

DEBBIE GRENNAN

CALL: 1997

"Debbie's courtroom skills are exceptional. She is crystal clear on paper and in person, and always puts the clients at ease."

Legal 500 2022

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Debbie is a highly sought-after and experienced employment & discrimination barrister.

PRACTICE AREAS

- Employment & Discrimination
 - Professional Discipline
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EMPLOYMENT & DISCRIMINATION

Debbie has a balance of claimant and respondent work which covers all aspects of employment and discrimination law, as well as business protection and trade union law. She appears in the Court of Appeal, the Employment Appeal Tribunal, the High Court and County Courts, as well as the Employment Tribunal and SEND Tribunal.

Debbie represents parties from public and private sectors. Her work regularly involves complex cases of whistleblowing, health and safety, discrimination, TUPE and related matters, as well as claims in respect of restrictive covenants and directors / fiduciary duties. She is experienced in dealing with equal pay litigation and has been involved in very large public sector equal pay claims on behalf of both local authority employers and groups of employees, as well as private sector claims relating to large clearing banks.

She advises in respect of trade union matters, including issues relating to recognition, collective agreements and industrial action.

Debbie has particular expertise in the area of overlap between employment and insolvency law.

She also advises and appears in the Special Educational Needs ("SEND") Tribunal and undertakes civil Equality Act claims in respect of the matters such as the provision of services and education.

Debbie's employer clients include Local Authorities, NHS Trusts, schools, clearing banks, large national and multi-national businesses and a large number of solicitors' firms, who appreciate her commercial outlook, pragmatism and ability to quickly get to the heart of the problem and find solutions which work for their organisations.

Her employee clients include professionals from various sectors, from celebrity chefs and football club directors to medical professionals, senior public and private sector directors and employees and legal and HR professionals.

She is regularly instructed to advise in relation to TUPE transfers, restructuring and redundancy processes and changing terms and conditions.

Debbie is renowned for her exceptional client care skills, forensic attention to detail and is a highly respected advocate. She is consistently ranked as a Band 1 barrister by both Legal 500 and Chambers UK and is actively involved with the key employment law professional groups and associations.

Debbie is on the EHRC Panel of approved barristers.

[MISSED ANY OF OUR RECENT TEAM WEBINARS - CLICKHERE TO VIEW](#)

SIGNIFICANT CASES

- **Sweeney v Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company UKEAT/0277/17** -a very lengthy appeal process concerning the admissibility of evidence and the impact of a reconsideration judgment by the ET.
- **Martin v University of Exeter UKEAT/0092/18** -concerning the definition of disability for Equality Act purposes and in particular, the tribunal's approach to the term "likely" when considering whether the condition was long-term.
- **Callendar v South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust UKEAT/0012/18** -dealing with the final straw in constructive dismissal claims and the tribunal's approach to the proportionality defence in the disability discrimination claim.
- **McDowell v BAE Systems (Operations) Ltd [2018] ICR 214** -concerning the prima facie age-discriminatory tapering cap on BAE's discretionary redundancy scheme and the extent to which this was justified.
- **Gallop v Newport City Council (No 2) [2016] IRLR 395 (EAT)**- dealing with knowledge of disability and the mindset of the decision-maker.
- **Gallop v Newport City Council [2014] IRLR 211 (COURT OF APPEAL)** -dealing with the requirement of knowledge of disability and the significance of Occupational Health advice.
- **Gallop v Newport City Council [2013] IRLR 23 (EAT)** concerning the requirement of knowledge of disability and the admissibility of without prejudice communications when assessing compensation for unfair dismissal.
- **Plymouth City Council v White UKEAT/0333/13**- Relating to the correct test for specific disclosure of documents.
- **Obokoh v Hywel DDA Health Board UKEAT/0407/12**- Dealing with the correct approach to wasted cost orders against a party's representative.
- **Obokoh v Hywel DDA Health Board UKEAT/0089/12**- Relating to SOSR dismissals and immigration status.
- **Somerset County Council v Chaloner UKEAT/0600/12**- Dealing with the correct approach to redundancy dismissals in the context of a business reorganization.
- **Singh v Bristol Sikh Temple UKEAT/0429/11** - Relating to the employment status of a Sikh priest.
- **Wheelers (Westbury) v Smallwood UKEAT/0455/10** - Regarding Service Provision Changes under TUPE.
- **Hookey v Truro School UKEAT/0234/10** - Dealing with causation of loss and assessment of damages in unfair dismissal claims.
- **Cherrington v Plymouth City Council UKEAT/0449/09**- Relating to the definition of a protected disclosure in the context of whistle-blowing.
- **Wright v Weed Control Ltd UKEAT/0492/07** - Dealing with the jurisdiction of employment tribunals to hear cases for breach of confidence.
- **Ranger v BIT Systems UKEAT/0049/07** - Relating to unfair dismissal and the failure of the ET to have regard to all material facts.
- **Walker v Hiberna FM Ltd UKEAT/0242/06** - Dealing with territorial jurisdiction in respect of a civilian working in Kosovo.
- **Mark Insulations v Bunker UKEAT/0331/05** - Concerning continuity of service under the ERA.
- **Scorah v Thomas UKEAT/0577/05** - Relating to Polkey deductions.

PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE

INTERNAL INVESTIGATION, HEARINGS AND APPEAL

Debbie regularly undertakes internal investigation processes for employer clients (such as disciplinary, grievance, whistleblowing and health and safety matters), as well as chairing and determining issues at internal hearings and appeals. She is also able to provide specialist employment advice in respect of their processes and decisions.

For employees, Debbie has particular expertise in cases which involve potentially career-ending allegations, most notably for senior medical staff, headteachers and legal and FCA-governed professionals.

HEALTHCARE REGULATION

Debbie regularly undertakes work in respect of proceedings before professional regulators. Her work includes advising and appearing in proceedings before the General Medical Council, the General Dental Council, the General Optical Council, the Nursing & Midwifery Council and the Teachers' Regulation Agency.

She also advises as to solicitors' professional conduct obligations under the Code of Conduct and in proceedings before the SRA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

LEGAL 500 2021

Employment

'Debbie's courtroom skills are exceptional. She is crystal clear on paper and in person, and always puts the client at ease.'

Ranked: Tier 1

CHAMBERS UK 2021

Employment

Band 1

Highly experienced in high-value and complex discrimination and whistle-blowing claims, as well as matters relating to equal pay and TUPE. She regularly receives instructions on behalf of public sector clients, including respondent local authorities and the NHS.

Strengths: "Debbie Grennan is a delight to work with. She is the perfect blend of calm reassurance for the client, and incisive and persuasive advocacy in tribunal, which is always done with a smile." "A fantastic advocate and very client-friendly. She engages with the client and is able to distil complex factual and legal issues in layman's terms. She is calm and collected and gets the best out of witnesses. You definitely want her acting for your side!"

Recent work: Acted for a consultant surgeon in a whistle-blowing detriment claim against BMI Healthcare.

LEGAL 500 2021

Employment

'Very impressive on her feet - a joy to watch in action.'

Ranked: Tier 1

CHAMBERS UK 2020

Employment

Highly experienced in high-value and complex discrimination and whistle-blowing claims, as well as matters relating to equal pay and TUPE. She regularly receives instructions on behalf of public sector clients, including respondent local authorities and the NHS. She appears before the Employment Appeal Tribunal in addition to her court practice.

Strengths: "She's an excellent advocate, with a first-rate technical ability. She is cool, calm and collected, approachable and always meticulously prepared."

Recent work: Successfully acted for 15 claimants in a case to determine whether a TUPE transfer had taken place, or simply a share sale, in relation to a private clinic.

LEGAL 500 2020

Employment

"Very good with difficult clients."

CHAMBERS UK 2019

Employment

Highly experienced in high-value and complex discrimination and whistle-blowing claims, as well as matters relating to equal pay and TUPE. She regularly receives instructions on behalf of public sector clients, including respondent local authorities and the NHS. She appears before the Employment Appeal Tribunal in addition to her court practice.

"She has a great cocktail of qualities: she has a real fighting spirit, and a good measure of commerciality as well; she's clever at making the other side engage with our position when they are entrenched." "She's tremendous: she's very strong, very diligent and very sensible."

Recent work: Represented the successful claimant in an age discrimination claim against BAE Systems. The respondent's enhanced redundancy scheme meant that employees aged 63.5 or above received reduced or no enhanced payments.

LEGAL 500 2019

Employment

'Her technical ability is first rate.'

CHAMBERS UK 2018

Employment

Leading Junior - Band 1

Highly regarded for her expertise in high-value and complex discrimination and whistle-blowing claims, as well as matters relating to equal pay and TUPE. She regularly receives instructions on behalf of respondent local authorities and the NHS. She appears before the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) in addition to her civil court practice.

Strengths: "Calm, collected, meticulously prepared and very persuasive. Watching her unravel a case through cross-examination is better than going to the theatre."

Recent work: Represented the claimant in an age discrimination case against BAE Systems. The case concerned a tapering provision in an enhanced redundancy scheme.

LEGAL 500 2017

Employment

Leading juniors

'Experienced in equal pay litigation.'

CHAMBERS UK 2017

Employment

Leading Junior - Band 1

Highly regarded for her expertise in high-value and complex discrimination and whistle-blowing claims, as well as matters relating to equal pay and TUPE. She regularly receives instructions on behalf of respondent local authorities and the NHS.

