



# Christopher Knowles

Call 2011

*"A brilliant junior. Highly intelligent, incredibly hardworking, and superb drafting and advice. Wise beyond his years"*

*Legal 500*

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Chris has been described in the directories as an "effective", "highly intelligent", and "hard-working" junior who "thinks of everything", "always has a novel point or two up his sleeve", and "can improve a case overnight"

He is recommended as a leading junior for insurance and reinsurance (Legal 500), and professional negligence (Legal 500, Chambers and Partners). He has appeared in some of the most important cases of recent years in his fields. He is appearing in the multi-billion-pound *Russian Aviation Insurance litigation*, and appeared for the successful Claimant in the leading case on the merits test for granting freezing orders, *Unitel S.A. v Isabel Dos Santos*, as well as in a high-profile barrister's negligence claim, *McClellan & Ors v Thornhill*, and for a group of successful insureds in the landmark *FCA Business Interruption Insurance Test Case*.

He has a broad commercial practice in line with chambers' profile, specialising in:

- Aviation & Travel
- Banking & Finance
- Commercial Disputes
- Civil Fraud
- Insurance & Reinsurance
- International Arbitration
- Privilege, Confidentiality & Conflicts of Interest
- Professional Negligence

He has extensive experience of high-value commercial disputes. He is comfortable appearing as sole counsel, and regularly appears for prominent UK and international clients. His work often has an international element. For example, he appeared in proceedings between two Monaco-based individuals, involving entities in Cyprus, Greece, the BVI, and Monaco, which took place against the background of litigation in those jurisdictions.

## Recent Highlights

### Russian Aviation Insurance Litigation

Appearing with Tim Howe KC for a reinsurer, Fidelis, in the multi-billion-pound insurance litigation arising from the

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alleged seizure of aircraft in Russia following the invasion of the Ukraine, defending claims under reinsurance policies reinsuring Russian operator insurance policies. These claims form part of the ongoing litigation in the Commercial Court arising from what some are predicting could be the largest ever aviation loss, and raise important coverage issues.

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## Unitel v UIH, Isabel Dos Santos

Appearing with Paul Sinclair KC in a c.£500m+ claim by an Angolan telecoms operator against a former director, the President of Angola's daughter, and a Dutch company she owned and controlled. The claim raises issues about the interpretation and enforceability of loan agreements and security, and breach of directors' duties. At first instance, Chris's client obtained a £580m worldwide freezing order against the former director. This was upheld by the Court of Appeal, in what is now the leading decision on the merits test for granting freezing orders: [2024] EWCA Civ 1109.

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## Zurich v Greensill, and Secretary of State for Business and Trade v Greensill

Chris acts for businessman Lex Greensill in matters arising from the collapse of Greensill Capital and the Greensill group. He acts, with David Railton KC, for Mr. Greensill in a \$392m claim against Mr. Greensill for deceit and unlawful means conspiracy brought by Zurich, in which it is alleged that Mr. Greensill procured Zurich's entry into insurance policies with Greensill entities through fraud. He also acts, with Andreas Gledhill KC, for Mr. Greensill in directors' disqualification proceedings brought by the Insolvency Service, in which it is alleged that Mr. Greensill allowed Greensill entities to enter into transactions disenfranchising noteholders, procured insurance for Greensill through fraud, and lied to Greensill Capital's board about the company's insurance status. Mr. Greensill denies both claims. These cases raise important factual and legal issues surrounding the collapse of the Greensill group.

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## FCA Business Interruption Insurance Test Case

Acted with Ben Lynch KC in the groundbreaking FCA Business Interruption Insurance Test Case, and a related arbitration between many policyholders and their insurers. Chris's clients succeeded on the key issues of construction and principle arising in relation to their policies, opening the door to recovering substantial business interruption losses.

# Expertise

## Aviation & Travel

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Christopher has substantial experience in this area, having addressed issues ranging from the existence and scope of rights in aircraft to the interpretation of agreements concerning ticketing, and the sale of seats on aircraft to tour operators.

