



Dominic Kay KC



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Dominic Kay KC

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"By far the best of the young silks in this area"
"Exceptional in every way"
(Legal 500 & Chambers & Partners)



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Dominic Kay KC is a specialist regulatory law practitioner and is one of a very small number of King's Counsel to be listed by the legal directories as a leading individual in each of his three areas of practice: Health & Safety, Environmental Law and Inquests & Inquiries.

Dominic has been nominated this year as 'Health & Safety – Silk of the Year' at the 2023 Chambers UK Bar Awards. He won the title in 2020, was nominated for the award in 2018 and won Junior of the Year in 2011.

Dominic has particular experience in representing VLOs and has advised and represented some of the UK's most prominent companies and organisations including Lidl, Tesco, Aldi, Arcadia, Sunseeker, BUPA, Royal Mail, Thomas Cook, BAE Systems, Kier, Amey, Mitie, Ikea, DHL, Arla, Virgin, St Gobain, Mornflake, Calor Gas, JJB Sports, Universal Music, EDF and a number of NHS Trusts.

In relation to his Environmental Law work, he is one of the country's leading Silks specialising in defending environmental prosecutions and in the past few years alone has represented most of the UK's main water and utility companies including Thames Water, Yorkshire Water, Severn Trent Water, South West Water and Anglian Water. His experience includes major pollution incidents (including sewage and chemical spills), including those resulting in the highest levels of harm caused to animal and human health. He has been instructed to represent water companies in several of the 'super-case' prosecutions and in relation to investigations being undertaken by regulators.

Dominic has significant experience in Judicial Review proceedings relating to criminal cases (both in relation to Health & Safety and Environmental prosecutions) and inquests.

He has been ranked consistently throughout the last decade by the various legal directories as a leading or 'Star Individual' most recently he has been described as being:

"by far the best of the young silks in this area...a heavyweight practitioner...renowned for his top-level work...a barrister with a nationwide practice...with a strong grasp of clients' commercial and legal requirements and excellent communication skills...very confident before the Bench and when handling opponents"

and as having

“outstanding knowledge and experience of this niche area of law. He is an excellent advocate, down-to-earth and with a common-sense approach...he takes a dynamic approach and is always looking for an innovative solution”.

Chambers & Partners 2020 describes him as “exceptional in every way...brilliant in court and gets the results for his clients”.

Dominic is in high demand and is currently instructed to represent/advise in relation to several of the country's most prominent Health & Safety investigations and environmental prosecutions including the Didcot Power Station collapse, the investigation into the fire at Grenfell Tower and for several of the UK's water companies in relation to multiple, large-scale water pollution prosecutions.

Dominic regularly provides emergency advice in relation to HSE, EA and Police investigations into serious incidents such as corporate and individual manslaughter or large-scale pollution incidents.

Health and Safety

Health & Safety

- ‘Band 1’ Health & Safety Juniors – Chambers & Partners: 2011 to 2014
- ‘Star Individual’ in Health & Safety – Chambers & Partners: 2015 to 2017
- ‘Ranked KC’ in Health & Safety – Chambers & Partners: 2018 to 2020
- ‘Band 1’ in Health & Safety KCs – Chambers & Partners: 2021 & 2022
- Leading Individual Health & Safety – Legal 500: 2008 – 2017
- Leading KC Health & Safety – Legal 500: 2018 to 2022
- Winner: Health & Safety Junior of the Year – 2011 Bar Awards
- Nominated: Health & Safety Silk of the Year – 2018 Bar Awards
- Winner: Health & Safety Silk of the Year – 2020 Bar Awards

Described in one of the legal directories as “by far the best of the young Silks in this area”, Dominic Kay's health & safety work involves representing companies and directors, typically in complex prosecutions concerning single or multi fatality workplace accidents. His clients include many of the country's best known retailers, manufacturers, construction companies, care homes, leisure companies and public bodies (including NHS Trusts and Councils). He also undertakes work in respect of investigations in the agricultural, forestry and sports sectors, consumer safety cases (specifically including food safety/hygiene/poisoning) and fire safety prosecutions.

He has been involved in many of the highest profile health & safety cases before the courts and over recent years has been instructed to defend a significant number of the companies charged under the Corporate Manslaughter & Corporate Homicide Act 2007. He also has considerable experience individual manslaughter prosecutions.

