

JOHN SNELL

CALL: 1991

"Very easy to deal with, sensible and pragmatic."
Chambers UK 2021

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John specialises in clinical negligence, equine litigation and personal injury claims arising under the Animals Act 1971. He was in chambers in London at 2 Temple Gardens from 1991 to 2003 when he moved to Bristol to join Guildhall Chambers.

PRACTICE AREAS

- Clinical Negligence
 - Equine
 - Personal Injury
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CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE

John has 25 years' experience fighting clinical negligence claims. He has a particular interest in claims concerning cauda equina syndrome and obstetric injuries but has wide-ranging experience in this field.

EQUINE

John is particularly known for his work involving injuries caused by animals, particularly horses but also cattle and dogs and more unusual species such as peacocks and llamas. He was instructed as junior counsel on behalf of the intervening insurers in the House of Lords in *Mirvahedy v Henley* (2003) and has appeared in a great number of cases fought to trial. He appeared in the Court of Appeal in *Turnbull v Warrenner* (2012) on behalf of the successful Respondent when the section 5(2) defence was upheld on a Respondent's cross-appeal.

CASES AT TRIAL:

- **Aungier v Payne (2019)** - Instructed on behalf of the Defendant in a claim for misrepresentation, breach of contract and negligence over the sale of a show horse. Claim dismissed at trial.
- **Lynch v Ed Walker Racing Ltd (2017)**- Instructed on behalf of injured jockey. Decision of trial judge that a fall from a racehorse was not likely to result in personal injury was upheld on appeal.
- **Blandford v Forestry Commission & others (2016)**- Instructed on behalf of one of three defendants in a riding accident case. Claim dismissed at trial.
- **Blake v Woodside Riding School (2015)**- Instructed on behalf of the riding school. Claim dismissed at trial.
- **Bell v Professor Congdon (2013)**- Instructed on behalf of the owner of a dog which bit a visiting nurse. Trial on liability. Claim dismissed.
- **Turnbull v Warrener (2012) PIQR P16; EWCA Civ 412**- John Snell acted on behalf of the defendant in a successful appeal against the finding of the judge at first instance that the claimant had not voluntarily consented to the risk of injury involved in riding a horse. The Court of Appeal held that the judge was wrong to dismiss the defendant's defence under s.5(2) of the Animals Act 1971.
- **Morgan v Gidleigh-Wright (2012)**- Instructed on behalf of the purchaser of a show pony which turned out to be unfit for its purpose. Claims in breach of contract and misrepresentation against two defendants. Damages awarded for loss of bargain and wasted keep costs.
- **Farrow v Loughton Manor Equestrian Centre (2011)**- Trial on liability. Instructed on behalf of the Defendant in a claim arising from a fall during a riding lesson. The claim was dismissed at trial.
- **Telford v EDF Energy (2011)** - Claim for damage to horse caused by electrocution. Instructed on behalf of the claimant. Damages were awarded for the cost of keep for the whole remaining life of the horse.
- **Watson v Wareham (2010)** - Dog bite. Liability established at trial. Instructed on behalf of the claimant.
- **Goring v Trayford (2009)** - Successfully resisted at trial a claim for misrepresentation and breach of contract arising from the sale of a horse. Instructed by Travers Smith.
- **Hughes v Rosser (2008)** - Groom trampled by a horse. Trial on liability. Instructed for the successful claimant.
- **Millward v Pritchard (2007)** - Horses trampling pedestrian on a footpath. Trial on liability. Instructed for successful defendant.
- **Warner v Twin Trees (2006)**- Groom kicked in the face by a horse. Trial on liability. Instructed on behalf of successful claimant.
- **Leonard-Nicholson v Morgan (2006)** - Bolting horse. Claim settled.
- **Cabanne v Whittaker (2005)** - Liability established at trial for negligent injection of vitamin supplement causing diminution in value of a showjumper.
- **Diaz v Tomlinson (2005)** - Groom kicked in the face by a colt. Claim settled.
- **Beverley v Barlaston (2005)** - Junior Counsel defending claim brought against riding school for accident causing paraplegia. Liability denied. Settled at a major discount on full value.
- **Livingstone v Armstrong (2003)** - No liability for cow standing on the road.
- **Elliott v Townfoot Stables (2003)** - Fall from riding school pony. No liability on the defendant.
- **Mirvahedy v Henley (2003)** - Junior Counsel instructed on behalf of intervening insurers in the House of Lords.

