

Steven Snowden QC

Call: 1989

Silk: 2017



AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Personal Injury, Industrial Disease, Clinical Negligence, Public Inquiries, Inquests, Insurance, Costs

Steven Snowden QC is recognised in the independent legal directories as one of the leading barristers in the country in his areas of work.

Steven's main areas of practice are high-value, complex or sensitive personal injury and industrial disease cases, alongside which he regularly deals with aspects of procedure and costs and appears at inquests. His practice extends to associated insurance, professional negligence and clinical negligence work. He works for claimants and for defendants.

Steven is a strong and experienced trial advocate and regularly deals with substantial and complex cases in court and in settlement meetings. His current case-load includes the liability and quantum aspects of head injuries, paraplegic and other serious spinal injury cases, amputations, psychiatric injuries and fatal claims. In disease work he deals with mesothelioma and other asbestos claims, stress at work and other occupational illness claims involving difficult issues of liability, causation or quantum.

He is one of the authors of the Judicial College Guidelines for the Assessment of General Damages in Personal Injury Cases, and is the Vice Chair of the Personal Injuries Bar Association.

Inquests

Steven has been instructed to appear at inquests arising from work accidents, RTAs or deaths in residential or care homes. He has undertaken a two-week jury inquest into a swimming pool death during a school swimming lesson and a 3-day jury inquest arising from a roll-away HGV. He was retained on behalf of a major construction company in what was to be a three-week inquest involving 12 represented parties arising from multiple fatalities in sequential RTAs on a particular stretch of road where works had been carried out, and appeared at numerous pre-inquest hearings before successfully extricating his client completely from the inquest.

Qualifications & Awards

- BA (Law) University of Nottingham 1988
- Inns of Court School of Law 1989

Appointments & Memberships

- Appointed to the editorial team of the Judicial College Guidelines for the Assessment of General Damages
- Vice Chair of the Personal Injuries Bar Association.

- Member of PNBA and LCLCBA.

Publications

One of the authors of the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th editions of the Judicial College Guidelines for the Assessment of General Damages in Personal Injury Cases

Cases

Examples of Steven's personal injury work include:

- Securing the discontinuance after the first day of trial of an allegedly fraudulent claim involving surveillance evidence.
- Acting for a claimant in a nut-allergy anaphylactic shock claim with loss of opportunity to pursue a career as a professional boxer.
- Acting for the defendant employer facing a claim which sought to link repetitive manual work with acceleration of spinal degeneration. Claim dismissed after a six-day trial including a full day cross-examining claimant's medical expert, leading the judge to reject his evidence entirely.
- Instructed in a multi £m fatal accident claim, arising from the electrocution of a jogger when a power pylon retaining disc failed and the cable dropped but remained live. Extremely sensitive due to the nature of the death and the family circumstances, with HSE involvement in the background, and high value due to the deceased's job and age. Settlement approved.
- Representing one of three defendants in a serious injury claim arising from a fall through a ventilation shaft. Issues of occupier's liability, construction of leases, primary liability, contributory negligence and apportionment among defendants. Advising, negotiating at a mediation and then appearing at the liability trial where two days of cross-examination brought other parties to accept offers made previously, with appropriate costs consequences.
- Acting for driver's employer in an HGV roll-over case with detailed scientific evidence. Involved from the outset through drafting, advising, a JSM, and then 2-day liability trial. Claim dismissed.
- Bilateral amputation claim with issues over accommodation, equipment and prosthetic costs. Resolved at JSM, then advising on aspects of security of PPO.
- Instructed for one defendant against claimant and another defendant in an amputation claim arising from the combination of two RTAs in bad weather on a motorway. Reconstruction evidence, primary liability, apportionment and quantum all in issue.
- Acting for a child claimant suffering catastrophic brain injury when trapped beneath a farm gate which fell on him. Liability firmly disputed, quantum complicated by life expectancy, accommodation and care needs, and the fact that defendant had a PL policy with fixed indemnity cap so PPO not available. Satisfactorily settled at a JSM and settlement approved.
- Acting for EasyJet in an £11m+ claim – claimant already paraplegic when he suffered a minor injury – claim put on the basis that psychiatric consequences led to failure to engage with therapy, thereby greatly worsening his pre-existing condition. Significant issues of exaggeration. Claim dismissed.
- Acting for the defendant in a six-day High Court liability and quantum trial at the end of which damages of only £2,930 were awarded: *Everett v London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority* (Lawtel 22.11.13 and Lawtel 7.11.14)
- Substantial claim for somatic injury following a fall at work. Liability, causation, diagnosis and quantum all in issue. Surveillance evidence obtained and allegations of exaggeration.
- Instructed in civil claims and inquest for one of several defendants (construction company) in multiple linked claims for fatalities and serious injuries arising from RTAs in wet conditions on successive days at a location where highway works had previously been carried out, severing a drain. Complex issues of accident reconstruction, highway engineering, vehicle maintenance, causation, contributory negligence, contractual indemnity and quantum. Successfully extricating his client from all claims.
- Led (when a junior) in quantum aspects of a £10m brain injury claim arising from an RTA.
- Acting for the defendant in a serious RTA claim with issues over automatism / unforeseeable medical event causing accident.
- Representing a young claimant rendered paraplegic in a scooter accident. Issues over contributory negligence

(helmet came off) and quantum all satisfactorily resolved together at a JSM with a lump sum and periodical payments.