## Notable Aviation & Travel cases

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Acting (with Matthew Reeve KC) for an airline in an ICC arbitration against an engine manufacturer. The dispute arose from the supply, by the manufacturer, of allegedly defective aircraft engines, and the alleged failure by the manufacturer to meet obligations to repair and maintain engines, and then return them, or else source replacements, within a particular time, resulting in aircraft being grounded. The dispute raised issues concerning the interpretation and application of contracts for the sale and maintenance of aircraft engines, the cause of aircraft being grounded, and the monetary relief available in respect of that, along with the availability of specific relief relating to repairing or returning the engines or making engines available to the airline.

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Acting (with Akhil Shah KC) for the lender under an aircraft financing transaction against the lessee of two aircraft, in proceedings seeking delivery up of the aircraft following defaults by the lessee. The proceedings raise issues about when a lender, relying on rights assigned to it by its borrower, the lessor, can terminate aircraft leases and seek to repossess the aircraft.

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Acting, as sole counsel, for an aircraft lessor in proceedings seeking the return of an aircraft, said to have been wrongfully seized by a third party while in the lessee's possession. The proceedings raised issues concerning who had a beneficial interest in the aircraft, and who had control of it.

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Acting, as sole counsel, for a lessee under a series of aircraft leases in a dispute concerning two passenger aircraft. The proceedings raised issues concerning the interpretation and application of aircraft leases, as well as, later, issues regarding potential contempt.

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Appearing (with Simon Browne-Wilkinson KC) for a tour operator in a claim against an airline relating to the latter overcharging the former in respect of certain charges. The claim raised issues regarding unjust enrichment against the background of passenger liability insurance, airport charges, and the purchase of capacity on aircraft each year. It settled after written closing submissions but before judgment, following a 2-week trial.

## Banking & Finance

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Chris has experience of a wide range of work in this area. He began his practice during the era of swap mis-selling claims and built up experience of mis-selling claims against banks, before being led by leading silks in some of the largest, highest-value litigation in the banking & finance sector, while continuing to appear as sole counsel in a range of small and medium-sized disputes.

## Notable Banking & Finance cases

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### The RBS Rights Issue Litigation

Acting (with David Railton KC and others) for RBS in the multi-billion-pound rights issue litigation arising from the £12 billion rights issue in April 2008.



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## Nomura International Plc v Banca Monte Dei Paschi Di Siena SPA

Acting (with Richard Handyside KC and Tamara Oppenheimer KC) for Nomura in a very high-value dispute raising issues relating to accounting for complex transactions, alleged wrongful accounting, illegality, and the attribution of knowledge to a company.

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Acting (with Nicholas Medcroft KC) for a bank in proceedings raising issues relating to the extent to which a paying bank is liable for payments made by a third party using a customer's credentials, and the scope and application of the Payment Services Regulations.

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Appearing in a wide range of mis-selling claims, ranging from swaps mis-selling claims against a number of the UK's largest banks (in which Christopher has appeared both as sole counsel, and with Andrew Mitchell KC and John Taylor KC), to a claim brought by a wealthy individual against a bank concerning allegedly negligent financial advice.

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Appearing as sole counsel for a bank in a 5-day trial in the High Court, in proceedings raising issues relating to agency, unjust enrichment, and trusts, which settled partway through trial.

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Appearing as sole counsel for a prominent UK bank in a dispute concerning whether the bank was entitled to freeze a customer's account, raising issues relating to the interpretation and application of the bank's terms and the POCA 2002 regime.

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## Civil Fraud

Chris has had the opportunity both to learn from leading practitioners in this area and to conduct fraud cases as sole counsel, and has experience of both claimant and defendant work; he is acutely aware of the difficulties of proving fraud and obtaining effective relief, and of seeing off allegations of fraud in the face of difficult facts. He is also a contributor to the *Lloyds Law Report Financial Crime Reports*.

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## Notable Civil Fraud cases

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### Unitel v UIH Ltd, Isabel Dos Santos

Appearing (with Paul Sinclair KC) for a telecoms company in a £580m+ claim against a former director and a company owned by her said to be used by her to plunder the claimant through a series of uneconomic loans to the company. The allegations against the former director include deliberate and fraudulent breach of her duties as a director. They are pursued against a background of criminal proceedings, allegations of political persecution, litigation across various jurisdictions, and sanctions. Chris's client secured a worldwide freezing order against the former director, and the Court of Appeal's decision upholding that order – [2024] EWCA Civ 1109 – is now the leading decision on the merits test for granting such orders.