PERSONAL INJURY

John is recommended in both the Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners guides as a leading practitioner in the field of personal injury and is frequently instructed in high value cases involving acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy or spinal injuries. He has a particular interest in and experience of chronic pain, including CRPS, somatoform disorder and chronic pain syndrome.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAMBERS UK 2021

Personal Injury

Band 1

Focuses on personal injury cases relating to animals, particularly equine claims. He often handles matters involving brain injuries, spinal injuries and complex regional pain syndrome. He acts on behalf of both claimants and defendants.

Strengths: "A steel fist in a velvet glove."

Clinical Negligence

Band 1

Well regarded for his expertise in cauda equina cases, as well as other spinal injury claims. He is also active in cerebral palsy matters, as well as maternal obstetric injuries, and advises both claimants and defence organisations, including trusts and healthcare professionals.

Strengths: "Very easy to deal with, sensible and pragmatic."

LEGAL 500 2021

Personal Injury

'He is particularly strong in equine accident claims.'

Ranked: Tier 1

CHAMBERS UK 2020

Personal Injury

Focuses on personal injury cases relating to animals, particularly equine claims. He often handles matters involving brain injuries, spinal injuries and complex regional pain syndrome. He acts on behalf of both claimants and defendants.

Strengths: "He's very professional, easy to deal with and straightforward." "He's so knowledgeable and the close attention he pays to the issues of each case is unparalleled." "He is excellent with clients, always adheres to timescales and has very good communication skills. He's meticulous with regard to detail."

Clinical Negligence

Well regarded for his expertise in cauda equina cases, as well as other spinal injury claims. He is also active in cerebral palsy matters, as well as maternal obstetric injuries, and advises both claimants and defence organisations, including trusts and healthcare professionals.

Strengths: "He has excellent attention to detail, is exceptionally able, great with experts and provides an excellent service." "John will get back to you within 48 hours, which is so valuable when you're up against a deadline. He's very approachable and there's no pomposity; he knows his stuff and is great with clients. You really see that clients respect his views and feel they're able to engage with him."

LEGAL 500 2020

Personal Injury

"Particularly good on Animals Act cases."

CHAMBERS UK 2019

Personal Injury

Focuses on personal injury cases relating to animals, particularly equine claims. He often handles matters involving brain injuries, spinal injuries and regional pain syndrome.

"His ability to process a lot of information quickly and to then apply this information in a way that is both logical and easily understood by clients is second to none." "He provides very clear, thorough advice and he's very good with clients."

Recent work: Acted on behalf of a claimant who suffered a broken shoulder and hip after being pulled over by her friend's Alsatian when the dog's lead was placed in her hand. Liability was disputed on the basis that the claimant consented to the risk of injury by agreeing to take hold of the lead.

Clinical Negligence

Well regarded for his expertise in cauda equina cases, as well as other spinal injury claims. He is also active in cerebral palsy matters, as well as maternal obstetric injuries, and advises both claimants and defence organisations, including trusts and healthcare professionals.

"He is extremely able." "Excellent barrister with fantastic helpful and speedy service. No weakness."

LEGAL 500 2019

Personal Injury & Clin Neg

Very knowledgeable about cases of equine litigation.

CHAMBERS UK 2018

Clinical Negligence

Leading Junior - Band 1

Well regarded for his expertise in cauda equina cases, as well as other spinal injury claims. He is also active in cerebral palsy matters, and advises both claimants and defence organisations, including trusts and healthcare professionals.

