

Oliver Friend-Smith

Call: 2025

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Oliver practises in all of Chambers' core areas, including employment, commercial, public, human rights, and information law.

As a pupil, Oliver assisted in a number of significant cases in these areas, such as:

- *R (Broadbent) v Secretary of State for the Home Department*: a human rights challenge to section 64 of the Police Act 1996, which prohibits police officers from joining trade unions (as a pupil, assisting Patrick Halliday).
- A case before the Employment Appeal Tribunal concerning the interaction between whistleblowing protections and legal professional privilege (assisting Andrew Smith).
- *Cruelty Free International v Information Commissioner* [2026] UKUT 328 (AAC): a freedom of information appeal in which the Upper Tribunal held that a statutory prohibition on disclosure was in breach of Article 10 ECHR (assisting Peter Lockley).

Oliver is currently instructed by the Information Commissioner (led by Christopher Knight KC) in *Farley v Paymaster (1836) Ltd*, an appeal to the Supreme Court which will determine whether data protection claims are subject to a threshold of seriousness.

Before coming to the Bar, Oliver graduated with a first-class BA in Law from the University of Cambridge, and a Distinction on the BCL from the University of Oxford. He was a research assistant for the book *Reimagining Employment Dispute Resolution and Enforcement*, which proposes reforms to the UK's employment tribunal system. He also volunteered with a pro bono organisation representing parents in the school exclusion process.

Expertise

Employment and Commercial

Oliver accepts instructions across the full range of statutory and commercial employment matters. His recent experience includes:

- A case before the Employment Appeal Tribunal concerning the interaction between whistleblowing protections and legal professional privilege (as a pupil, assisting Andrew Smith).
 - An employment dispute in the DIFC concerning the interpretation of termination and garden leave clauses (as a pupil, assisting Jane McCafferty KC).
 - Advising on the enforceability of covenants in a contract of employment and a shareholders' agreement (as a pupil, assisting Zac Sammour).
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Public and Human Rights

Oliver practises in all areas of public law and human rights. Highlights include:

- Acting for a local authority in a local government reorganisation matter (led by Tom Cross KC).
 - *R (Broadbent) v Secretary of State for the Home Department*: a human rights challenge to section 64 of the Police Act 1996, which prohibits police officers from joining trade unions (as a pupil, assisting Patrick Halliday).
 - *R (Baron Ranger) v Prime Minister*: a judicial review involving a preliminary issue about whether the removal of a person's CBE is justiciable (as a pupil, assisting Christopher Knight KC).
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Information, Technology and Media

Oliver accepts instructions in data protection, privacy, freedom of information, and online safety matters. He is currently instructed by the Information Commissioner (led by Christopher Knight KC) in *Farley v Paymaster (1836) Ltd*, an appeal to the Supreme Court which will determine whether data protection claims are subject to a threshold of seriousness.

Oliver's experience in this area also includes:

- *Cruelty Free International v Information Commissioner* [2026] UKUT 328 (AAC): a freedom of information appeal in which the Upper Tribunal held that a statutory prohibition on disclosure was in breach of Article 10 ECHR (as a pupil, assisting Peter Lockley).
- Providing research assistance to Zoe Gannon on a FOIA matter before the Court of Appeal.

Achievements

Education

BA Law, University of Cambridge (First Class)

BCL, University of Oxford (Distinction)

BVS, City Law School (Distinction)

Awards

Sir John and Lady Sophie Laws Scholarship, Bar European Group, 2026

Senior Scarman Prize, City Law School, 2025

Queen Mother Scholarship, Middle Temple, 2024

Law Faculty Prize for the highest mark in Human Rights at Work, University of Oxford, 2024

College prizes, Trinity College Cambridge, 2021–2023

Publications

'Should there be exceptions to the rule that courts cannot enforce ultra vires legitimate expectations?' [2024] Public Law 29–37

Oliver contributed as a research assistant to Sarah Fraser Butlin KC, Professor Catherine Barnard, and Dr Maayan Menashe's book, *Reimagining Employment Dispute Resolution and Enforcement* (Hart, 2026)

Oliver also contributed to 'Fixing Equal Pay Law: From Endless Litigation to Fair Pay by Design', a report commissioned by UNISON.