Dominic's particular experience includes;

- Prosecutions for corporate and individual manslaughter (he has been involved in a large number of the prosecutions and investigations under the Corporate Manslaughter & Corporate Homicide Act 2007);

- Cases concerning the construction industry (including falls from height, structural collapse, electrocution, injuries / fatalities to employees / public);
- Cases concerning diseases/illnesses/infections including E.coli, Salmonella, Cryptosporidium, Legionella and Listeria (in 2023/24 appeared in the inquests into deaths caused by the hospital food/sandwich listeria outbreak in 2019);
- Fire safety investigations and prosecutions including under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 including in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation, retail premises, hotels and care homes (appeared in a number of high profile fire cases including multiple fatality incidents including the Penhallow Hotel fire prosecution and the Lakanal House Inquests);
- Machinery and vehicular accidents (including fairground equipment, factory machinery, MEWPs, ATVs, agricultural machinery / vehicles, swing barriers, gate systems);
- Workplace accidents (including factories, maritime, warehouses, care homes, swimming pools and agricultural);
- Improvement and prohibition notices (including both appeals against notices and prosecutions in respect of alleged breaches);
- Cases concerning consumer safety issues such as food safety (food unfit for human consumption, food hygiene and poisoning cases, food labelling, animal infestations) and toy safety;
- Particular experience and expertise in cases concerning fatal accidents involving children;
- Cases concerning deaths in custody, care home and school/nursery settings.

Selected Cases

Health & Safety

Corporate Manslaughter

- R v Lion Steel Equipment Limited & Others – Acted for the Company in Corporate Manslaughter prosecution. Manchester Crown Court.
- R v HMEL & Others – Acted for the Company in Corporate Manslaughter prosecution. Manchester Crown Court.
- R v LD Ltd & Others – Acted for the Company in Corporate Manslaughter prosecution. St Albans Crown Court.
- R v RC – Acted for the Company in Corporate Manslaughter prosecution. Manchester Crown Court.
- R v GHND – Corporate and Individual Manslaughter prosecution in relation to fall from height.
- R v CIL – Corporate Manslaughter in relation to construction site fatality. Brighton Crown Court.
- R v H&A – Corporate Manslaughter following death in recycling plant. Plymouth Crown Court.
- R v NH – Corporate Manslaughter prosecution. Leeds Crown Court.
- R v Wood Treatment Limited – Corporate Manslaughter prosecution in relation to the Bosley Mill explosion. Chester Crown Court and Court of Appeal
- R v DP – Corporate Manslaughter prosecution. Bradford Crown Court.
- R v DHW Limited – Corporate Manslaughter prosecution relating to fall from height. Teesside Crown Court.

Individual Manslaughter

- R v York College & SR – Acted as Junior Counsel for SR, charged with manslaughter following death of child in a nursery. Leeds Crown Court. Client acquitted.
- R v KK & CG – Acted with John Cooper KC in manslaughter prosecution of installer following accident in which girl killed in a set of electric gates. Manchester Crown Court. Client acquitted.
- R v PN – Represented PN in manslaughter prosecution relating to overturn of lorry during hi-ab operation. Ipswich Crown Court.
- R v GH – Represented GH in gross negligence manslaughter prosecution. Construction site fall from height. Bristol Crown Court. Client acquitted.
- R v MG – Represented MG in gross negligence manslaughter prosecution. Recycling site fatality. Wolverhampton Crown Court. Client acquitted.
- R v SB – Represented SB charged with double manslaughter. Workplace fatality. Leicester Crown Court. Client acquitted.
- Currently instructed to advise and represent several individuals in respect of gross negligence manslaughter investigations.

Health & Safety Prosecutions

- R v Synergy Housing Limited & Orona Limited – Acted for S in prosecution arising out of accident in which young girl killed by a defective through-floor lift at her family home. Bournemouth Crown Court.
- R v Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust – Represented O in prosecution relating to issues including knife control and risk assessment following double stabbing incident by patient on secure unit. Central Criminal Court.
- R v Sunseeker Limited – Acted for S in case concerning boatyard accident.
- R v ELP & Others – Represented E in prosecution following fatal 10m fall at Elstree Studios. Harrow Crown Court.
- R v Arla Foods Limited – Acted for A in prosecution concerning a workplace transport incident at new 'super dairy' site. Reading Crown Court.
- R v 2 Sisters Food Group Limited – Represented 2SFGL in two separate cases concerning three separate (work equipment related) incidents at two of 2SFG's industrial food/chicken processing sites. Sheffield Crown Court.
- R v Royal Mail Group – Acted on behalf of RMG in case concerning serious workplace transport accident. Isleworth Crown Court.
- R v Yorkshire Water – Represented YW in respect of fatal accident which occurred during confined space work. Leeds Crown Court.
- R v ISEurope Limited & Others – Acted for Company charged in respect of fatal construction site accident on Mayfair street. Central Criminal Court.
- R v London Borough of Camden – Represented LBC in prosecution following wall collapse which killed a child. Central Criminal Court.
- R v DF – Represented DF, the Master of a North Sea Emergency Vessel following triple fatality at sea. Sheffield Crown Court.
- R v Pearlview & EGS – Represented First Defendant company in prosecution following accident in which child killed in a set of electric gates. Bournemouth Crown Court.
- R v Leisure Connection Ltd – Represented swimming pool operators in respect of accident in which child drowned. Chelmsford Crown Court.
- R v Blackmoor Estates Limited & Another – Acted for Estate charged with H&S breaches following double fatality in apple store. Winchester Crown Court.
- Powys County Council v Bethania Adventure – Represented business in prosecution relating to the drowning of a canoeist on a lake.

