

Richard Hignett

Call: 1995

"Richard is excellent in cross-examination. He can extract information that others cannot."

Chambers UK 2025



Richard Hignett practises exclusively in the field of employment and discrimination law.

Expertise

Employment

Richard is instructed by a wide range of clients in both the public and private sectors.

Richard served as Head of Employment Law at No5 between 2012 – 2018, and is listed in the Who's Who of Employment Law Practitioners, The Legal 500, Chambers & Partners and is described as "...a sharp blade in velvet."

Notable Cases

Iceland Food Ltd v Ms P Stevenson UKEAT 0309/19/RN

Overlap between unfair dismissal test and justification test in disability discrimination

Philander v Leonard Cheshire Disability UKEAT/0275/17/DA

Perversity

Blackburn v Aldi Stores Ltd UKEAT/ 0185/12/JOJ

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Grievance appeals and constructive dismissal

X County Council and The Governing Body of Y School v Miss D and Ms C UKEAT/0155/12/RN

Perversity and substitution

Norland Managed Services v Hastick UK EAT 0005/12/LA

Substitution and misapplication of the range of reasonable responses test

Alemo Herron and Others v Parkwood Leisure Limited [2011] UKSC 26 [2013] ICR 1116

TUPE and collective rights

Finlay v Cyron and Ors UKEAT/0121/11/RN

Whether a claim against a third party for knowingly aiding having any reasonable prospect of success

Griffin v Governing Body of Beechview School v BCC UKEAT/ 0162/ZT

Interplay between unfair and wrongful dismissal

D King v Royal Bank of Canada Europe Limited UKEAT /0333/10/DM

Amendments to Notices of Appeal and mandatory requirement on Tribunal to explain remedy options

O'Neill v Buckinghamshire County Council [2010] IRLR 384

Pregnancy discrimination and risk assessments for pregnant women

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue v Beever and Others [2009] EAT/0533/09/DM

Contractual construction and incorporated terms

Allen and Others v Murdoch [2009] EAT0361/09

Statutory construction

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Onley v Tim Arrow and Sons [2008] EAT/0527/08/RN

Uplifts on compensation

Muschett v Parkwood [2008] EAT0361/08

Constructive dismissal

Degama v HSBC [2008] EAT 0532/08

Judicial discretion

Loosley v Moulton and Norfolk Probation Board [2004] EAT/0468/04

Sexual harassment

T and K Limited v Skilton [2000] IRLR 595 CA

Employment Contracts and scope of PILON clauses

Awards



Memberships

- Employment Lawyers Association
- Employment Law and Bar Association
- Industrial Law Society

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- Employment Law Advice and Assistance Scheme

Practice and Experience

20 years plus experience of advising and acting for clients on employment law matters

Undertakes all aspects of employment law with an emphasis on discrimination, contractual disputes and whistleblowing

Standing counsel to an international logistics company, a broking house, a high street retailer, a brewery chain, a car manufacturer, a constabulary, several NHS Trusts and a local authority

Regularly appears in Employment Tribunals up and down the country

Employment Appeal Tribunal and Court of Appeal experience

Presents to solicitors and heads of HR on a wide range of employment law related issues

Trains managers in equality practises and how to recognise unconscious bias

Licensed to undertake Public Access Work

Richard acts as a barrister mentor for the citizenship foundation

Sector Experience

Retail, Fashion, Banking, Finance, Leisure, Healthcare, Education, Social Care, local government, Police, Fire and Rescue, NHS, Airlines, Financial services.

Investigations

Richard is an experienced investigator. He has undertaken investigations in the education sector, social services and legal sectors. Recent investigations include a complex sexual harassment complaint and infighting amongst staff in a stately home.

Particular Areas of Expertise

High value complex claims, Whistleblowing, Interim relief, Disability discrimination, Sexual harassment, TUPE, Professional disciplinary tribunals, Professional misconduct of healthcare staff.

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Client Recommendations

Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK Ltd, Liam Holmes, Senior Manager, Personnel and Employee Relations

"Richard is organised, prepared and focused on the key issues. He is quick to grasp complex manufacturing issues. His natural style is calm and logical which is well accepted by Employment Judges. He makes strong closing submissions which the tribunal in our experience have found very compelling. From a customer perspective one key measure of the working relationship must be based on success and in our experience Richard has been faultless."

SSAFA Family Health Services, SSAFA Forces Help, Paul Branscombe CBE, Managing Director

"In a highly complicated and confused case involving unfamiliar jargon, regulations and spanning three different countries, Richard most ably focussed on the essentials which won the day. He is very quick to absorb new information, adaptable, decisive in applying his advocacy talents, and calm under pressure. Importantly he has an intuitive sensitivity to client needs, a quiet diplomacy with difficult people, and an outstanding sense of humour – essential at times of stress."

Cambridgeshire Police, Superintendent Mark Hodgson, Head of Professional Standards Department

"Richard not only understood the case but understood the context and associated issues surrounding it. His cross-examination of the Claimant was particularly good. I also liked and appreciated the way that he challenged the Chair and the panel, not in an aggressive or theatrical way, but in a way that clearly allowed the panel to get and take the point on board. Richard was also prepared to work with some witnesses who were feeling rather 'wobbly' – this was an added extra in terms of his support for the Constabulary and appreciated."

Birmingham Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Tony Middleton, HR Director

"Richard Hignett represented our organisation on a complex employment tribunal case, which was successfully defended. Thanks to Richard, our witnesses, from all levels of the organisation felt more relaxed and at ease with the tribunal process. We were particularly impressed at the level of preparation and understanding he had for both the case and the organisation as a whole. We will definitely work with Richard and No.5 Chambers again"

Advantage Healthcare Group, Keith Nurcombe, Chief Executive

"Richard provided my organisation with high quality advice regarding a complex matter in relation to the national minimum wage and on call coverage. On the day of the hearing Richard brought a considerable level of relevant experience which I believe swung the case in our favour and his argument was powerful and extremely pertinent to the matters raised by the tribunal."

James Fisher Tankships, Justin Tyler, Company Secretary

"Richard displayed great skill at imposing structure on the chaotic case presented by the claimant, enabling the defence team to focus on the key issues. He interacted effectively with the client and has an approachable style. The hearing was handled by Richard in a firm but not antagonistic manner, well suited to the personalities involved, and he was quick to modify his cross-examination where necessary best to blunt the line of attack adopted by the claimant."

Current Cases

Richard is currently acting for an NHS Trust whereby relationships in a body of consultants imploded over a disagreement surrounding the safety of a new clinical practice. The case concerns allegations of whistleblowing detriment brought by one of the consultants who considered the practice to be unsafe

Richard is representing a senior manager of one of the world's largest corporations in a claim for age discrimination

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