- Recovered an award of £5.5m for a brain-injured child in one of the remaining cases under the old CICA scheme.
- Acting for a protected party in a serious head injury claim with arguments over acceleration of a pre-existing cerebro-vascular condition, need for care, Local Authority funding, periodical payments complicated by contributory negligence.
- Acting for infant claimants (one of whom not born at the date of death) in a fatal accident claim arising out of death of their grandmother who was closely involved in their care and upbringing. Nature and extent of dependency.

His reported cases include:

- **Kotula v EDF and others [2011] EWHC 1546 (QB) and [2010] EWHC B11 (QB)** – Acting initially for one, then for all three defendants in a paraplegic claim which had contested High Court hearings over liability, then over provisional damages and variable PPs, then over the terms of the final periodical payments order and the security of periodical payments when insurers were out of the jurisdiction and had policies with indemnity limits capped at fixed sums in Euros.
- **Dixie v British Polythene Industries [2010] EWCA Civ 1170, [2011] 1WLR 945** – Appearing at trial and in Court of Appeal on the issue of whether resurrection of a personal injury claim by second proceedings after the first had been struck out for failure to serve a claim form in time was permissible under the Limitation Act or was an abuse of process.
- **Gray v Thames Trains [2009] UKHL 491** – Appearing in the House of Lords (led) for the defendant in a claim by a survivor of the Ladbrooke Grove train crash for damages – issue of whether his claims for loss of earnings etc after committing manslaughter as a consequence of psychiatric injury sustained in the accident were barred as unlawful acts or under the doctrine of *ex turpi causa*.
- **Glaister v Appleby in Westmoreland Town Council [2009] EWCA Civ 1325, [2010] PIQR P6**– Acting at trial and in the Court of Appeal arguing over the existence of a duty of care alleged to have been owed to seriously injured bystander by a runaway horse at the Appleby Horse Fair.
- **Hashtroodi v Hancock [2004] EWCA (Civ) 652** – Appearing at all stages from master's hearing through to Court of Appeal in a case concerning the proper test for extension of time for service of a claim form – application made when claim form still valid but after limitation period had expired – whether “good reason” needed.

Examples of Steven's industrial disease work include:

- Acting in a wide range of cases for claimants and defendants in so-called “low dose” asbestos exposure cases with exposure typically in the 1970's in construction, schools, business premises, exposure incidental to employment and secondary exposure claims.
- Acting in a high-value living mesothelioma claim arising from alleged exposure during works at Heathrow Airport in the 1980s. Detailed technical expert evidence, issues over disclosure and insurance coverage.
- Acting for a claimant construction professional in a substantial claim for stress at work, successfully settled after a JSM and then a mediation.
- Acting for Pret a Manger to defend a stress claim brought by an assistant manager; successful after four-day trial.
- Advising in respect of liability, quantum, apportionment and settlement of a silicosis claim and subsequently in respect of an application for further provisional damages for pneumothoraces.
- High Court trial of a preliminary issue in a mesothelioma claim – transfer of historic liabilities and of the benefit of insurance from a Local Authority to an education corporation under the Higher and Further Education Act 1992.
- Representing a claimant in a stress at work claim against a major city bank – case settled satisfactorily at JSM before trial.

His reported cases include:

- **Dowdall v William Kenyon & Others [2014] EWHC 2822 (QB)** – Preliminary issue trial in a living mesothelioma claim brought by a claimant who had many years before brought (and compromised provisional damages claims on a full and final basis) claims against a number of other employers who had exposed him to asbestos. Novel legal issues, with arguments of estoppel, abuse of process and limitation.
- **Fleet v Fleet [2009] EWHC 3166 (QB)** – Deceased mesothelioma claim – assessment of damages – proper approach to claims for loss of the unique care and attention of a spouse – Ogden 6 contingency discounts for a man older than 55.
- **Watson v Cakebread Robey Ltd [2009] EWHC 1695 (QB)** – Trial of a living mesothelioma claim – assessment of damages – recoverability of prospective funeral expenses – Ogden 6 contingency discounts for a man older than 55 – past and future loss of earnings when the claimant had not declared his business for tax, VAT, etc.