

Olivia Chaffin-Laird

Banking, Finance and Financial
Regulation



Year of Call: 2001

Email Clerks: banking@no5.com

Banking and financial disputes constitute a major part of Olivia's practice. She has acquired significant experience in the financial services sector acting for large groups of investors who have received negligent financial advice and who have been financially devastated as a result of collapsed funds and schemes.

Olivia has uncompromising standards and is utterly committed to her cases, her conscientious approach is well suited to complicated finance, fraud and deception cases. She is recognised for her meticulous preparation and attention to detail, combined with thorough and tenacious advocacy and yet retains a down to earth and pragmatic approach to both people and their disputes.

Olivia has extensive experience of litigation involving all aspects of retail and commercial banking. She has been involved in cases regarding interest rate swaps and misrepresentation. Other subject matters include cheque conversion, breach of mandate, bailment and a variety of disputes concerning the enforceability of securities, including guarantees and mortgages.

She has developed the ability to digest complex reports as well as detailed financial statements and enjoys the challenge of explaining difficult issues in terms acceptable to, and understandable by, her client. She provides a clear, analytical approach with a degree of pragmatism. She appreciates that where there are implications for directors both advice and case management must be robust.

She has in depth experience in a wide variety of failed funds and investments including Harlequin, Sustainable Growth Group in Cambodia, Alpha Bank, Cyprus, Unregulated Collective Investment Schemes and Ready2Rent/Ready2Invest in Croatia, Bulgaria and Montenegro.

Olivia is frequently instructed in cases of varying sizes and degrees of complexity, both on her own and as part of a larger team. They are often high value and high stake.

Recent instructions include:

- for multiple investors [960] in property development overseas through the Harlequin Scheme following negligent advice in the UK leading to investment in property in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, the Dominican Republic and St Lucia;
- for 38 investors in a scam in the UK whereby they were sold parcels of land with planning permission when in fact the owner did not have title to the land, planning permission had not been obtained and in any event the plots were landlocked with no access;
- for investors in a development in Spain against their UK lawyers who encouraged them to part with funds before having satisfied themselves the seller had good, unencumbered title when it subsequently transpired there were two undischarged mortgages against the property and the vendor being unable to satisfy those liabilities;
- for hundreds of investors in response to a claim brought against them by Alpha Bank, Cyprus following investments in property in Cyprus. The claim included allegations of professional negligence against their professional advisers in the UK, for negligence and conflict of interest against their appointed lawyers in Cyprus and allegations of fraudulent documentation;
- provided advice to investors following their receipt of negligent advice before investing through SGG in jatropha seeds in Thailand;
- advised multiple investors following negligent advice to invest in an unregulated collective investment scheme, namely property in Croatia, Bulgaria and Montenegro via Ready2Rent/Ready2Invest. The claim also included a claim against the company charged with managing and overseeing the investment;
- acting for a banker alongside his employer, a bank in Dubai and Switzerland, and solicitors, both as a firm and individually, in a 9 week trial following the claimant being duped to invest 100million euros. The claim gave rise to arguments concerning money laundering, breach of trust, dishonest assistance, professional obligations of solicitors and fiduciary duties of banks and their employees;
- involved in a claim brought by a company against RBS alleging negligent and fraudulent advice to enter into products that were neither suitable nor appropriate as defined by COBS.

She was on the panel of nominated counsel for risk warning, an organisation which aims to assist investors that have been wronged and further seeks to attempt to clean up the industry for financial services along the way.

She has experience of mediation including those requiring concise financial arguments in order to support settlement proposals.

Recommendations

“Olivia is highly intelligent and a quick thinker. She doesn't shy away from a firm opinion and is accessible, responsive and incredibly easy to work with.”

Legal 500 2024 – Commercial Litigation

“Olivia Chaffin-Laird impresses with her performance in cases concerning contractual disputes, professional negligence, construction and finance. She is praised for her breadth of expertise and business-minded approach. Her diverse clientele includes investors, bankers and company directors, among others.”

Chambers UK 2024 – Commercial Dispute Resolution

"Olivia is extremely well prepared. She is a formidable opponent."

Chambers UK 2023 - Commercial Dispute Resolution

"Olivia is thorough and ensures no page is unturned. Clients trust her as a reliable barrister. She has extensive knowledge and expertise in insolvency and director disputes."

Legal 500 2023 - Commercial Litigation

"She provided very good written advice in which she considered all the angles. She really gave us and the clients confidence in where we stood."

Chambers UK 2022 - Commercial Dispute Resolution

"On the matters I have worked with Olivia on, I have been impressed by her technical ability and firm grasp of the law."

Legal 500 2022 - Commercial Litigation

"She is incredibly approachable and goes beyond her instructions. She thinks outside the box and is a passionate advocate."

Chambers UK 2021 - Commercial Dispute Resolution

"A commendable advocate who is able to manage client expectations and secure positive outcomes."

Legal 500 2021- Commercial Litigation

"She has the ear of the judges – they know that she is reliable and trustworthy."

Chambers UK 2020

Impresses with her performance in cases concerning contractual disputes, professional negligence, construction and finance. She is praised for her breadth of expertise and business-minded approach. Her diverse clientele includes investors, bankers and company directors, among others. "She is very technical and very thorough."

Chambers UK 2019

"Highly experienced in financial disputes."

Legal 500 2019

Notable Cases

London Executive Aviation Ltd v Royal Bank of Scotland Plc [2017] EWHC 1516 (Ch)

(1) Group Seven Ltd (2) Rheingold Management Inc v Ali Nasir and 9 Ors : Equity Trading Systems Ltd v Notable Services LLP and 7 Ors [2017] EWHC 2466 (Ch)

Appointments

January 2013: Junior Counsel to the Crown Chancery, Commercial, Insolvency

January 2008: Treasury Counsel in the Midlands Chancery, Commercial, Insolvency, Property

Memberships

Midlands Chancery and Commercial Bar Association [MCCBA]

Commercial Bar Association [COMBAR]

Technology and Construction Bar Association [TECBAR]

Qualifications

LLB Europe with French

Universite de Montpellier – Diplome de droit francais fondamentale