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## Lex Greensill



Chris acts (with David Railton KC) for Lex Greensill in a \$392m+ claim brought against him by Zurich in connection with the high-profile collapse of the Greensill group, alleging deceit and unlawful means conspiracy, and in particular that Mr. Greensill procured Greensill Bank's insurance through fraud. Chris also acts (with Andreas Gledhill KC) for Mr. Greensill in directors' disqualification proceedings brought by the Insolvency Service alleging a range of deliberate wrongdoing, including fraud.

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## Re M/Y Royal Romance

Chris acted (with Akhil Shah KC) for an insured in a €130m+ claim concerning a yacht – said to have been bought by an insured from oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk – in which the yacht's insurers alleged that the Russian owner of the insured had procured the insurance of the yacht by fraud as to the source of his wealth and the capacity in which the insured was to hold the yacht, and that the insured was making a fraudulent claim under the policy.

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## Axiom Ince

Chris is acting (with Ben Lynch KC) for Axiom Ince's indemnity insurers in relation to issues and claims, including for breach of trust, arising from the alleged theft of £57m+ client funds by solicitor Pragnesh Modhwadia, leading to the collapse of his firm, Axiom Ince. The matters arising from the alleged fraud raise accounting issues as to the flow of funds through various accounts, and the responsibilities of solicitors and their regulator, the SRA, all against the background of regulatory interventions, and criminal prosecutions.

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## SKAT v Solo Partners

Acting (with Robin Barclay KC) for a defendant in the £1.5 billion SKAT litigation, raising issues regarding deceit, dishonest assistance, knowing receipt, proprietary claims, and unjust enrichment. This was of The Lawyer's top 20 cases of 2021.

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Chris recently appeared as sole counsel for two high-net-worth individuals in a claim against a building contractor and project manager, relating to the renovation of a high-value property in London. The individuals alleged, among other things, deceit, inducing breach of contract, dishonest breach of trust, and dishonest assistance by the director and part-owner of the contractor, who was said to have procured payments from the individuals by lying as to what they would be used for, then misappropriating the sums instead of using them on the project. Chris secured disclosure orders and undertakings freezing the defendant's assets.

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## Caja Paraguaya De Jubilaciones Y Pensiones Del Personal De La Itaipu Binacional

Appearing (with Brian Doctor KC) for a Paraguayan company in proceedings against individuals said to be responsible for a \$40 million fraud against it. Christopher's client obtained freezing and search orders against the defendants, the latter in a novel form.

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## Commercial Disputes

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This is the most diverse element of Chris' practice. His experience extends from acting as sole counsel in disputes between individuals and small and medium companies in the UK, to being led in large, high-value, and often international disputes involving high net-worth individuals and substantial enterprises. He has appeared both in the courts and in arbitrations.

## Notable Commercial Disputes cases

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### Unitel v UIH Ltd

Acting (with Paul Sinclair KC) for an Angolan telecoms operator in a c.£330 million claim against a Dutch company owned by one of the telecoms operator's directors and shareholders, as well as the former director. The claims arise from a series of loan and security agreements. They raise issues surrounding the interpretation of the agreements, their enforceability, and the circumstances in which defaults by the borrower can be relied upon, as well as breach of directors' duties, unjust enrichment, and worldwide freezing orders.

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### Eurochem v Tecnimont

Acting (with Michael McLaren KC and Robin Lööf) for an Italian construction company in a €244 million dispute with a Russian fertilizer concern, raising issues over the effect of sanctions on performance bonds and construction contracts, as well as anti-suit injunctions.

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### SDI Retail Services Ltd v Rangers Football Club Ltd

Appearing (with Akhil Shah KC) in a long-running dispute over matching rights provisions in a Retail Operations, Distribution and IP Licence Agreement. It raised issues relating to the proper interpretation of such provisions, as well as issues regarding deceit, economic torts, and injunctions. Christopher recently appeared in the Court of Appeal in part of the case, concerning the interpretation of an injunction made earlier in the proceedings.

