



William Lacey



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William Lacey accepts instructions across Chambers' core areas of practice, with an emphasis on insurance & reinsurance, professional liability, construction & engineering, property damage, personal injury, credit hire, insurance fraud, and inquests.

William's practice is evenly weighted between court and written work, and between civil and commercial work. He has a busy County Court practice consisting mainly of fast track trials, application hearings and multitrack CCMCs. He regularly drafts pleadings and pre-action correspondence, and advises insurers, solicitors and other clients in writing. He accepts appropriate public access clients.

William read music at King's College, Cambridge, taking a First Class degree and being elected Scholar of his college. He later obtained a Distinction on the GDL and an Outstanding on the Bar Course. He was awarded Lord Brougham and Lord Denning Scholarships by Lincoln's Inn, and a Senior Advocacy Scholarship by the University of Law.

Prior to coming to the Bar, William spent 25 years as an international orchestral conductor. He worked with orchestras from Tromsø to Tel Aviv and from Honolulu to Hong Kong. He conducted almost 60 operas in cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Santa Fe, Houston, New York, Barcelona, Paris, Leipzig, Stockholm and Moscow. He studied the piano with Alfred Brendel, and still plays to concert level.

William speaks German to a high standard, having spent ten years living and working in Germany and Austria. He also speaks conversational Italian and French.

Insurance & Reinsurance

William regularly advises insurer clients on coverage, defence and recovery, and settles pleadings on their behalf. He is currently on part-time secondment with the Complex Casualty Coverage team of a leading insurance/re-insurance law firm in the City of London. He is gaining in-depth experience of a wide range of commercial, property damage and construction disputes worth up to £20 million. He is also able to advise on coverage in EL/PL, RTA and product liability claims.

Current and recent work for leading global insurers includes:

- Advising on an eight-figure coverage dispute arising from the supply of allegedly defective components to a major infrastructure project.
- Advising on a complex and long-running subsidence claim, which raises some novel points of law.
- Advising on a six-figure coverage dispute concerning a product liability policy.
- Advising on both coverage and recovery in a series of claims arising from structural defects warranties for new dwellings.
- Representing an insurer which is attempting to recover its outlay arising from a school skiing trip which was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Drafting documents, and attending conferences and mediation, in relation to two substantial Covid-related business interruption insurance claims (as a pupil).

Professional Liability

William is developing a busy professional liability practice. He often advises defendants on claims made against them, and drafts Letters of Response and Defences on their behalf. His clients include solicitors, law firms, architects, engineers, financial advisers, property management companies, accountants, and auditors. During pupillage he gained experience of D&O claims.

Current and recent work includes:

- Drafting a Defence for a company that produces 3D Building Information Modelling of architectural designs, and has been accused of negligence and breach of contract by a former client.
- Drafting a Defence for an accountant accused of having negligently failed to verify figures underlying a financial presentation to potential investors, with the alleged result that the potential deal collapsed.
- Drafting a Defence for a property management company accused of having negligently failed to comply with the law concerning tenancy deposit protection.
- Advising a firm of conveyancing solicitors accused of negligent delays which caused a client's mortgage offer to lapse, causing financial loss.
- Advising a family law solicitor accused by a third party of negligently drafting a court order, which was then approved by a judge. The third party alleged that, as a direct consequence, he was arrested and became homeless.
- Advising a solicitors' firm accused by a deceased person's estate of having negligently failed to renew the insurance on the deceased person's house, in circumstances where it knew (or ought to have known) that the house had a long history of subsidence.
- Advising a solicitor accused of having negligently helped a client to alter their will, in circumstances where the solicitor allegedly should have suspected that the client lacked testamentary capacity.
- Advising an employment solicitor accused of having negligently missed a filing deadline, with the alleged result that the solicitor's client lost the chance of bringing an employment tribunal claim.
- Advising a firm of personal injury solicitors accused of having negligently agreed to a full and final settlement of a client's claim, in circumstances where they knew or ought to have known that a sizeable claim for credit hire losses was still outstanding.



Construction & Engineering

William is developing a varied construction practice. He has a good knowledge of recent developments concerning the Building Safety Act 2022, latent defects insurance, developer/builder insolvency, and limitation periods. He is able to accept instructions on a public access basis, which is a potentially efficient way for developers, builders, self-builders and construction professionals to obtain focussed legal advice and representation.

Current and recent work includes:

- Advising a major insurer on structural defects affecting the roof of a housing development, and on potential recovery of its losses from a third party.
- Advising a construction company facing a potential Building Liability Order arising from alleged breaches of the Defective Premises Act 1972.
- Advising a building developer on the status and effect of a series of written and oral agreements made with a firm of architects.
- Advising a major insurer on subsidence damage alleged to have been caused by the negligent construction of a building's foundations.
- Drafting a Defence for a provider of Building Information Modelling who is alleged to have derailed the progress of a major construction project by providing insufficient architectural and technical detail.
- Advising a major insurer on its options in attempting to recover from an insolvent building developer.

Property Damage

William is developing considerable experience in dealing with property damage claims. He is able to advise on coverage, defence and recovery. During pupillage, he received a solid grounding in the law of fire, escape of water, causation, and damage to chattels/real property.