Strengths: "He is an outstanding barrister who is extremely popular and has a fantastic understanding of the medical terminology." "He has great ability to process a lot of information in a very short space of time, and is very good in conferences with clients and experts."

Recent work: Represented the defendant in CD v Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust, a case concerning negligent management of the claimant's bleeding leading to the development of Sheehan's syndrome. The case was settled for £250,000.

Personal Injury

Leading Junior - Band 1

Focuses on personal injury cases relating to animals, particularly equine claims. He often handles matters involving brain injuries, spinal injuries and regional pain syndrome.

Strengths: "He is a master of claims involving personal injury caused by an animal, and he is always at the forefront of developments in the law." "John's knowledge of his subject area is very sound." "Very bright and very likeable."

Recent work: Successfully represented the second defendant in a claim arising out of a riding accident in which the claimant's horse was allegedly spooked by the second defendant's log transporter.

LEGAL 500 2017

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

Leading juniors

'Very bright and excellent with clients.'

CHAMBERS UK 2017

Clinical Negligence

Leading Junior - Band 1

Demonstrates particular expertise in clinical negligence, personal injury and equine litigation. He acts in high-value claims often concerning cerebral palsy, spinal injuries and obstetric damage.

Strengths: "Helpful, thoughtful and insightful." "He's very experienced and very thorough. He has good medical knowledge." "He tends to be on particularly complicated cases on liability. He can process information very quickly and distil it into advice."

Recent work: Defended an NHS Trust in connection with a claim of delayed diagnosis and treatment of raised intracranial pressure causing total blindness of the claimant.

Personal Injury

Leading Junior - Band 1

Focuses on personal injury cases relating to animals, particularly equine claims. He often handles matters involving brain injuries, spinal injuries and regional pain syndrome.

Strengths: "John has a first-class grasp on the Animals Act and is a real expert in his field." "Excellent understanding of Animals Act claims. Unparalleled for his knowledge and close attention to the issues."

Recent work: Acted for the defendant in a horse-riding accident case in which the claimant alleged she suffered a spinal injury due to her horse being hit by a whip by the defendant riding instructor.

LEGAL 500 2016

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

Leading juniors

'Approachable, well organised, effective in court and extremely knowledgeable.'

CHAMBERS UK 2016

Clinical Negligence

Leading Junior - Band 1

Has especially strong expertise in equine litigation to go with his well-respected practice in personal injury and clinical negligence. His clinical work focuses on very serious injury cases, and he has particular expertise in dealing with problems such as cerebral palsy and obstetric damage.

Strengths: "He is a very good and very experienced clinical negligence barrister."

Recent work: Represented a claimant affected by the severely delayed diagnosis of a myocardial infarction and carcinoid tumor. Causation was a particularly complex issue in the case, due particularly to contested psychiatric evidence.

Personal Injury

An experienced personal injury barrister with particular expertise in accidents caused by animals.

Strengths: "He is highly intelligent and always impeccably prepared; he is a master of cross-examination."

LEGAL 500 2015

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

Leading juniors

'Always extremely well prepared and on top of the papers'

CHAMBERS UK 2015

Clinical Negligence

Leading Junior - Band 1

Focuses on high-value cases including cerebral palsy, spinal injury and obstetric issues. He represents both claimants and defendants.

Expertise: "He's good on detail, particularly with paperwork and drafting." "He's thoroughly approachable and easy to work with."

Recent work: He represented the defendant in a claim of alleged surgical negligence following an operation to remove a Morton's neuroma.

Personal Injury

Leading Junior - Band 1

Receives instructions from both regional and national clients on personal injury claims, and has a particular niche in those relating to the Animal Act 1971.

Strengths: "He has an excellent understanding of Animal Act claims"

Recent work: Instructed in Bell v Professor Congdon, a claim brought under the Animal Act 1971.

