001 (Admin), [2017] 4 WLR 191.**
- **Alice Gross Inquest.**
- **Brecon Beacons Inquest.**
- **In Amenas Inquest.**
- **Coagh Inquest (Northern Ireland).**

Public Inquiries

Over the last five years, Peter has been instructed by large numbers of claimants who allege that they were abused by Jimmy Savile and Max Clifford. He has also been acting for claimants in several other high-profile cases, including Ian Paterson (breast surgery) and Rob Jones (gynaecological surgery). Previously, he acted for the claimants in the Winterbourne View Litigation (institutional neglect and abuse exposed by Panorama), the Cornwall Partnership Trust Litigation, and the Nationwide Organ Group Litigation.

On the defendant side, Peter is counsel for the Metropolitan Police Service in a multi-party action arising from allegations of inappropriate sexual liaisons by undercover police officers. He is acting for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the Kenyan Emergency Group Litigation, which involves allegations of mistreatment by

the Colonial Government of Kenya in the 1950s. He is also representing an international mining corporation in a multi-party human rights claim arising from allegations of police brutality in Sierra Leone.

From 2009 to 2010, Peter was a member of the senior counsel team in the Guantánamo Bay Litigation, representing five Government departments accused of complicity in the rendition and torture of detainees by the United States. In early 2011, he appeared in the Supreme Court case which determined whether the courts in England and Wales have a common law power to order secret hearings (*Al Rawi v The Security Service* [2011] 1 AC 531); and in 2014, he appeared in the Court of Appeal in *Belhaj v Straw* [2015] 2 WLR 1105.

Peter has been instructed in several major public and private inquiries in the last thirteen years, most recently the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, the Leveson Inquiry, the Al-Sweady Inquiry and the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry. From 2005 to 2009, he was Junior Counsel to the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry, which investigated allegations of Government collusion in the murder of the Northern Irish solicitor, Rosemary Nelson. He previously represented participants in the Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry and the Royal Liverpool Children's Inquiry.

Selected Cases

- **Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.**
- **Leveson Inquiry.**
- **Al-Sweady Inquiry.**
- **Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry.**
- **Rosemary Nelson Inquiry.**
- **Ayling Inquiry.**
- **Royal Liverpool Children's Inquiry.**
- **Bristol Royal Infirmary Public Inquiry.**

Clinical Negligence

Peter has been instructed by claimants and defendants in several major international personal injury cases. These include (1) the *Guantánamo Bay* litigation, which focused on allegations of extraordinary rendition and torture by the US and UK governments, (2) *Pike v Indian Hotels Co Ltd* [2013] EWHC 4096 (QB), which arose from the Mumbai terrorist attack in 2008, (3) *Kalma v African Mineral Ltd*, a multiparty human rights action arising from allegations of police brutality in Sierra Leone, and (4) the *Kenyan Emergency Group Litigation* arising from allegations of mistreatment by the colonial authorities during the Mau Mau Emergency in Kenya in the 1950s.

"Excellent to work with. He is very knowledgeable and provides clear accurate advice." "A shrewd tactician who is willing to push hard on difficult cases. He has an empathetic manner with vulnerable clients." (Chambers & Partners 2018)

"An approachable silk with a first-rate brain." (Legal 500 2018)

"Very assiduous and very practical." (Chambers & Partners 2017)

Appointments

- Attorney General's A Panel of Counsel (2014-2016)
- Special Advocate (2009)
- Attorney General's B Panel of Counsel (2009)
- Attorney General's C Panel of Counsel (2004)

Awards

- Harmsworth Scholarship from Middle Temple to the Inns of Court School of Law (1996)
- Economic & Social Research Council Scholarship to the University of Cambridge (1995)
- Harmsworth Scholarship from Middle Temple to the College of Law (1994)
- Academic Scholarship to the University of California (1992)

Education

- Called to the Bar of Northern Ireland (2006)
- Master of Philosophy, University of Cambridge (1996)
- Common Professional Examination, College of Law London (1995)
- BA Hons English Literature (First Class), University of York (1994)

Memberships

- PIBA
- PNBA

Publications

- Contributing author of *The Inquest Casebook* Neil Garnham QC and Caroline Cross, Hart Publishing, 2016.
- Contributing author of *Public Inquiries* Jason Beer QC, Oxford University Press, 2011, Second Edition forthcoming.