

Stephen Connolly



Call 2003



Clerks

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Memberships

- Lincoln's Inn
- Northern Circuit Commercial Bar Association
- Northern Chancery Bar Association
- Chancery Bar Association

Education

- University of Buckingham, LLB
- St Thomas More High School, Preston

Commercial Fraud

Stephen has extensive experience in the field of commercial fraud acting for Claimants and for Defendants alike as well as for innocent third parties who find themselves caught up in a fraud or in proceedings arising from that fraud. He is known for his first rate legal mind (Legal 500 2017) and for being a very able and pugnacious litigator (Chambers and Partners 2018).

Stephen adopts a proactive and team based approach in connection with his commercial fraud work. He is regularly instructed on urgent interim relief applications, whether to freeze assets or preserve documents and property or to resist the making of such orders or to seek to have them set aside where obtained without notice. He has a deserved reputation as an excellent advocate who is particularly effective in injunctions and interim relief applications (Legal 500 2016).

Interim relief apart, a substantial part of Stephen's practice is prosecuting and defending substantial commercial fraud matters through to trial. At any given time Stephen is instructed on a wide range of commercial fraud claims including common law claims in deceit and restitution, equitable claims for breach of trust and breach of fiduciary duty, accessory claims for knowing receipt and dishonest assistance that arise from such claims and economic tort claims for conspiracy and inducement to breach and similar. As claims in commercial fraud so often require, Stephen is tenacious in his approach, is bold and is technically very good (Chambers and Partners 2017).

Commercial Fraud Cases

Sample cases include:

Clements v Frisby [2023] EWHC 320 (Ch)

I v B (2018) – currently acting for Claimant company in injunctive proceedings against former senior employee and co-conspirators in connection with misappropriation and misuse of confidential information.

P v D (2018) – currently acting for Defendants defending warranty claims brought on the basis of allegations of fraud with an asserted value of over £6 million.

A v J (2018) – currently advising the Claimant in connection with prospective proceedings arising out of the administration and liquidation of a limited company involving substantial claims under both the Insolvency Act for voidable preference and TUV and also claims for breach of duty by de jure and de facto directors.

E v J (2018) – currently acting for Claimant company in proceedings for breach of trust, breach of fiduciary duty and accessory claims against former nominee and investment manager in connection with the misappropriation and misuse of trust assets to a value of £2 million plus. Successful in obtaining and thereafter maintaining freezing and proprietary orders and Norwich Pharmacal relief.

Eden v Parker [2016] EWHC 3302 (Ch) – acted for the Claimant in 3 week trial involving claims in deceit and breach of fiduciary duty by a member of an LLP arising out of a substantial property development.

Hy-Fly v Salisbury (2015) – acted for the Claimant in equitable fraud proceedings seeking to recover substantial sums that had been paid to the Defendant as deposit monies for the purchase and construction of commercial wind turbines which never materialised. Following trial and on the eve of judgement being handed down, favourable settlement terms were agreed.

VC v J (2015) – acted for the Claimant in proceedings against its former managing director for misuse of confidential information and breach of covenant claiming losses in excess of £1 million. The proceedings began with Anton Pillar and Freezing Order relief which was maintained on applications being made to set the same aside. Claim subsequently settled at mediation.

Recommendations

“Stephen is resilient and user-friendly and makes himself available. His work is at a very high quality.”

Chambers and Partners 2024

“Stephen is sure on his legal arguments and prepares to develop them carefully but with force in his skeleton arguments and before a judge. He is an advocate to have in your corner for a case heading for trial, and he is not distracted by new matters as they unfold and remains calm under pressure.”

The Legal 500 2024

“His communication is excellent. He is really thorough and hard-working. He is a formidable opponent. Stephen is a force to be reckoned with.”

“Stephen is pragmatic in his advice and very clear in his plan of operation.”

“Stephen is incredibly bright and incredibly commercial.”

Chambers and Partners 2023

“Stephen quickly gets to the nub of issues and is able to focus on the points that really matter. He gives clear views and delivers his messages to the client in a very user-friendly way. He also thinks outside the box and is prepared to consider all potential options at any stage.”

The Legal 500 2023

“His attention to detail is phenomenal and he’s also someone who quickly builds a very good rapport with clients. He’s very unassuming, extremely bright and very accessible despite being a senior barrister.”

Chambers and Partners 2022

“Stephen’s work, both written and spoken, is impressive. His submissions are well expressed and persuasive and he is very good on his feet.”

The Legal 500 2022

“An outstanding advocate with an extremely sharp analytical brain.”
“He has a calm, measured approach and gets to the commercial side of the issues.” “His advocacy is top-draw and he has a solicitor background so he has the ability to empathise with clients and understands their challenges.”

Chambers and Partners 2021

“An outstanding advocate with an extremely sharp analytical brain. He’s succinct in his advice and doesn’t sit on the fence.”

“He’s practical, commercial and an incredible trial advocate. His attention to detail is second to none, which ultimately is what makes him such effective counsel.”

Chambers and Partners 2020

“An exceptional advocate – he really gets into the nitty gritty of the papers and leaves no stone unturned. His cross examination skills are as good as I have seen. His client handling skills are superb.”

The Legal 500 2021

“A good commercial barrister.”

The Legal 500 2020

“He is an outstanding advocate with an extremely sharp analytical brain. He is succinct in his advice and does not sit on the fence.” “His attention to detail, ability to talk the client’s language and his robustness are first-rate. He is able to cut through ancillary issues and get to the heart of the matter, something which is key in delivering an excellent result for the client.”

Chambers and Partners 2019

“A tough negotiator with a calm manner.”

The Legal 500 2018/19

“I’m always impressed by his ability to grasp technical matters and he is very client-friendly as well.” “He is a very able and pugnacious litigator.”

Chambers and Partners 2018

“A first-rate legal mind.”

The Legal 500 2017

“He’s quite tenacious, very bold and technically very good.” “Very good in court and has excellent paperwork.”

Chambers and Partners 2017

“An excellent advocate, who is particularly effective in injunctions and interim relief applications.”

The Legal 500 2016

“He’s brilliant on his feet. He’s a really good advocate. He fights the client’s corner – a force to be reckoned with.”

Chambers and Partners 2016

“Barrister with renowned advocacy skills who practices in commercial and property disputes.”

Chambers and Partners 2016

“His practice includes shareholder and company disputes, partnership conflicts and professional negligence.”

The Legal 500 2015

“Specialises in high-value and complex disputes.”

The Legal 500 2014

Beyond the Bar

Outside of work Stephen plays the trumpet, cycles and watches Preston North End.