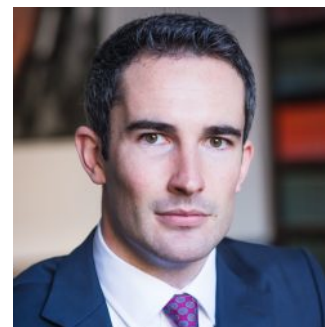


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## Ronnie Dennis

Ronnie is ranked as a leading junior in his two main areas of practice: employment and public law. He is described as: “an excellent all-round barrister; he’s very commercial, gives a pragmatic view and is very impressive on his feet”; “A tower of strength with incredible capacity for work and someone you would always want on your team”; and “laser-focused, client-friendly and a relentless cross-examiner” (Chambers & Partners/ Legal 500).



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## Specialisms

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### Commercial Dispute Resolution

Ronnie has acted in a broad range of employee competition disputes, including claims for breach of restrictive covenants, misuse of confidential information and economic torts.

Examples of his work in this field include:

#### **Non-compete and confidentiality clauses**

(March 2021)

Acting for the Head of Marketing of a global chemical manufacturer in dispute with his employer over the terms on which he could join a competitor. Issues included the enforceability of non-compete and confidentiality clauses in his contract of employment.

#### **Multinational team move litigation**

(February 2021)

Acting for a leading business advisory firm in team move litigation against former employees in the UK, Dubai, Hong Kong and India. Claims included breach of express and implied duties of loyalty and fiduciary duty, inducing breach of contract and unlawful means conspiracy. The parties also sought declarations as to the enforceability of non-compete, non-dealing and non-poaching clauses in the employees’ contracts of employment. Ronnie was led by James Laddie QC.

#### **Team move litigation**

(2018 – 2020)

Acting for two former employees of a commercial real estate company defending claims they had conspired together and with others, including a recruitment consultancy and their new employer, to execute an unlawful team move. Claims included breach of the duty of fidelity and post-termination restraints, misuse of confidential information, inducing breach of contract and unlawful means conspiracy.

#### **Confidentiality and data protection**

(November – December 2018)

Acting for a Fund Manager accused of hacking his employer’s email accounts and misusing confidential information. Claims included breach of the duty of fidelity and fiduciary duty, breach of confidence, misuse of private information and breach of the DPA and GDPR. Ronnie was led by Anya Proops QC.

#### **Urgent injunction without notice**

(November 2016)

The High Court granted an urgent injunction at a hearing without notice, to prevent a solicitor

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### Professional Summary

Called 2010

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### Contact Details

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**Clerk** Lee Cutler

**Clerk** Ellie Hecht

[Contact Clerks](#)

from using or disclosing client lists and other confidential information he had taken from his employer. Ronnie acted for the successful applicant.

### **Non-compete and confidentiality clauses**

(October 2016)

Acting for a former employee of a worldwide chemical manufacturer, defending claims she would breach non-compete and confidentiality clauses in her contract of employment by continuing in her role with a new employer.

### **Non-solicit and non-dealing clauses**

(March 2015)

The High Court granted an interim injunction to enforce non-solicit and non-dealing clauses in a former employee's contract of employment. Ronnie acted for the successful applicant.

Ronnie has also acted in a number of commercial disputes outside the sphere of employee competition. Examples include –

- Acting for a property asset manager defending claims for negligence and breach of contract in connection with an interest rate hedging arrangement;
- Acting for a Cloud Software company bringing claims against an employee for failing to carry out his work with reasonable skill and competence;
- Obtaining a High Court injunction to prevent a sampling agency from dealing with clients in breach of a contract for the sale of goodwill; and
- Acting for a senior employee bringing claims against his employer for breach of a commission agreement.

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## **Employment**

Ronnie's employment practice encompasses:

- the full range of claims in the Employment Tribunal, with a particular focus on discrimination, equal pay and whistleblowing claims;
- industrial relations disputes; and
- employee competition claims: see further under "Commercial Dispute Resolution" above.