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### Coward v Ambrosiadou

Acting (with Derrick Dale KC and Ian Bergson) in a dispute between a high-net-worth individual and his former wife and business partner, concerning the profits of a fund that they started. The proceedings raised issues concerning the formation and enforceability of oral agreements, fiduciary duties, issue estoppel and abuse of process.

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### PEL (UK) Ltd v Shaftesbury Plc

Appearing (with David Mabb KC, Jeffrey Gruder KC and Nigel Dougherty) in a dispute between a shareholder and a publicly listed company, raising issues including whether the board used its powers for an improper purpose in relation to a share placing.

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Appearing as sole counsel for a startup accelerator in a claim against a fintech company, seeking sums due under a deed.

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Acting as sole counsel for an energy company in a c.£11 million dispute with parties seeking to build and operate a waste-to-energy plant. The dispute raised issues concerning the interpretation and breach of exclusivity agreements.

Acting as sole counsel for a broker in a claim against a client arising from the client's failure to settle bond transactions, obtaining summary judgment on both the broker's claim and the client's counterclaim.

Appearing as sole counsel for the owner and operator of chain of high-end restaurants, obtaining damages and wide-ranging injunctions against two defendants who breached a franchising agreement and then continued to use the owner's and operator's branding and materials.

Acting for a string of corporate purchasers of goods (ranging from clothes to car parts to food products) in contractual disputes with suppliers.

## Insurance

Chris is ranked as a leading junior in this sector by *Legal 500* with previous editions describing him as "A brilliant junior. Highly intelligent, incredibly hardworking, and superb drafting and advice. Wise beyond his years" (2023), "Very capable, very much on top of the papers, and good at drafting skeletons" (2022) "completely reliable" with "a great eye for detail" (2021); and possessing "a sense of humour and perspective at all times" (2020). He is (with Ben Lynch KC) the co-author of a new chapter on professional indemnity insurance in *Professional Negligence & Liability* (having updated the current chapter for several years), and contributed to the chapters covering misrepresentation, non-disclosure, and fair presentation of risk in the most recent edition of *MacGillivray*.

## Notable Insurance cases

### Zurich v Greensill

Acting (with David Railton KC) for prominent businessman Lex Greensill in an insurance dispute with Zurich, arising from the collapse of the Greensill group. Greensill Bank seeks indemnities under insurance policies written by Zurich covering defaults on debts said to be owed to it. Zurich, however, asserts that the debts were fictitious, and created as part of an alleged fraud said to have been carried out between Mr. Greensill and Sanjeev Gupta, the owner of the Liberty Steel Group, and so the policies do not respond. It has also sued Mr. Greensill for deceit and conspiracy, seeking \$392m. The claim raises important issues concerning fair presentation of risk by an insured.

### Russian Aviation Insurance Disputes

Chris act (with Tim Howe KC) for Fidelis, a reinsurer, in around 50 claims forming part of the 'operator' litigation. It consists of a large number of claims, worth over \$12bn, brought by owners, financiers, and lessors of aircraft said to be stranded in Russia following the invasion of the Ukraine. The claims are brought against the Western reinsurers of Russian insurers who provided insurance to Russian airlines who leased the aircraft. The litigation is the, or one of the, biggest matters in the Commercial Court. It raises issues of fundamental importance to the aviation insurance market as to the effect of widely-used market standard clauses.



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## Axiom Ince

Chris acted with (Ben Lynch KC) for the indemnity insurer of failed law firm Axiom Law, which collapsed with a c.£57m hole in its client accounts, after its owner and head, Pragnesh Modhwadia, had large sums paid out into other accounts. The firm's collapse has led to many demands and claims on the insurer, plus criticism of the SRA. It also raises issues, which are critically important to solicitors and the solicitors' indemnity market, about the application of successor practice and run off cover, aggregation clauses in solicitors' indemnity insurance, and the relevance of SRA failings.

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## M/Y Royal Romance

Chris acted (with Akhil Shah KC) for an entity owned by a Russian businessman, which bought Victor Medvedchuk's yacht, The Royal Romance. The yacht was seized in Croatia at the Ukrainian authorities' request, and faced being sold. The insured sought €130m under the vessel's insurance, alleging it was a total loss. But the insurers declined cover, arguing the insured and its owner were a front for sanctioned Russians, whose relationship to the insured had, it was said, been misrepresented, allowing the insurers to avoid the policy. The case raised issues on fair presentation of risk, and sanctions.