- R v F & C – Represented high ropes course operator following accident involving course-user who fell from high tower having been incorrectly clipped-on. St Albans Crown Court.
- R v DMS – Acted on behalf of Trust prosecuted in respect of accident in which flanker shot whilst working on a grouse moor.

Consumer Safety Prosecutions

- Bradford MBC v S – Acted for butcher prosecuted following e.Coli outbreak in which in excess of 50 people contracted severe food poisoning. Bradford Crown Court.
- Surrey County Council v T; & Bracknell Forest BC v T – Represented major supermarket in prosecutions relating to the sale of food products with expired 'use by' dates.
- Birmingham City Council v E – Represented high street sandwich chain in prosecution relating to animal infestation at outlet at Birmingham' Bullring shopping centre.

Fire Safety

- Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service & Cheshire East Council v S & S – Represented S and S in prosecution involving failures by landlords to register an HMO, fire safety legislation breaches and breach of a prohibition notice served under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Chester Crown Court.
- The Lakanal House Inquest – Acted for the manufacturer of a piece of electrical equipment in which it was thought a fire began. The fire spread through the building causing the deaths of six people.
- The Penhallow Hotel Fire – Represented a director in prosecution following fire at Cornwall hotel in which three people died. Truro Crown Court.
- Surrey CC v Southern Cross Healthcare Plc – Represented charged with offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in respect of fire at residential care home. Guildford Crown Court.

Environmental

- Milton Keynes Council v Leisure Connection Limited – Divisional Court case concerning matters to be proved by prosecuting authority in prosecution brought under s.34 EPA 1990;
- Environment Agency v YW – Represented Defendant Company in prosecution brought in respect of effluent discharges from breweries neighbouring the Tadcaster Water Treatment Centre;
- Environment Agency v CP & SGS – Represented fuel storage site management company following spillage of approximately 70,000 litres of petrol at the Mayflower Terminal near Plymouth.
- Environment Agency v R – Represented groundworks company charged in relation to oil leak into watercourse due to rupture of pipeline during work being undertaken on a construction site.
- Environment Agency v MCC(G) Limited & RC – Represented Defendant Company and Director in prosecution under s.33 EPA relating to the unlicensed disposal of approximately 971 lorry-loads of building material.
- London Borough of Havering v JD Sports Fashion PLC – Represented Defendant Company in local authority prosecution relating to waste disposal at rear of shop.
- Leeds City Council v W – Represented high street restaurant chain in local authority prosecution relating to repeated escapes of waste at rear of city centre restaurant.
- Environment Agency v W – Represented national catering company in prosecution relating to biodiesel release into watercourse due to defective bunding.
- Environment Agency v R & S – Represented company director in respect of alleged permitting offences following chemical discharge.

- HSE & Environment Agency v I & S-A – Represented company and director in respect of joint HSE and EA prosecution arising out of an accident that occurred during the mixing of hydrogen peroxide and sodium cyanide at a laboratory in Ellesmere Port. A worker suffered burn injuries and, following the incident there was an accidental discharge of chemicals into a canal.
- Thames Water Utilities Limited v E – Represented well-known food manufacturer and retailer in respect of prosecution arising out of alleged unconsented discharges of trade effluent causing damage to effluent treatment facility.

Environmental

Environmental

Dominic is one of a very small number of King's Counsel undertaking a large volume of criminal Environmental Law cases throughout the country, representing corporate defendants facing prosecution for breach of environmental legislation. Such cases typically involve charges under the EPA 1990, the Water Resources Act 1991, Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations 2000, the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 and/or appeals against notices served under the EPA. He has represented many of the large utility companies as well as major high street retailers, fuel storage, agricultural, food manufacturing and groundwork companies.

His environmental work includes defending companies and directors charged in respect of large-scale and high-profile pollution incidents (land, watercourse and offshore), permitting offences, waste escapes and licence infringements. He has considerable experience in fisheries cases. His recent work includes representing major utility companies, chemical storage facility operators, manufacturing companies prosecuted for discharges leading to pollution incidents, leisure companies and research laboratories.

