

ROBERT SOWERSBY

CALL: 2000

"Robert is always well-prepared, very down to earth, and adept at putting forward hard hitting, persuasive arguments. I have every confidence that with his guidance, the outcome at the end of the case will be the best for the client."

LEGAL 500 2022

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Rob's busy practice is centered around defending clinical negligence claims and he has worked as a practitioner in this field for over 15 years.

Initially best known for claimant work, having followed the well-worn "*poacher turned gamekeeper*" path, Rob now acts principally for doctors, health boards and hospital trusts, no longer accepting instructions to act on behalf of claimants.

He has a reputation for success in unusually difficult cases and is well regarded for being strongly client-focused, 'down to earth' and skilled in dealing with experts. He is consistently recommended by the leading legal directories and is recognised for his ability to approach cases forensically but with an eye on the 'bigger picture'.

Rob sits locally as an Assistant Coroner and as result of this, along with regularly being instructed to provide representation, he has acquired extensive experience of large and high-profile inquests.

PRACTICE AREAS

- Clinical Negligence
- Inquests
- Personal Injury

CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE

Rob works across the full spectrum of clinical negligence work. Most of his cases arise from a serious untoward outcome, and many involve allegations of surgical negligence.

Rob often deals with claims of unusual factual or medical complexity. In terms of financial value; the majority fall within the £50,000 to £1m range.

He regularly provides advice and representation in cases involving allegations of:

- Surgical negligence
 - Failings in the provision of primary and/or emergency care
 - Failure to diagnose cancer
 - Negligence in the provision of psychiatric care
 - "Secondary victim" psychiatric claims
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INQUESTS

Rob sits part-time as an Assistant Coroner in Avon and has extensive experience of large and high-profile inquest work as an advocate.

PREVIOUS CASES

- **Re Ellie-May Clark (2018)** – a 5-year old girl died after her GP refused to see her when her mother was minutes late for an emergency appointment ([Five-year-old dies after being turned away from doctor's appointment 'because she was 10 minutes late' | The Independent](#) | [The Independent](#))
 - **Re Carl Smith (2015)** - Mr Smith died of methadone toxicity while on remand in Exeter Prison. He was on a methadone stabilisation programme but had obtained illicit methadone in addition to his prescribed dose. The jury returned a conclusion of 'drug-related death'; adding a narrative which indicated that both the welfare checks performed by the prison's healthcare provider, and the overnight observations carried out by the prison staff, were insufficient for a prisoner in Mr Smith's vulnerable position.
 - **Re Shaun Beasley (2012)** - Acted for Mr Beasley's family in the inquest following his suicide in a privately run prison. Mr Beasley had killed himself while purportedly under a scheme of increased observation in the prison's healthcare unit. Both the prison and the unit were run by different companies: there was a double finding of neglect by the jury (<http://www.itv.com/news/wales/2012-06-29/prisoners-suicide-contributed-to-by-neglect/>).
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PERSONAL INJURY

Whilst most of Rob's work is clinical, he still undertakes a small proportion of personal injury work, generally of high value, with complexity or unusual aspect, such as complex procedural, liability or causation issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

LEGAL 500 2022

Clinical Negligence

'Robert is always well-prepared, very down to earth, and adept at putting forward hard hitting, persuasive arguments. I have every confidence that with his guidance, the outcome at the end of the case will be the best for the client.'

Ranked: Tier 2

LEGAL 500 2021

Clinical Negligence

'Extremely thorough, unflappable, and insightful, with a sensitive and very efficient approach to cases.'

CHAMBERS UK 2019

Clinical Negligence

Regularly handles surgical negligence claims as well as those concerning negligent care of individuals. His practice predominantly centres on acting for claimants. He garners particular praise from commentators for his user-friendly approach.

"The work he produces is always of a high standard. He is very down to earth and is well received by clients." "Very straightforward."

LEGAL 500 2019

Personal Injury & Clin Neg

'A very grounded barrister, who always provides pragmatic advice.'

CHAMBERS UK 2018

Clinical Negligence

Leading Junior - Band 2

Regularly handles surgical negligence claims as well as those concerning negligent care of individuals. His practice predominantly centres on acting for claimants. He garners particular praise from commentators for his user-friendly approach.