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## FCA Business Interruption Insurance Test Case

Appearing (with Ben Lynch KC) in the landmark FCA Business Interruption Test Case and a related arbitration brought by a large number of policyholders, raising issues as to the recoverability of losses stemming from the imposition of measures in response to COVID-19 under clauses providing cover for business interruption losses arising from public authority action. Christopher's clients succeeded on key issues of principle, giving them the chance to recover large business interruption losses. Christopher has since advised other insurers on business interruption claims following the Supreme Court's decision.

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## D&O and PI Dispute

Acting (with Ben Lynch KC) in two related complex, high-value disputes, arising under D&O and PI policies, connected with an ongoing public enquiry. The disputes raise issues including as to cover for mitigation costs, as well as for the costs of preparing for and attending, and making submissions to inquiries, as well as knowledge and disclosure and reporting obligations.

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## PI Dispute

Acting (with Ben Lynch KC) for an insured in an £87 million dispute arising from a large number of claims and potential claims related to construction projects, following a wide-ranging review of the projects. The dispute hinges on whether the insurer is entitled to avoid the policy for alleged failure to make a fair presentation of risk, given what it says the insured knew about the projects and review when seeking cover.

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## LCIA Arbitration



Acting (with Aidan Christie KC) for an excess insurer in a substantial arbitration between the liquidators of a bank and the bank's professional liability insurers, raising issues surrounding cover for claims by third parties against the bank. The dispute raises issues as diverse as aggregation, waiver and estoppel, the interpretation and application of exclusions, and the availability of defence costs cover in relation to demands for non-monetary relief.

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## Ambon

Appearing as sole counsel for a firm of insurance brokers in a dispute with a larger firm of insurance brokers who bought their business. Chris's client alleged that another firm, which bought its business, withheld commissions due to Chris's client in respect of premiums paid by clients secured before the sale of the business. The case raised important questions regarding insurance broking practice, including as to when brokerage is earned, and as to the proper drafting of an agreement to sell a broking business.

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Acting (with David Railton KC and Andrew Neish KC) for insurers in a \$100 million arbitration regarding a political risk policy, raising issues regarding cover for expropriation and the cancellation of mineral rights, and material non-disclosure.

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Appearing (with Patrick Goodall KC) for two insurers in an arbitration with their reinsurers, arising from a dispute over the provision of information, and the commutation of reinsurance contracts.

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## Cuckow v Axa

Acting (with Leigh-Ann Mulcahy KC) for insurers in a series of claims under the Third Parties (Rights Against Insurers) Act 1930 and 2010, arising from the installation of cavity wall insulation by an insolvent insured. The claims raised issues regarding those statutes, the interpretation and application of public liability insurance, exclusions in such insurance, and compliance with conditions precedent to cover. Chris's clients ultimately prevailed in an important test case both at first instance and on appeal: [2023] EWHC 701 (KB)

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Acting (with David Railton KC, Michael Crane KC and James Cutress KC) for a reinsurer in a complex arbitration brought against it by a construction company's captive insurer. The proceedings raised issues under the law of New York relating to the extent to which a reinsurer is bound to follow settlements, aggregation of claims, the extent to which faulty workmanship and defective construction work counts as an accident or property damage, as well as the incorporation, scope, and applicability of exclusions.

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Acting (with Stuart Ritchie KC) for an individual in a coverage dispute relating to two D & O policies. The dispute turned on points relating to an insured's obligations to assist an insurer, the advancement of defence costs, and the grounds on which an insurer can deny coverage. It arose against the background of civil and criminal proceedings being brought against the individual by their former employer.

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Acting, as sole counsel, for insureds in a series of disputes under credit insurance policies, raising issues surrounding the interpretation of the policies, and the application of exclusions.

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## International Arbitration

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Many of the matters in which Chris has acted are arbitrations, and he has good experience of the unique considerations in play in international arbitration as well as of a range of institutional rules, and challenges to arbitral awards.

