# Peter Oldham KC



Silk: 2010 Call: 1990

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**T: +44 (0)20 7632 8500**

Peter is a well-known practitioner advising and litigating in public, local government, education and employment law, and has always appeared as a leading silk in the directories. Peter regularly advises and appears in the cutting edge cases in his fields.

> ***A super advocate and tactician, who presents winning arguments and quickly turns advice around.***
>
> LEGAL 500

# Expertise

## Local Authority

Peter has decades of experience advising and litigating in the field of local authority law.

Peter has recently advised on matters including:

- Numerous challenges to cuts and closures
- Powers, including the general power of competence
- Budgets
- Budget crises and s 114 of the LGFA 1988
- Local government reorganisation and the LGPIHA 2007
- Vires and general power of competence
- Best value
- Prudential borrowing, accounts and the CIPFA code
- Education issues (please see separate Education webpage for full details)
- Rating
- Social services and community care
- Museums
- Local government ombudsman
- Staffing, including Chief Officers' statutory rights and JNC terms of employment
- LGPS issues (complaints, shortfalls, Pensions Ombudsman, termination rights, admission bodies etc)
- Bias and conduct of meetings
- Data protection and freedom of information
- Health powers
- Audit and accounts
- Investment and borrowing powers
- Highways
- Harbours
- Waste collection, disposal and recycling
- Assets of community value
- Elections
- Trading and commercial initiatives

> ***A very good advocate who is very experienced in local government matters.***
>
> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

- Inter-authority care/health disputes and ordinary residence
- Bus services and transport
- Regeneration projects, including state aid and procurement (please see separate Procurement & State Aid page)
- Section 123 of the LGA 1972 and sales at an undervalue
- Assets of community value
- Members' standards and the Localism Act 2011
- Indemnities for officers and members
- Political balance
- Termination of employment of chief officers
- Parking regulation
- Operation of joint authorities
- Operation of combined authorities

### R (Heart of Wales Ltd) v Swansea Council

(APRIL 2026, ONGOING IN THE COURT OF APPEAL)

challenge to setting of care home fees

### R (H) v Buckinghamshire Council

(MARCH 2026)

challenge to reorganisation of adult day care provision

### R (BH) v Kirklees Council

(MARCH 2026, COURT OF APPEAL)

challenge to sale of care homes

### R (Coventry CC) v Home Office

(JULY 2025)

challenge to Home Office's policy on procurement of accommodation for asylum seekers

### R (CKT) v Twyford School and others

(JULY 2025, ONGOING IN COURT OF APPEAL)

admission criteria for Church of England School and indirect race discrimination

### R (NAA) v Haringey LBC, A School and an Independent Review Panel

(JUNE 2025)

exclusion from school, county lines, Art 4 of the ECHR and modern slavery

### R (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council) v Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

(JAN 2025)

challenge to LGSCO's decision on nursery charges and free early education entitlement

### R (X) v Bristol City Council

(DECEMBER 2024)

challenge to LA's entry into "safety valve agreement" with DfE for SEN funding

### R (Mid Ulster DC) v Department for Communities

(DECEMBER 2024)

challenge to refusal of IT grant application to central government

### R (Birmingham CC) v Department for Transport

challenge to cessation of PFI funding from DfT

### R (Mid Ulster DC) v Department for Communities

(OCTOBER 2023)

rate support grant, equalities and rural considerations

### R (Bristol Boaters Community Association) v Bristol CC

(OCTOBER 2023)

challenge to LA's harbour charges

### R (X Limited) v OFSTED

(OCTOBER 2023)

challenge to OFSTED report by apprenticeship provider

## Education

Peter has a particular specialism in education law and he has continuously been in the very highest rank in the education directories for over twenty years. His work covers all aspects of education, whether in schools, academies, universities, colleges, professional and vocational settings, specialist settings, the independent sector, etc.

Peter has recently advised on the following amongst other issues:

- Various academy issues, including transfer of property on academisation
- The impact of increased energy costs on school budgets
- Numerous OFSTED challenges in different educational settings
- School closures

> ***He has a brilliant intellect and an encyclopaedic knowledge of complex education legislation.***

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- School transport cuts
- Welsh language rights and duties in education, and the Welsh Language Tribunal
- Special educational needs and disability
- Teachers' pensions
- Disputes over maintained school borrowing
- School photocopier lease disputes
- School and university staffing disputes
- Religious, disability and sex discrimination in schools
- Consumer Rights Act 2015, universities and independent schools
- The operation of statutory and private law trusts for voluntary schools
- Independent schools, discipline and contracts of education
- School transport
- University staffing disputes
- University governance and statutes
- Universities, sexual harassment and discipline
- Students' claims against universities (private and public law)
- Students unions
- FE colleges
- Foundation trustees' powers and duties
- Charity Commission issues
- DfE and withdrawal of funding
- Regulation of examination and awarding bodies
- Admissions
- Exclusions
- Boarding and fee charging
- Constitution of governing bodies