LEGAL 500 2014

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

Leading juniors

'Handles claimant and defendant personal injury and clinical negligence cases of the utmost complexity and severity'.

John Snell recently handled a multimillion-pound claim relating to sustained catastrophic brain and orthopaedic injuries following a roadside collision.

CHAMBERS UK 2014

Clinical Negligence

A noted medical negligence, personal injury and professional discipline barrister. He has a particular talent in handling high-level cerebral palsy and spinal injury cases.

Expertise: "He is always very helpful, approachable and very good with clients." "I would have no hesitation in recommending him."

Recent work: Acted for Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust in defending a case brought by a claimant who suffered from a miscarriage as a result of a failure to diagnose appendicitis.

Personal Injury

Receives particular acclaim for his handling of claims under the Animals Act. He is also highly experienced in catastrophic injury claims arising from RTAs, in which he acts for both claimants and defendants.

Expertise: "He's the go-to for Animals Act cases, and he has a very sharp mind - he's able to get to the crux of the issue very quickly."

Recent work: He acted for the defendant in a claim resulting from a riding accident, where the claimant suffered a spinal injury in a fall from a galloping horse.

LEGAL 500 2013

Clinical Negligence

John Snell, Abigail Stamp and Robert Sowersby are also recommended for their clinical negligence expertise.

CHAMBERS UK 2013

Clinical Negligence

John Snell has a practice which is split between personal injury, professional regulation and clinical negligence. He is lauded for "his excellent knowledge and meticulous preparation," and is also noted for having "a wonderfully empathetic manner with clients which enables him to quickly gain their trust." He has considerable expertise in claims relating to delayed diagnosis of cancer.

Personal Injury

John Snell "is one of the foremost advocates for cases concerning accidents caused by animals," although the scope of his practice is far broader. He takes in a range of cases, including those relating to brain injuries, cerebral palsy and complex regional pain syndrome.

LEGAL 500 2012

John Snell is recommended for clinical negligence matters.

CHAMBERS UK 2012

Personal Injury

The "exceptionally able and very bright" John Snell has an "outstanding eye for detail." He is especially well known for Animals Act and equine cases, and deals with serious brain and spinal injury claims.

Clinical Negligence

John Snell spent over a decade at noted London set 2 Temple Gardens, and brings with him an abundance of litigation experience involving medical, surgical and dentistry cases. Sources highlight his "exceptional analytical skills and thorough attention to detail", before adding that he is "practical, approachable and personable and has an excellent ability to convey complex details to the lay client."

LEGAL 500 2011

John Snell 'thinks about things from all angles (and from both a claimant and defendant perspective) so that he gives a well thought out and balanced view at all times'.

CHAMBERS UK 2011

Personal Injury

Sources describe John Snell as "exceedingly bright and extremely efficient." "A lawyer with a persuasive manner," he has considerable expertise on matters involving animals.

LEGAL 500 2010

John Snell includes equine-related claims within a high-value claims practice.

CHAMBERS UK 2010

Personal Injury

John Snell has made a big impression on the market. His thorough, focused approach and sound judgement play well with solicitors and clients alike.

LEGAL 500 2009

John Snell includes Equine-related claims within his high-value practice.

CHAMBERS UK 2009

Personal Injury

"Everyone's favourite," John Snell is renowned for his practice in litigation regarding animals and elicits praise for being "thorough, focused, responsive and sound in his judgement." He "always gets the right answer" for his clients.

LEGAL 500 2008

John Snell recently acted for the claimant in Tracey Pye v Holtam, a serious motorcycle accident case.

MEMBERSHIPS:

- Personal Injury Bar Association
 - Professional Negligence Bar Association
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EDUCATION:

- MA (Oxon), Literae Humaniores, Oriel College, Oxford
 - Diploma in Law, City University London
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RECENT NEWS

- Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence Newsletter - April 2020
 - Personal Injury Case Updates - December 2015
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