Strengths: "She has complete knowledge of her brief and is calmness personified."

Recent work: Represented the claimants in a high-profile whistle-blowing case brought by two senior employees against two NHS trusts. The claims were successful, leading to a number of resignations and significant settlements.

LEGAL 500 2016

Employment

Leading juniors

'An employment law specialist.'

CHAMBERS UK 2016

Employment

Leading Junior - Band 1

Well reputed for her handling of complex whistle-blowing and discrimination cases, along with TUPE and equal pay claims. She receives a large number of instructions from NHS and local authority respondents.

Strengths: "She's a very effective presenter, a feisty cross-examiner and a robust advocate." "Good with clients, sharp on her feet, and involved closely even before the hearings."

Recent work: Represented the claimants in *Sardari & Gates v Torbay and Southern Devon Health & Care NHS Trust* and *South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust*, a high-level whistle-blowing matter which ultimately led to internal investigations at the organisations concerned.

LEGAL 500 2015

Employment

Leading juniors

'Her advice is always focused, clear and pragmatic'.

Debbie Grennan recently represented two employees in a high-profile whistleblowing case against two NHS trusts.

CHAMBERS UK 2015

Employment

Leading Juniors (Band 1)

One of the Western Circuit's leading employment barristers, with vast NHS and local authority-related experience. She is noted for the breadth of her practice, which covers discrimination, whistle-blowing, TUPE and equal pay-related claims.

Expertise: "She is incredibly intuitive in terms of knowing what you want to achieve and finding the quickest way to get you there. If you ask her to do something you know it will be done quickly, but you can also be safe in the knowledge that everything is going to be done properly." "She is an excellent advocate, clear and concise in the advice which she provides."

Recent work: Represented Newport City Council as the respondent in a case at the Court of Appeal concerning a complex disability discrimination issue.

WHO'S WHO LEGAL - UK BAR 2015

The "incredible" Debbie Grennan. She is a "calm authority" on matters involving equal pay, whistleblowing, discrimination and TUPE.

LEGAL 500 2014

Employment

Leading juniors

'She has expertise in complex whistleblowing and discrimination cases, as well as TUPE and equal pay'.

CHAMBERS UK 2014

Employment

Has considerable experience of employment law disputes. She handles a mix of claimant and respondent work related to all aspects of employment law, and also acts on trade union cases.

Expertise: "She is an excellent advocate, clear and concise in the advice she provides, and very approachable."

Recent work: He was instructed in a high profile EAT appeal concerning the issue of the employment status of a Sikh priest.

LEGAL 500 2013

Other recommended members of the 'very strong' group include Debbie Grennan.

LEGAL 500 2012

Debbie Grennan has particular expertise in discrimination and whistle-blowing claims.

LEGAL 500 2011

'Debbie Grennan's responses are prompt, apposite and down to earth; and her business acumen is faultless'.

LEGAL 500 2010

'Mixes a delightful and reassuring approach with clients with real grit and determination in the Employment Tribunal'.

LEGAL 500 2009

'Debbie Grennan has loads of ability and is user-friendly too'.

LEGAL 500 2008

'Highly-regarded'.

MEMBERSHIPS:

- Employment Lawyers Association
 - Employment Law Bar Association
 - Industrial Law Society
 - Western Circuit
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EDUCATION:

- LLB Hons
 - LLM, Medical Law & Ethics
 - Bar Vocational Course
 - Winner of the Lady Shaw prize as the highest placed female Grays Inn student
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RECENT NEWS

- Our Employment & Discrimination Team is delighted to announce that Anna Williams has accepted an offer of tenancy at Guildhall Chambers
 - Debbie Grennan appointed as South West representative for the Employment Lawyers Association for 2020-2022
 - Employment & Discrimination Team Business Continuity and Support Arrangements – Covid-19
 - Debbie Grennan to provide a Discrimination Update talk for ELA in Exeter
 - Julian Allsop & Debbie Grennan to speak at the ELA Solent Employment Law Conference 2019
 - Members of Guildhall provided training to NHS England, Department of Health & Local Government
 - Debbie Grennan and Julian Allsop are delighted to be able to assist the Employment Lawyers Association
 - ELA Webinar - Masterclass on Employment Claims in the Civil Courts - Feb 2016
 - Debbie Grennan & Julian Allsop: A Masterclass - EMPLOYEE COMPETITION - Sept 2015
 - Debbie Grennan and Julian Allsop to speak at DASLS Employment Law Update, Exeter Racecourse on 13 April 2015.
 - ELA Masterclass - Employment Claims in the Civil Courts 2015 -Jan 2015
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