Strengths: "I find him an excellent all-rounder. He has a very good understanding of what the client and a lawyer needs. He's tenacious and fights his corner, and his advocacy is first-rate." "He is a dedicated barrister and shows repeated good judgement." "He is very good at getting to grips with the issues and holding conferences with clients and experts in complex matters."

LEGAL 500 2017

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

Leading juniors

'He skilfully explains complex legal issues to lay clients.'

CHAMBERS UK 2017

Clinical Negligence

Leading Junior - Band 2

Praised by sources for his ability on technically complex claims. He handles a wide-ranging clinical negligence caseload, often tackling matters concerning surgical negligence and substandard care.

Strengths: "He's very efficient, helpful and friendly. He is one of those people that can take something complex and simplify it for everyone and get to the heart of the matter. He is also excellent at dealing with sensitive cases. You want him in your corner."

LEGAL 500 2016

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

Leading juniors

'A top-quality barrister with a unique ability to simplify the most difficult cases.'

CHAMBERS UK 2016

Clinical Negligence

Leading Junior - Band 2

A clinical negligence specialist, he is frequently instructed by a wide range of clients including a spectrum of niche clinical negligence firms nationwide. Sowersby is especially highly regarded for his expertise in genital injuries and bowel issues.

LEGAL 500 2015

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

Leading juniors

'He ensures that all aspects of a case are investigated thoroughly'.

CHAMBERS UK 2015

Clinical Negligence

Leading Junior - Band 1

Handles a wide range of clinical negligence work, with noted niche expertise in male genital injuries and issues of the bowel. Although he has a national client base, a strong portion of his caseload originates from Wales.

Expertise: "He is a dogged, tenacious advocate." "He's focused on client management and is particularly good with sensitive issues."

LEGAL 500 2014

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

'A clinical negligence specialist who attracts instructions nationally'.

CHAMBERS UK 2014

"A respected clinical negligence practitioner at the Western Bar...He is especially well known for his skills with inquests and chronic pain cases."

Expertise: "He comes into his own when dealing with difficult cases: he excels with them."

LEGAL 500 2013

'...recommended for [his] clinical negligence expertise...'

CHAMBERS UK 2013

Clinical Negligence

Band 1

'Roberts Sowersby's practice is almost entirely concentrated on clinical negligence claims, although he does also undertake some personal injury work. His caseload is predominantly made up of complex and high-value claims. Commentators note that "he is very persuasive as an advocate," because of his "ability to make the most technically difficult case seem straightforward." He is also highly regarded for "skill in dealing sensitively with clients on difficult cases - he's very approachable and down to earth".'

CHAMBERS UK 2012

Clinical Negligence

Band 1

'Robert Sowersby recently joined Guilhdall from Devereux Chambers in London and is emphatically praised as "thorough, well-informed and empathetic individual who is very good with clients".'

LEGAL 500 2011

'The [Guildhall] team was enhanced by the addition of Robert Sowersby, who exhibits "a ruthless professionalism in court", provides advice that is "to the point and easy to understand", and is "superb with experts".'

CHAMBERS UK 2011

Personal Injury

Band 1

'Robert Sowersby is [a] highly regarded practitioner, who has a good deal of experience and expertise in this area. He is noted for his "willingness to fight difficult cases" and the fact that he "always complies with deadlines quickly".'

CHAMBERS UK 2010

'...thought to be particularly good on fatal cases. He was described as having "a good analytical mind and a relaxed manner with clients". He was further commended for the fact that "he fights his corner in court, remaining impressively calm and unflappable at all times".'

APPOINTMENTS:

- Assistant Coroner (Avon)
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MEMBERSHIPS:

- PIBA
 - The King's Fund
 - The Coroners Society
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EDUCATION:

- BVC, ICSL
 - PgDip Law, UWE
 - MA, History & Anthropology
 - First Class Hons, History, UCL
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RECENT NEWS

- Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence Newsletter - April 2020
 - Rob Sowersby comments on Inquest heard yesterday of little girl who died of asthma after being turned away from doctors
 - Personal Injury Case Updates - December 2015
 - Rob Sowersby - Appointed Assistant Coroner
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