### Notable International Arbitration cases

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Appearing (with Matthew Reeve KC) for a European airline in a high-value ICC arbitration concerning a US engine manufacturer's supplying defective aircraft engines, and then failing to supply replacement engines or return ones being maintained quickly enough when the engines failed, resulting in aircraft being grounded. The dispute raised issues concerning interpreting and applying contracts for the sale and maintenance of aircraft engines, the availability of specific relief relating to returning or repairing engines or supplying replacements, and the availability of interim and emergency relief in international arbitration.

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Appearing (with Edward Levey KC) for a Mexican gambling concern in a complex ICC arbitration brought by a Maltese gaming concern regarding the management of the former's online gambling operations. The dispute arose against the background of a web of agreements governing how the online gambling operations were to be financed and run, and the provision of software relating to those operations, and raised issues regarding the interpretation and application of those agreements, as well as steps taken in litigation in Mexico and elsewhere.

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Appearing (with David Railton KC, Michael Crane KC, James Cutress KC) in a Bermuda Form arbitration between a US company and its Bermudan reinsurer. The dispute concerned whether the reinsurer was bound, under New York law, to indemnify the US company's captive insurer for sums paid to settle claims against the company.

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Appearing (with Patrick Goodall KC) in an ARIAS arbitration between English and European insurers and Middle-East-based reinsurers. The dispute turned on issues as to what information had to be provided by the insurers to the reinsurers, and the sums to be paid to commute existing obligations, and the reinsurance-to-close process at Lloyd's.

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Appearing (with Aidan Christie KC) in an LCIA arbitration between the liquidators of an insured and its indemnity insurers, all located in different jurisdictions. The case raised questions as to aggregation, waiver, estoppel, and the interpretation and application of insuring clauses and exclusions in a professional indemnity policy.

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Acting (with David Railton KC and Andrew Neish KC) in a c.\$100m LCIA arbitration between a Swiss company and its English insurers (which itself raised issues surrounding previous ICC and ICSID arbitrations involving a state), regarding mining in Sierra Leone.

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### Eastern European Engineering Ltd v Vijay Construction (Pty) Ltd



Acted (with Alexander Milner KC) for an engineering concern in proceedings in which it sought to enforce a large ICC arbitration award made by a Paris-seated tribunal against a Seychellois company. The proceedings concerned the grounds on which a court can order a party to give security for an arbitration award, the arbitrator's substantive jurisdiction, whether the defendant had a sufficient opportunity to present its case, and enforcement of the award.

## Privilege, Confidentiality & Conflicts of Interest

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Many of Chris' cases raise difficult issues of privilege and confidentiality and he has substantial experience of dealing with those issues.

### Notable Privilege, Confidentiality & Conflicts of Interest cases

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#### Suppipat v Narongdej

Acting (as sole counsel) on issues relating to legal advice and litigation privilege in a claim against overseas lawyers, raising issues including as to communications between lawyers in the same firm and across firms, and the crime / fraud exception.

Acting (with Bankim Thanki KC) on issues relating to the without prejudice rule, privilege, and choice of law issues surrounding both in a high-value ICC international arbitration

Successfully defeating a challenge to claims of litigation privilege shortly before trial in a substantial professional negligence claim. The challenge raised issues surrounding the purpose of a communication made for mixed purposes. Chris also advised at an earlier stage on claims to privilege over communications with advisers, as well as collateral waiver.

Appearing in an application to conduct a hearing in private based on grounds of confidentiality.

Advising on the application of legal advice privilege, litigation privilege, and collateral waiver, as well as addressing the extent to which, if at all, an insured can withhold documents from its indemnity insurer on grounds of privilege, in an LCIA arbitration.

Advising on issues surrounding the without prejudice rule and exceptions to it in a substantial commercial claim raising issues surrounding deceit.

## Professional Negligence

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Chris has extensive experience of acting in professional negligence cases generally, with much of his experience being bringing and defending professional negligence claims against other legal professionals. He is ranked as a leading junior in this area: "Very good and always has a novel point or two up his sleeve" (Legal 500, 2023); "A very

good junior; he is very hard-working and he thinks of everything" (Chambers & Partners, 2023).