Examples of his work in this field include:

### **Queensgate Investments LLP v Millet**

[2021] ICR 863; [2021] IRLR 637

The EAT ruled that interim relief hearings in the Employment Tribunal must be heard in public, unless the Tribunal makes an Order under Rule 50 of the ET Rules 2013. Ronnie acted for the Appellant, led by Sean Jones QC.

### **Headley v Sensyne Health plc**

(April – May 2020)

Ronnie acted for Sensyne's former Chief Financial Officer in his whistleblowing claims against the company and its CEO, Lord Drayson. The litigation was reported in the Times, Telegraph and Financial Times.

### **Bird & Rashid v Morrison Data Services (Water) Ltd**

(November 2020)

The claimants were two Trade Union Representatives who claimed their employer had subjected them to detriments for their trade union activities. The Tribunal dismissed all claims after a 5-day hearing. Ronnie acted for the successful employer.

### **Law firm's bonus policy not discriminatory**

(January 2020)

The Employment Tribunal ruled that a bonus policy operated by a multinational law firm, which did not reduce hours targets for time spent on holiday, was neither directly nor indirectly discriminatory on grounds of maternity or gender. Ronnie acted for the successful law firm.

### **Beal v Avery Homes (Nelson) Ltd**

[2019] 6 WLUK 89

The High Court conducted the equivalent of a “Stage 2” hearing in equal pay claims brought by over 70 female care workers. The judgment contains helpful guidance on what constitutes a person’s work for the purposes of any equal value assessment. Ronnie acted for the claimants, led by Sean Jones QC.

### **R. (Independent Workers Union of Great Britain) v Central Arbitration Committee**

[2019] I.R.L.R. 530

The High Court rejected claims that workers have a right to compulsory collective bargaining with a third party who is not their employer under Art. 11 ECHR. Ronnie acted for the University of London, led by Christopher Jeans QC.

### **Patel-Jones v Babylon Partners Ltd**

(April 2019)

The Employment Tribunal dismissed claims for direct disability discrimination (including by association), harassment, failure to make reasonable adjustments, whistleblowing detriment and automatic unfair dismissal after a 12-day hearing. Ronnie acted for the successful employer.

### **Ayodele v Citylink Ltd**

[2018] I.R.L.R. 114

The Court of Appeal ruled that employees bringing claims for discrimination bear the initial burden of proof under the Equality Act 2010, despite the change in wording as compared with the pre-EqA legislation. Read more about the case here.

### **Extraterritorial discrimination claims**

(November 2017)

The Employment Tribunal ruled that it had territorial jurisdiction to determine claims for unfair dismissal and discrimination brought by an Engineering Manager against a multinational oil and gas company, relying on acts alleged to have occurred in the USA. Ronnie acted for the successful claimant.

### **Tribunal grants interim relief in whistleblowing claim**

(June 2017)

The Employment Tribunal granted interim relief to a Senior Director of Business Development in his whistleblowing claim against his former employer, a multinational computer services company. The Tribunal was satisfied that the claimant was likely to succeed in showing that he was dismissed for making protected disclosures about sexual harassment and tax fraud, rather than for poor performance as alleged by the company. Ronnie acted for the successful claimant.

### **Merseyrail Electrics 2002 Ltd v RMT**

(2017)

Merseyrail sought an injunction to prevent RMT members from going out on strike in connection with the introduction of driver only operated trains. Ronnie acted for Merseyrail, led by Bruce Carr QC.

Other Employment Tribunal cases include:

- Acting for employers and employees at hearings to determine issues under TUPE, including whether there has been a relevant transfer and issues of assignment;
- Acting for a leading UK housebuilder defending claims of disability and age discrimination, victimisation and unfair dismissal at a 10-day hearing;
- Acting for an overseas bank defending claims for discrimination, whistleblowing and automatic unfair dismissal on a TUPE transfer at a 15-day hearing. Led by Jane Mulcahy QC;
- Acting for a high street bank defending claims for disability discrimination, failure to make reasonable adjustments and unfair dismissal at a 7-day hearing;
- Acting for a national rail company defending its shift premium policy against claims for indirect sex discrimination;
- Acting for a nationwide retailer defending claims for indirect sex discrimination and unfair

dismissal arising out of a redundancy process at a 7-day hearing.

