

Richard Furniss

Call 1991

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Richard Furniss has more than 20 years' experience of clinical negligence, personal injury, and solicitors' and other professional negligence. He is an expert in medico-legal work, has appeared in innumerable inquests, and has wide experience of judicial review and Court of Protection matters, especially where they concern medical issues.

He has always acted for both claimants and defendants in all areas of his work.

He is straightforward and firm, but personable and sympathetic with lay and professional clients. He brings an imaginative approach to cases, but is sensible and realistic when advising.

Richard was educated at Downing College, Cambridge, and called to the Bar in 1991.

Clinical Negligence Law

Richard is a well-known specialist in medical law, and has vast experience of all aspects of clinical negligence and personal injury work.

He acts both for claimants and for defendants.

His clinical negligence cases have encompassed almost all aspects of that area of work. He is regularly instructed in cerebral palsy and other catastrophic cases, and has been sole or junior counsel in very many cases worth in excess of £1 million.

Related accreditations

- Widely known for his extensive experience acting on behalf of both claimants and defendants. He routinely handles cases concerning cerebral palsy, as well as a range of catastrophic injury claims. He is also renowned for his personal injury advocacy.
- Strengths: *"Pragmatic and sensible."* *"Prompt, thorough and concise. He always gives sound advice and instils confidence in clients and lawyers alike."*

- *"Richard is excellent with both witnesses and experts."*

"He's very good supporting his clients through the legal process, and is also technically very strong."

– [Chambers & Partners 2021](#)

- Recent work: Acted for a claimant who contracted an infection after undergoing surgery on his fractured wrist, rendering him unable to use his wrist. Chambers and Partners 2018
- In 2014 edition of Chambers & Partners, Richard is described as “a top-rated junior...who is widely appreciated for his comprehension and expert analysis of voluminous complex information: *‘He has the ability to sort through large amounts of information and come up with sensible suggestions, and gives a strong opinion about matters, which is often what is needed. He takes control of cases and gives a good sense of direction. Pleasingly, he is realistic and sensible in his assessment of cases, which is a real plus.’*”
- And in the 2015 edition, he is “A well-regarded clinical negligence advocate, who is recognised by market sources for his approachable manner and technical skill. His practice covers both the claim and defendant side and takes in cases relating to cerebral palsy and catastrophic injury. *‘He can cut through a case, see what the main issues are and give you really practical solutions when you’re trying to settle cases.’ ‘He’s great with clients and really leads the way when it comes to round-table meetings.’*”
- “Clients appreciate his ability to provide... straightforward advice given in a manner which is readily understandable by those without either legal or medical training.”



Court of Protection

Richard’s Court of Protection work is largely but not exclusively ancillary to his main specialism in medical law.

For example, he acts for NHS Trusts, individuals and the Official Solicitor in cases where the court is asked to determine what medical treatment is in the best interests of a patient who lacks capacity to give or withhold consent.

He also has experience of deprivation of liberty cases, especially where there is a dispute over medical issues, often concerning elderly people who are said to have lost capacity due to age-related dementia, but also those who are being held securely in hospital.

Related accreditations

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Inquests

Richard has enormous experience of all types of inquest and coronial law.

He has acted in nearly a hundred Article 2 inquests, especially those concerning deaths in prison, including the inquests into the deaths of Gareth Myatt, Michael Bailey, Wayne Reid and Aleksey Baranovsky.

He has also acted in innumerable inquests arising from deaths in hospital and concerning the adequacy of medical care. He represents both the families of the deceased and doctors/NHS Trusts. He acted for London Air Ambulance (Bart's Health NHS Trust) in the inquests for the victims of the London 7/7/05 bombings.

Richard is especially well known for his ability to tackle complex medical issues (and has particular experience of positional asphyxia cases).

Recent Cases:

Inquest into the death of Police Sergeant Matt Ratana (2023) - Richard Furniss led Max Montgomery as Counsel to the Inquest. The Inquest, held over three weeks in November 2024, touched the death of Police Sergeant Matt Ratana, who was murdered in Croydon Custody Centre on 25 September 2020 by Louis De Zoysa. Mr De Zoysa had been arrested for possession of cannabis with intent to supply and possession of ammunition following a stop and search by a Metropolitan Police Constable. A loaded revolver in a holster on his person was not discovered during the search and was used in custody by De Zoysa to shoot and kill Sergeant Ratana. The Senior Coroner found there was "failure to carry out a safe, thorough and systematic search". De Zoysa had been convicted of murder so the conclusion was inevitably that of 'Unlawful Killing'.

The Inquest has been widely reported in the press:

[BBC](#)

[Sky News](#)

Related accreditations:

"An experienced and accomplished junior, who is able to handle large cases with good sense and judgement." Legal 500 2021

"Clients appreciate his ability to provide... straightforward advice given in a manner which is readily understandable by those without either legal or medical training."



Judicial Review

As a specialist in medical law, Richard has experience of various aspects of judicial review, but is particularly well-known for cases which involve medical issues. Frequently, these arise in the setting of a prison or other secure establishment.