## Notable Professional Negligence cases

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### A La Carte Healthcare v Faegre Drinkwater Biddle & Reath

Appearing (with Thomas Grant KC) for insurance intermediaries in a negligence claim against an international firm of solicitors for misadvising on: (i) litigation against AXA; and (ii) a professional negligence claim against another well-known firm of solicitors who had previously acted for the intermediaries in the litigation against AXA. Faegre is said to have failed to consider a limitation of liability in the previous firm's retainer, leading to it recommending a flawed strategy against AXA, premised on being able to recover any shortfall from the previous solicitors. The case turned on important questions about a client's obligations to its litigation solicitors, causation, and loss.

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### Morgan Sindall v Capita

Appearing (with Sian Mirchandani KC) for Capita, a well-known engineering firm defending a claim from a lead contractor, alleging that the firm acted negligently while engaged as consulting engineers in relation to the construction of part of Lancashire County Cricket Club. The main contractor alleged that Capita breached various duties in relation to the design, and advice on, structural steelwork at the ground. Capita denied liability, and disputed quantum. This dispute raised issues about the role and duties of consulting engineers on large construction projects.

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### McClellan v Thornhill

Acting (with Anneliese Day KC) for over 100 claimants in a large claim against a leading tax silk by investors who invested money into film schemes after he advised that the schemes would allow them to mitigate their tax liabilities. This is one of The Lawyer's Top 20 cases of 2021.

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### Coghlan v Garstangs

Acting (with Chloe Carpenter KC) for a claimant in a £10 million+ claim brought against a firm of solicitors arising from the allegedly negligent mishandling of a civil recovery action brought against their client by the Serious Organised Crime Agency.

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### Feeney v PDT Solicitors

Acting (with Ben Lynch KC) for a firm of solicitors in an £83 million professional negligence claim against them arising from the settlement of their client's fraud claim against a leading UK bank. The claim raised issues concerning damages for loss of a chance to pursue litigation.

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### Springdew Ltd v Fitzgerald



Appeared (with Derrick Dale KC) for a defendant barrister in a £20 million claim regarding the provision of negligent advice that was said to have led to the loss of the opportunity to pursue a supposedly valuable mis-selling claim against a bank. The dispute turned on issues regarding the likelihood of litigation being pursued and resulting in substantial sums being recovered from the bank. It settled shortly after, in two hearings within the space of two weeks, the defendant barrister's disclosure application succeeded in full, and the claimant company's application wholly failed. Chris appeared as sole counsel for the defendant barrister at both hearings.

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## Various Claimants v Scott Fowler

Appearing (with Derrick Dale KC) for a large number of purchasers of off-plan properties in proceedings against the solicitors who acted for them on the purchases. The aggregate value of the claims was over £10 million, and the proceedings raised issues relating to (among other things) the duties of a purchaser's solicitors in such transactions, and causation. The defendants ultimately settled with all of the purchasers Chris represented.

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## Ridgewood Properties Group Ltd v Kilpatrick Stockton LLP

Acting (with Patricia Robertson KC) for one of the successful defendants in a large dispute between a firm of solicitors and their former clients, raising issues relating to advice on repudiatory breach, affirmation, advice from counsel, and causation. The Claimants discontinued their claim after Chris's client had the largest part of it struck out as an abuse of process.

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Acted as sole counsel for clients in two accountant's negligence claims, arising from failure to prepare tax returns properly, leading to HMRC investigating the accountant's client for fraud and failure to warn the client of the tax consequences of agreeing to the issue of new shares in a company, when the client previously held shares which attracted tax relief under the Enterprise Investment Scheme rules.

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Acting (with James Cutress KC) for a leading firm of financial advisers in two sets of proceedings against former consultants, raising issues relating to the COB rules, the provision of financial advice, and the recovery of sums paid to settle claims.

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Appeared, as sole counsel in the High Court, for a prominent UK bank in a case concerning allegations that it negligently advised a wealthy client to invest in certain funds. The claim also raised issues relating to the extent to which a bank owes duties to its customer at common law when calculating any offer of redress made to the customer.