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## Public

Ronnie's public law practice encompasses all areas of judicial review, with a particular focus on claims with a commercial context. He also specialises in State aid and public procurement: see separately below.

Examples of his work in this field include:

### **R. (Williams) v Caerphilly County Borough Council**

[2020] EWCA Civ 296, [2020] PTSR 1130

The Court of Appeal dismissed a challenge to the Council's decision to adopt a 10-year leisure strategy. The strategy was not a relevant arrangement within the scope of the Welsh improvement duty (akin to best value in England); or contrary to the Council's budget, so that the decision could properly be taken by Cabinet. Ronnie acted for the Council, led by James Goudie QC. Read more about the case [here](#).

### **R. (L) v Buckinghamshire CC**

(2019)

Supperstone J rejected the claimant's application for interim relief to prevent the council from taking any further steps to implement a decision to repurpose 19 of its 35 children's centres. Ronnie acted for the Council.

### **R. (Independent Workers Union of Great Britain) v Central Arbitration Committee**

[2019] I.R.L.R. 530

Supperstone J rejected claims that workers have a right to compulsory collective bargaining with a third party who is not their employer under Art. 11 ECHR. Ronnie acted for the University of London, led by Christopher Jeans QC.

### **R. (Mas Group Holdings Ltd) v Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

[2019] 2 WLUK 12

The claimant challenged the defendant's policy of refusing to allow animal exporters to use a route via Ireland unless a shorter route via the Channel was unavailable. The claimant argued the policy constituted a disproportionate restraint on trade contrary to the EU Regulation for the protection of animals during transport and Art. 35 TFEU. Ronnie acted for the claimant, led by Conor Quigley QC.

### **R (Hussain) v Sandwell Metropolitan BC**

[2017] P.T.S.R. 142

An elected member of the council sought judicial review of on-going investigations into allegations against him. Green J dismissed the claim, ruling that the Council had the power to investigate under s. 28 of the Localism Act 2011, and that the process had not been tainted by actual or apparent bias. Ronnie acted for the Council, led by James Goudie QC. Read more about the case [here](#).

### **R. (Justice for Health Ltd) v Secretary of State for Health**

[2016] A.C.D. 119

Green J dismissed claims that the Health Secretary's decision to approve a new contract for junior doctors in the NHS in England was unlawful. The Judge found that the decision was within the scope of his powers, complied with his duty of transparency and was not irrational. Ronnie acted for the the Health Secretary, led by Clive Sheldon QC.

### **R. (British Medical Association) v Secretary of State for Health**

(2016)

The BMA sought to challenge the Health Secretary's decision to approve a new contract for junior doctors in the NHS in England, arguing that he had failed to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Ronnie acted for the Health Secretary, led by Clive Sheldon QC.

### **R (O'Neill) v Lambeth LBC**

(2016)

Lang J dismissed a challenge to the Council's decision to vary a lease on the South Bank of the River Thames as part of the Garden Bridge project. The Judge found that the decision was within the Council's powers, did not involve any disposal of land under the LGA 1972, and that Reg. 13(1) of the Asset of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 was *intra vires*. Ronnie acted for the Council, led by Clive Sheldon QC.

### **R (Logan) v Havering LBC**

[2016] P.T.S.R. 603

Blake J ruled that a Council Tax Reduction Scheme, under which all taxpayers paid some council tax except in cases of exceptional hardship, was not discriminatory on grounds of age or disability. Ronnie acted for the Council, led by Clive Sheldon QC.

### **R (Sky Blue Sports and Leisure Ltd) v Coventry City Council**

[2014] B.L.G.R. 616

Hickinbottom J ruled that the Council had not acted irrationally or failed to take account of relevant considerations when it made a loan of £14.4m to the company that manages the Ricoh Arena in Coventry. Ronnie acted for the Council, led by James Goudie QC.