Related accreditations

“Clients appreciate his ability to provide... straightforward advice given in a manner which is readily understandable by those without either legal or medical training.”

Personal Injury Law

Richard has well over 20 years’ experience of personal injury, and has done every type of personal injury case.

Latterly, he has generally concentrated on brain and spinal injury, amputation, and fatal claims, whether sustained at work or in a road traffic accident or otherwise.

He also has enormous experience of injury caused by stress at work, and of pain and fatigue syndromes.

He has acted on many cases where injury has been sustained as a result of deliberate assault, when aggravated and/or exemplary damages might be in issue.

On the quantum side, Richard has particularly wide-ranging experience and expertise in the assessment of future loss of earnings, especially where the issue is the loss of a chance.

Related accreditations

- *“He is great - really approachable and very clear in his advice.”* – [Chambers and Partners 2021](#)
- Recognised for his abilities in catastrophic injury and costs litigation on behalf of claimant clients. He has deep knowledge of the Fatal Accidents Act and vast experience in industrial disease cases, lower limb amputations and complex spinal injuries claims. Sources further note his ability to assist in cases involving psychiatric and chronic pain injuries. Chambers and Partners 2018
- In the Personal Injury section of the 2014 edition of Chambers & Partners, Richard is said to be *“acclaimed by instructing solicitors for his expertise and straightforward approach to a variety of complex areas of personal injury claims. He is experienced in catastrophic brain injury and fatal claims, as well as those involving complex regional pain disorder. ‘He picks up on everything and tells it to you straight.’ ‘He’s a pleasure to work with as he’s decisive, efficient and well prepared.”*
- And in 2015, he is *“Highly experienced at handling a variety of claims regarding serious injuries caused by RTAs and assaults, including matters concerning traumatic brain and psychiatric injuries. He is recognised for his confident courtroom demeanour and his excellence when it comes to strategy. ‘A consummate PI lawyer, who has seen everything and worked out how to deal with it. Light on his feet, flexible in his approach and able to think ahead when faced with a problem, he’s very handy to have on your side.’”*
- *“Clients appreciate his ability to provide... straightforward advice given in a manner which is readily understandable by those without either legal or medical training”*



Professional Negligence

Richard is a specialist in medical law, and clinical negligence in particular. He also has considerable experience of other professional negligence, including solicitors, accountants, financial advisers, insurance brokers, architects, surveyors, veterinary surgeons (with particular experience of equine matters), and estate agents.

His solicitors' negligence work often (but by no means exclusively) concerns failed clinical negligence and personal injury cases.

He acted for the successful claimant in *Knatchbull v John D Wood*, establishing estate agents' duty of care to a vendor when marketing a property.

Related accreditations

- *"Richard is excellent with both witnesses and experts."*

"He's very good supporting his clients through the legal process, and is also technically very strong."

– [Chambers & Partners 2021](#)

- *"Clients appreciate his ability to provide... straightforward advice given in a manner which is readily understandable by those without either legal or medical training."*



Animal Welfare Law

Richard Furniss has substantial experience in professional negligence including veterinary negligence and in Animals Act cases. He is able to undertake judicial review and regulatory work.

Accreditations

- "A first-rate practitioner for high-value personal injury work." Legal 500 2021

- "Richard is excellent with both witnesses and experts."

"He's very good supporting his clients through the legal process, and is also technically very strong."

– [Chambers & Partners 2021](#)

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- "a top-rated junior...who is widely appreciated for his comprehension and expert analysis of voluminous complex information: 'He has the ability to sort through large amounts of information and come up with sensible suggestions, and gives a strong opinion about matters, which is often what is needed. He takes control of cases and gives a good sense of direction. Pleasingly, he is realistic and sensible in his assessment of cases, which is a real plus.' – 2014 Chambers & Partners
- A well-regarded clinical negligence advocate, who is recognised by market sources for his approachable manner and technical skill. His practice covers both the claim and defendant side and takes in cases relating to cerebral palsy and catastrophic injury. 'He can cut through a case, see what the main issues are and give you really practical solutions when you're trying to settle cases.' 'He's great with clients and really leads the way when it comes to round-table meetings.' – 2015 Chambers & Partners

Selected Cases

- T v Foster and others – RTA causing brain damage to a 16-year-old – settled for £3.75 million after discount for contributory negligence.
- Gunn v Essex Strategic HA – Community midwife negligently failed to diagnose meningitis in new-born baby – child survived with brain damage – damages £1.7 million.
- M v King's College Hospital – Wrongful birth after hospital failed to discover genetic abnormality – child born with

lobar holoprosencephaly – liability admitted shortly before trial – quantum ongoing.

- O v Queen Mary’s Sidcup NHS Trust – Cerebral palsy as a result of perinatal hypoxia – liability admitted during proceedings -quantum ongoing.

Professional Memberships

- PNBA
- PIBA

Education

- MA (Cantab)