## Directory Quotes

*"An extremely bright lawyer. Great with clients. He is superb at pleadings, and has a brilliant mind."*

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Legal 500



*"A brilliant junior. Highly intelligent, incredibly hardworking, and superb drafting and advice. Wise beyond his years."*

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*"Very capable, very much on top of the papers, and good at drafting skeletons."*

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*"Highly intelligent, has a great eye for detail, and is completely reliable."*

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*"Highly intelligent, keeps a sense of humour and perspective at all times, knowledgeable and experienced beyond his years."*

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Legal 500

*"A very good junior; he is very hard-working and he thinks of everything."*

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Chambers & Partners

*"Outstanding analytical mind, which is able to identify, assess and provide solutions to difficult legal problems. Christopher is able to assimilate and deploy quickly highly complex material."*

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Legal 500

*"Chris is good at getting up to speed quickly with difficult factual and legal issues. He readily sees the issues and formulates good arguments for his client."*

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Legal 500

*"Extremely clever and is able to really get into the detail of a case."*

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## Directory Rankings

### Chambers & Partners

- Professional Negligence

### Legal 500

- Insurance & Reinsurance
- Professional Negligence

## Education

- BCL (Distinction), St. Catherine's College, University of Oxford
- BA (Law) (First Class), St. Catherine's College, University of Oxford

## Appointments, Memberships and Prizes

- Former Temporary Lecturer in Land Law, Trinity College, University of Oxford (2011)
- Kennedy Scholar, Lincoln's Inn (2010)
- Hardwicke Scholar, Lincoln's Inn (2010)
- College Prize for Performance in BCL Examinations, St. Catherine's College, University of Oxford (2010)
- Falcon Chambers Prize for the best performance in Land Law, University of Oxford (2009)
- Highest mark in the year in Personal Property in FHS Examinations, University of Oxford (2009)
- College Prize for Performance in FHS Examinations, St. Catherine's College, University of Oxford (2009)
- Exhibition Award for Performance in Moderations, St. Catherine's College, University of Oxford (2006), renewed in 2007/8, 2008/9 for sustained academic performance

## Publications

- Solicitors' duties when giving preliminary advice without a retainer – *Miller v Irwin Mitchell LLP – Professional Negligence*, Vol 40, No 4, 2024
- Contributor to the chapters of *MacGillivray* on Insurance Law concerning misrepresentation, non-disclosure, and fair presentation of risk.
- Co-author (with Ben Lynch KC) of the professional indemnity insurance chapter of *Professional Negligence and Liability* (loose-leaf, Informa UK, available on i-law)
- Co-author (with Anneliese Day KC) of the Lexis PSL section concerning damages for loss of a chance
- Co-author (with Nicholas Medcroft KC) of the *Lloyds Law Report Financial Crime Report* ([2019] Lloyd's Rep.

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FC 94) on the important Court of Appeal decision in *Lonsdale v NatWest* [2018] EWCA 1843 (QB) concerning the circumstances in which a bank is entitled to freeze a customer's account, and the *Lloyds Law Report Financial Crime Report on PDVSA Servicios SA v Clyde & Co LLP* [2020] Lloyd's Rep. FC 588

- Chris is a former contributor to the *Civil Procedure Reports*
- What's Special About Land? The Relationship Between Promissory and Proprietary Estoppel', *King's Law Journal*, 2013, 24(1), 111 – 118 (with Mischa Balen)
- 'Failure to Estop: Rationalising Proprietary Estoppel Using Failure of Basis', *Conveyancer and Property Lawyer*, 2011, 3, 176-190 (with Mischa Balen)
- 'Haugesund Kommune, Narvik Kommune v Depfa ACS Bank, Wikborg Rein' (Case Comment), *Journal of International Banking Law and Regulation*, 2011, 26(5), 207-210

Chris has acted as a research assistant to several academics and practitioners:

- *The Law of Security and Title Based Financing* (OUP, 2012 edition) as research assistant to Louise Gullifer, Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford. He provided assistance with regard to chapters concerning security rights in general, possessory and non-possessory security rights, priorities, and the enforcement of security rights, along with other matters (2011).
- He provided research assistance to Professor Ben McFarlane in relation to Proprietary Estoppel (OUP, 2014 edition) and promissory estoppel in a commercial context (2010 – 2011). He also assisted in producing the first supplement to the 32nd edition of leading textbook *Snell's Equity*.
- *Foreign Currency: Claims, Judgments and Damages*, M. N Howard KC, John Knott and John Kimbell (Informa, 2016) (2010 – 2011). He provided research assistance on restitution, trusts, private international law and interest on foreign currency debts.

## Awards

