Sophie Belgrove KC

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Sophie Belgrove is a specialist in employment law and commercial litigation. She advises and represents clients in the Employment Tribunal, the High Court and the appellate courts. Her practice encompasses all aspects of employment law including high value discrimination and whistleblowing claims. She is experienced in complex litigation in particular urgent applications for injunctive relief and business protection disputes in the High Court relating to confidential information, restraint of trade and breach of fiduciary duties. She advises and acts in disputes involving shareholders and directors and in partnership disputes. Sophie is also known for her specialist expertise in employment-related insurance disputes. She has extensive experience of advising and representing clients in the financial services sector, including investment banks and brokers. She is recognised as a leading practitioner in Chambers UK and in the Legal 500.

> ***She achieves great results and is a real hit with clients.***
>
> LEGAL 500

Expertise

Commercial Litigation

Sophie has a wide-ranging commercial practice with a particular focus on high value business protection disputes, company and partnership disputes and commercial contract issues. Sophie is known for her work in the financial services sector, acting for major investment banks, brokers and insurance companies. She has extensive expertise in team move cases and claims of breach of confidence and breach of contract. She frequently advises and acts in disputes in relation to share purchase agreements, shareholder agreements, the construction of partnership agreements and claims of breach of fiduciary duties against directors.

Sophie is also accustomed to appearing in civil fraud claims including conspiracy claims, misappropriation of proprietary information and the taking of secret profits and bribes and has in-depth expertise in relation to the grant of urgent injunctive relief including delivery up and search orders.

Sophie advises and acts in insurance matters, including the construction of insurance policy wordings, breach of warranty claims, avoidance of policies of insurance for misrepresentation and non-disclosure and claims under the Third Parties (Rights Against Insurers) Act 1930. Click here to read an article by Sophie (with Alison Padfield) concerning the potential restrictions on the dismissal of employees who are in receipt of benefits under group PHI policies. She also has significant specialist expertise in relation to professional negligence disputes involving professional advisers, including surveyors, accountants, brokers, financial advisers and solicitors.

X (a global commodities broker) v C, G and others

(2016), QBD

Acted on behalf of the employer in relation to a team move, seeking an injunction to restrain breaches of express and implied terms of the defendants' contracts of employment and breach of post-termination restrictive covenants.

A (an insurer) v F

(2015-2016), TCC

Acted for an insurance company in relation to a claim for clawback of commission payments.

X (a media company) v J and others

(2015), QBD

Acted for defendants in relation to an application for an injunction in the media sector against former employees for breach of contract, misuse of confidential information and infringement of copyright.

X (a property development company) v W and others

(2014-2015), QBD

High value claim relating to the diversion of corporate opportunities, including a £39 million property development, by a de facto director and others. The claim involved claims of breaches of fiduciary duties, misuse of confidential information and conspiracy to injure by unlawful means.

P v X (an engineering consultancy)

2016

Acting and advising in relation to a dispute regarding group life assurance and group income protection.

I-P v X (a major investment bank)

(2014-2016), QBD

Breach of contract and negligent misstatement claim by the former employee of a major investment bank relating to the provision of a reference to prospective employers.

Re an insurer

2015

Advised an insurance company in relation to coverage under an employment practices liability policy

A v C, A (an insurer)

(2014-2015), CC

Acted for an insurance company in relation to policy coverage.

G v X(a healthcare provider)

(2013), QBD

Obtained an interim injunction to restrain the employer from dismissing the employee in order to preserve her entitlement to benefit.

J v X (a law firm)

(2013-2014)

Advised the proposed claimant partner in respect of her entitlement to payment of permanent health insurance benefit in circumstances where there was no express entitlement to benefit in the contract of employment.

Achievements

News, Articles & Publications

'Unbundling unshackled' (NLJ, 18 March 2016; co-author): Reviewing the nature and extent of solicitors' duties under a limited retainer. Read here.

'The worst of both worlds – examining commercial agents' (NLJ, 22 January 2016; co-author): Considering the position of commercial agents. Read here.

'Dismissing employees with PHI benefits: a step too far?' (ELA Briefing, June 2011; co-author): Examining the options available to parties in PHI disputes. Read here.

Education

University of Oxford, BA

Other

Recent seminars

- Sophie was recently invited to speak at the ELA Annual Conference 2016 on the subject of whistleblowing. The paper for the session, *'Whistle while you work or whistling in the wind?'* can be found here.
- *'Disclosure in the Employment Tribunal'* (2015) for Berwin Leighton Paisner.
- *'High Court litigation – restrictive covenants, confidentiality and injunctions – what's new?'* (2015) for employment and commercial solicitors.
- *'Permanent health insurance – who benefits?'* (2014 and 2015) for employment and commercial solicitors, and repeated for Clyde & Co.
- *'High Court tactics'* (2014) for DLA Piper.
- *'Tricky issues in litigation'* (2014) for IHELN.

Memberships and committees

- Member of ELA, ELBA, ILS, COMBAR, LCLCBA, BILA, PNBA.
- Committee member of South Eastern Circuit Access to Justice Working Group. Sophie chaired the sub-group responsible for drafting the response to the report by JUSTICE, 'Delivering Justice in an Age of Austerity' (2015), and for drafting the response to the report by Lord Justice Briggs, 'Civil Courts Structure Review: Interim Report' (2016).

She has a very intellectual and detail-oriented approach, combined with a supreme team-player attitude.

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

A thoughtful, technically very accurate and responsive barrister who gets properly involved.

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

One of the very strongest employment juniors at the Bar. A genuine star.

LEGAL 500

She is very commercial, responsive and good on her feet; her cross-examination style is very effective but subtle and the [witness] does not realise they are being undermined.

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

Very approachable and down to earth.

LEGAL 500

A first class junior... She is hands-on and constructive, gets to grips quickly with the matters at issue, and has a keen eye for detail.

CHAMBERS UK

She achieves great results and is a real hit with clients.

LEGAL 500

She is a very strong advocate who is rightfully highly regarded.

CHAMBERS UK

She's going to be a real star... She sees the big picture well and is commercially astute.

CHAMBERS UK