### **Sky Blue Sports & Leisure Ltd v Coventry City Council**

[2014] A.C.D. 48

The claimant applied for specific disclosure between its application for permission to seek judicial review having been refused, and the oral renewal hearing. Silber J refused the application. Ronnie acted for the Council, led by James Goudie QC.

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## **Procurement & State Aid**

Ronnie also specialises in State aid and public procurement. He acted for Coventry City Council in the leading domestic cases on the private investor test for State aid: ***R. (Sky Blue Sports and Leisure Ltd) v Coventry City Council*** (see further below).

Examples of his work in the field of State aid include:

### **Defending challenge to the Mayoral Infrastructure Levy (2019)**

The claimant sought to challenge the Mayor of London's levy on new commercial, retail and hotel development across London. The claim raised complex issues around the application of the State aid rules to different rates of taxation for different uses in different areas. Ronnie acted for the Mayor of London, led by Jonathan Moffett QC.

### **R. (Sky Blue Sports and Leisure Ltd) v Coventry City Council (No. 3)**

[2018] EWCA Civ 2252

The owners of Coventry City Football Club argued that the Council had granted a State aid to Wasps RFC by selling its interests in the Ricoh Arena at an undervalue. The Court of Appeal upheld the Judge's decision that the claim was unarguable. The Council had been entitled to rely on an independent valuation from KPMG, which demonstrated that it had complied with the private vendor test. Ronnie acted for the Council, led by James Goudie QC.

### **R. (Sky Blue Sports and Leisure Ltd) v Coventry City Council (No. 2)**

[2016] EWCA Civ 453

The owners of Coventry City Football Club argued that the Council had granted a State aid to the operator of the Ricoh Arena, ACL, by lending it £14.4m on non-commercial terms. The Court of Appeal upheld the Judge's decision dismissing the claim. The Court's judgment contains a helpful summary of the principles to be applied under the private investor test. Applying those principles, a private investor might also have made the loan because it was at a commercial rate of interest and safeguarded the Council's 50% share in ACL. Ronnie acted for the Council, led by James Goudie QC.

### **R. (Sky Blue Sports and Leisure Ltd) v Coventry City Council (No. 1)**

[2014] EWHC 1747

Hickinbottom J refused the claimants permission to rely on expert evidence in their claim for judicial review of the Council's loan to ACL, which they argued constituted a State aid.

Examples of Ronnie's work in the field of public procurement include:

- Acting for a local authority defending claims for breach of the PCR 2015 in connection with a tender for waste, recycling and street cleaning services. Led by Jason Coppel QC;
- Advising a local authority on the implications of abandoning a public procurement in response to a potential challenge;
- Advising a local authority on award criteria for all of its public contracts;
- Advising a local authority on proposals to reduce the services required under an on-going public contract;
- Advising a local authority on the application of the PCR 2015 to proposals to outsource certain services;
- Advising a local authority on the distinction between public service and concession contracts; and how to deal with a change in contract terms.

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## Recommendations

"He's an excellent all-round barrister; he's very commercial, gives a pragmatic view and is very impressive on his feet" **Chambers & Partners**

"He's very bright, very helpful and has a very quick turnaround of work" **Chambers & Partners**

"Very smart and diligent. Very good with numbers" **Legal 500**

"Keeps things simple and to the point, effectively manages the litigation, and makes the key points heard" **Legal 500**

"A tower of strength with incredible capacity for work and someone you would always want on your team" **Legal 500**

"An immensely valuable junior" **Legal 500**

"He is laser-focused, client-friendly and a relentless cross-examiner." **Legal 500**

"He adopts a collaborative approach and has the ability to get to the crux of a case quickly" **Legal 500**

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## Education

University of Oxford, Bachelor of Civil Law, Distinction & Law Faculty Prize

University College London, Law LLB, First Class



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