He regularly gives lectures on various aspects of environmental prosecutions including in respect of sentencing very large organisations for environmental offences.

He has considerable experience representing companies charged in joint HSE/EA prosecutions and his recent environmental work has included:

- Defending companies charged in respect of large scale and repeated pollution of waterways;
- Cases involving large petrol, diesel and chemical spillages / escapes;
- Breaches of water abstraction licences;
- Cases concerning breaches of permits or disposals without permits;
- Representing groundwork / construction companies in respect of alleged watercourse pollution;
- Defending companies charged under the EPA with allowing large volumes of waste to collect on unlicensed land;
- Prosecutions against companies and individuals under s33 and s34 EPA 1990;
- Representing landfill and waste disposal companies (and often their directors) charged with breaching the terms of waste licenses.

His environmental law practice includes Marine Regulation work, in which he regularly advises and represents companies and / or individuals charged with breaches of Common Fisheries Policy and



associated domestic legislation, specifically cases concerning trawler operations, logbook and landing declaration offences and cases involving the satellite monitoring of vessels. He represented seven trawler companies/owners and their respective masters in a DEFRA prosecution of thirteen vessels in respect of large scale 'black fish' landings in Kilkeel and Whitehaven.

Inquests & Public Inquiries

Selected Cases

- Acting on behalf of a property company at the inquest into the death of a 7-year-old boy crushed to death by electric gates.
- Acting on behalf of a company at the inquest into a triple fatality caused by carbon monoxide in a storage container on a building site.
- Acting on behalf of a construction company at the inquest into the death of a 4-year-old boy who died after a stone mantelpiece became detached from a wall, crushing him.
- Representing a landowner at whose property the 4-year-old son of tenants drowned in a septic tank.
- Representing a gate installer at inquest into death of a young girl crushed to death by electric gates.
- Representing an outdoor pursuits company following the death of a customer who capsized in a canoe whilst under the company's supervision.
- Representing a care provider at the inquest into the death of an elderly care home resident who died after being given two insulin overdoses by nurses.
- Acting on behalf of a leisure company at the inquest into the drowning of a young boy in Wolverhampton.
- Representing leisure company at inquest into drowning of young girl in Essex.
- Representing a fairground operator at inquest into the death of a child struck by a rollercoaster.
- Representing a leisure centre operator at the inquest into the death of a swimmer who drowned in a swimming pool whilst no lifeguards were present.

Recommendations

"Dominic is best-in-class for handling large corporations and managing their expectations."..."His advocacy is excellent. He thinks well on his feet."..."He is brilliant with clients and consistently secures the best outcome for them."

Chambers & Partners, 2025

"Dominic is exceptional in every way - he is an expert advocate, produces high quality written work and has an unrivalled attention to detail." ..."Dominic advances cogent arguments, and his advice is reasoned and confident. His reading of the courtroom is second to none."

Legal 500, 2025

"Dominic is a formidable advocate with the legal intellect, court presence and personality to bring something unique to the cases he works on."... "He gets excellent results and provides first-class strategic advice and representation based on his considerable experience in this area."

Chambers & Partners, 2024

"Dominic grasps the technical detail of cases quickly. He is friendly and calm as well as authoritative."
Legal 500, 2024

"He is superb with clients and is a first-rate advocate. He knows the law inside and out and is strategically very astute."
Chambers & Partners, 2022

"Dominic is instantly impressive with his knowledge of the law, analysis of the evidence and the gift of presenting arguments in straightforward terms."..."Very polished and a technically strong, clear and concise communicator, he is superb at setting and executing a strategy."
Legal 500, 2022

"A very strong advocate who is excellent with clients and easy to recommend."..."He is technically superb but his impressive strength is seeing the big picture and being a very talented strategist. He manages clients expectations superbly. Senior judges sit up and listen when he speaks."
Legal 500, 2021

"He is one of the leading health and safety barristers in the country."; "He's extremely intelligent and really gets into the detail on cases. He's very good both on paper and on his feet in court."; "He is absolutely amazing - fantastic in court and his wealth of knowledge is second to none."
Chambers & Partners, 2021

"He truly understands environmental law and the technical detail, and he is an outstanding advocate who presents a compelling case."
Legal 500, 2021

"Exceptional in every way. His approach towards clients is always absolutely on point, and he knows the law inside out yet manages to translate complex issues to something easily digestible to clients. He is brilliant in court and gets the results for his clients. I take any opportunity I can to put him on my teams' cases as I know he will get the job done to the highest possible standards."
Chambers & Partners, 2020

"Outstanding and in high demand."
Legal 500, 2017

"By far the best of the young silks in this area."
Chambers & Partners