

Jessica Smeaton

Call: 2008

"Excellent client care skills and works well with instructing solicitor - forms a good team."

Jessica Smeaton - Legal 500 2022 (Employment)



Jessica Smeaton specialises in employment and immigration and has a busy practice in the tribunals and appeal courts where she acts as both sole and junior counsel. She is praised for her ability to develop good relationships with witnesses and for her attention to detail.

Her employment practice focuses predominantly on public sector respondents and, in addition to court representation, Jessica advises employers on a day-to-day basis on complex employee relations.

Her immigration practice covers both publicly and privately-funded work. She has appeared as junior counsel on a number of significant matters in recent years, both at the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.

Jessica is a member both of the Attorney General's panel of counsel, approved to conduct cases on behalf of Government departments, and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission's panel of counsel, appointed to support the commissioner's equality and human rights work through strategic litigation.

Jessica sits as a fee-paid Judge of the Employment Tribunal and of both the Upper and First-tier Tribunals (Immigration and Asylum Chamber).

Expertise

Employment

Jessica is an experienced and specialist employment practitioner. She regularly acts in lengthy, complex trials and is known for her representation of public authorities, particularly the NHS. She has an increasing appellate practice in the EAT and is often asked to advise on the merits of potential appeals.

In addition to court representation, Jessica has long-standing relationships with public sector clients (mainly local authorities) for whom she provides advice on all aspects of employment litigation and day-to-day employee relations, including redundancy processes, TUPE, long-term sickness absence and reasonable adjustments. She forms a good team with instructing solicitors and is often called upon for assistance in developing a clear strategy in complex matters.

Birmingham

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London

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Telephone: +44 (0) 207 420 7500

Bristol

30 Queen Square
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BS1 4ND

DX: 7838 Bristol
Tel: +44 (0) 117 917 8501

Because she is also an immigration practitioner, Jessica is often instructed on matters involving an overlap between employment and immigration issues, including unfair dismissal and discrimination claims concerning the right to work in the UK. This is particularly so since the UK left the EU. She also provides training to employment lawyers on immigration issues that they are likely to encounter in their practice.

Immigration, Asylum & Nationality

Jessica is an experienced immigration practitioner with a varied mix of led / unled and private / publicly-funded work. She appears in the First-tier and Upper tribunals on both immigration and asylum cases and is regularly led in cases of significant legal value at the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court. She is praised for developing good relationships with lay clients, reassuring witnesses throughout difficult litigation and explaining complicated legal issues in clear, simple ways. She has significant experience working with vulnerable clients, including those who lack capacity to give evidence or conduct proceedings.

Because she is also an employment practitioner, Jessica is well-placed to advise on complex matters involving an overlap between employment and immigration issues, including discrimination claims concerning the right to work. She also provides training to employment lawyers on immigration issues that they are likely to encounter in their practice.

Business Immigration

Jessica's business immigration practice centres on judicial review challenges to sponsor licence revocations and appeals against civil penalties. She regularly advises businesses on day-to-day immigration issues and works alongside employers to avoid sponsor licence issues.

Because she is also an employment practitioner, she is well-placed to advise businesses on matters where employment and immigration law collide.

Awards



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Appointments

- Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber)
- Fee-paid Judge of the Employment Tribunal
- Panel counsel to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission
- Attorney-General's panel of counsel (panel B)

Qualifications

- European Master's in Human Rights and Democratisation
- Bar Vocational Course
- Bachelor of Laws

Pro Bono Award nomination

Jessica is committed to access to justice and has provided pro bono advice on several environmental matters on an urgent and non-urgent basis. She is happy to accept instructions pro bono in appropriate cases.

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