Current and recent work includes:

- Advising a builder facing a six-figure claim for property damage. The builder is accused of having negligently caused a fire to break out on site, with the result that a building was severely damaged. William has also settled the Defence, and is instructed to attend an upcoming CCMC.
- Drafting a Defence for a major water utility accused of causing damage to property as a consequence of negligent repair work.
- Settling Particulars of Claim in a six-figure recovery claim for water damage to an industrial property.
- Advising an insurer on coverage where its insured had notified a substantial property damage claim arising from a construction project. The property in question belonged to a third party, with the result that the policy's operative clause was not triggered.
- In the County Court, securing the dismissal of claim for vehicle damage on the basis that the documentary evidence regarding diminution in value/reasonable cost of repair was inadequate and unconvincing.
- Carrying out research for Daniel Shapiro KC and James Sharpe on the law concerning damage to

chattels and its application in the context of road traffic accidents (as a pupil).

Personal Injury

William has a busy practice advising defendants in Employers' Liability, Public Liability and Road Traffic Accident claims, and representing them at fast track trials. He regularly achieves successful results for his clients by cross-examining claimants on their inconsistencies, and patiently undermining their credibility in the eyes of the court.

Current and recent work includes:

- Successfully representing a social housing association at a fast track trial. The claimant alleged that he had injured himself by tripping on a loose paving stone which the association had negligently failed to repair, but the court found that he was mistaken.
- Striking out a claim for personal injury and consequential losses arising from an alleged motorcycle accident, in circumstances where there were serious doubts as to whether the accident or injury had actually occurred.
- Successfully representing a provider of building materials at a fast track trial. The claimant alleged that he had slipped whilst unloading materials, due to the defendant employer's negligent failure to clear up an oil spill. The court found that the claimant was mistaken.
- Successfully resisting a claimant's application for an interim payment to fund a private operation, in circumstances where there were serious doubts as to whether the claim was an honest one.
- Successfully defending a claim against a well-known chain of pharmacies for psychiatric injuries alleged to have been caused by a delay in providing medicine to the claimant.
- Striking out an RTA small claim and obtaining a costs order of almost £1,700 in favour of the defendant, on the grounds of unreasonable conduct.

Credit Hire

William has extensive experience of credit hire work on both the fast track and the small claims track. He acts exclusively for defendant insurers, nearly always achieving a substantial reduction in the damages payable or having the claim dismissed. In several cases he has identified fraudulent elements during preparation or trial, leading to the claims being struck out or dismissed. He often attends application hearings arising from credit hire claims, typically involving strike out, relief from sanctions, disclosure, wasted costs, or third-party costs orders.

Current and recent work includes:

- Defending a claim for almost £80,000 in credit hire charges, disbursements and costs at a fast track trial. Near the end of the hearing, the court gave permission for the claimant to accept a Part 36 offer of c. £7,000 and pay the defendant's costs of over £9,000.
- Having a claim dismissed on the grounds that the claimant accepted under cross-examination they had never seen any of the documents in the trial bundle before, except for their inaccurate witness statement.
- Drafting a strike-out application, having previously raised a number of concerns around the claimant's apparent reliance on forged documents and involvement with organised crime. William is

- also instructed to attend the application hearing.
- Advising on a wasted costs application following a series of procedural blunders by the claimant and their representatives.
 - Attending two application hearings concerning a claimant who believed that their ethical and environmental beliefs entitled them to hire a luxury electric car at many times the basic hire rate.
 - Advising on a strike-out application made on the grounds that the claimant had apparently signed their witness statement under duress from their legal representatives. The claimant discontinued shortly before the hearing.

Insurance Fraud

As a result of his experiences in credit hire and personal injury claims, William is beginning to develop a practice in insurance fraud and motor fraud. He is currently instructed as part of a team working for a leading insurance company on a large-scale counter-fraud operation.

Inquests & Public Inquiries

William regularly appears at inquests and PIRHs for families and other interested persons, including highly sensitive inquests arising from fatal accidents, suicide, suspected suicide, and/or allegations of misconduct by state entities. He is well-versed in the legal tests around scope of inquest, evidence, neglect and Article 2. His life experience and maturity enable him to interact with the various participants with respect and sensitivity, and to be robust where appropriate.

Current and recent work includes:

- Representing a private health care provider at an inquest concerning a person whose death is alleged to have been partially caused by failures at a private care home.
- Representing the family at the four-day inquest of a person who died shortly after being released from police custody, having had a life-sustaining medical device seized by the police.
- Representing the family at a three-day jury inquest concerning the accidental death of an elderly person in a care home, including extensive submissions on neglect.
- Representing the family of a person who took their own life after a series of alleged failures by state entities to care properly for them.
- Being instructed to attend and report upon an inquest arising from a fatal road traffic accident, on behalf of the deceased's family.
- Advising an interested person who was required to give oral evidence at an inquest arising from a fatal accident.

William is able to represent interested persons on a public access basis, where appropriate.

Qualifications

- Bar Practice Course (Outstanding); The University of Law
- GDL (Distinction); The University of Law



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- MA Music (First Class); King's College, Cambridge

Memberships

- BILA
- COMBAR
- PIBA
- PNBA
- TECBAR