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### R (An Association) v Department for Education

(OCT 2024)

challenge to exam rules/disability

### R (British Medical Association) v Royal College of GPs

(OCT 2024)

challenge to exam rules/disability

### R (X Limited) v OFSTED

(OCT 2023)

challenge to OFSTED report by apprenticeship provider

### R (Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg) v Neath Port Talbot CBC

OCT-22

Welsh language and school reorganisation

### R (YA) v Swansea Independent Appeal Panel

FEB-22

school exclusions

### R (KD) v Leicestershire CC

JUL-21

school transport cuts, disability and human rights

### R (MI) v Waltham Forest BC

JUL-20

cuts to SEN budgets

### SFM v Christ the King College and Isle of Wight Council

MAY-20

bar on maintained school borrowing as a defence to a private law claim

## Public

Peter advises and litigates across the range of public law. Apart from his very extensive work with local authorities (details on Peter's separate local authority webpage), his cases include disputes involving central government departments and agencies, police authorities, fire authorities, combined authorities, health bodies, CQC, medical bodies, ombudsmen (local government, pensions), election matters, trade regulators, and education and examination regulators (e.g. OFSTED, ISI, OfS, OIAHE, QAA , and JCQ)– details on Peter's separate education webpage).

Peter has recently advised on matters including:

- Fire authorities
- Election issues
- Numerous JR challenges to medical bodies
- The conduct of business by a statutory trade regulator
- Numerous challenges to education regulator decisions about provider quality

For local authorities, Peter has recently advised on matters including:

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### R (X Limited) v OFSTED

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challenge to OFSTED report by apprenticeship provider

### R (City of Wolverhampton and six other LAs) v Home Secretary

JUL-22

LA challenge to Home Office's asylum dispersal policy

### R (X) v Bristol City Council

(DECEMBER 2024)

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challenge to closure of LA day centre for disabled adults

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APR-20

school transport, disability and human rights

### R (MI) v Waltham Forest BC

JUL-20

cuts to SEN budgets

### SFM v Christ the King College and Isle of Wight Council

(MAY 2020)

bar on maintained school borrowing as a defence to a private law claim

## Employment

Peter advises and litigates across the employment field, with a particular strength in public sector employment.

Peter advises on all employment issues, including:

- Unfair dismissal including mass dismissals
- Discrimination
- Redundancy and protective awards
- Pension rights, including Pension Ombudsman issues and appeals
- TUPE
- Whistleblowing
- Rights of local authority chief officers under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001, and JNC Chief Executive and Chief Officer terms
- Gig economy rights
- Flexible working rights
- Industrial action and injunctions
- Union rights, certification etc
- Trafficked workers' rights
- Whistleblowing
- Crown employment

### Holmes v Kirklees Council

(MAY 2026, EAT)

Trade union related claims

## Investigations

Peter has a particular expertise in conducting often highly sensitive and sometimes high profile investigations and determinations:

- Investigation into the working of Welsh legislation for discipline of senior local government officers
- An investigation into a local authority's failed investment worth tens of millions of pounds
- Expert determination under NHS standard terms of a dispute between CCG and provider
- Investigation into whistleblowing complaint against a local authority Chief Officer
- Investigation into possible financial fraud at FE college
- Investigation into the suicide of a school teacher
- Investigation of bullying of staff at a school

# Achievements

## Education

MA History, first class, University of Cambridge

Diploma in Law, distinction, first in year

## Other

Peter worked in banking for a number of years before studying law and becoming a barrister.

*Down to earth and willing to put himself in his client's shoes.*

LEGAL 500

*He handles things very well, is very responsive, has a fine academic brain, and is always willing to listen to clients and meet their needs.*

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

*His strengths include his intellect, analysis and expertise, and his approachability.*

LEGAL 500

*He's quick at turning advice around and is always very thorough.*

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

*He has a calm confidence, is excellent with clients and has the ability to quickly identify the key issues in a case.*

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

*He is really good in cases involving novel points of the law and is excellent with clients. He's wonderfully softly spoken, unbelievably bright and very responsive.*

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

*A very good advocate who is very experienced in local government matters.*

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

*He provides practical and pragmatic advice and real world solutions.*

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

*He exudes confidence with sound and pragmatic advice.*

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