Michael Lee



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Michael Lee has a broad practice, with a particular focus on employment and commercial matters. He has extensive advocacy experience and regularly appears in a range of courts and tribunals.

Michael is recommended in the employment sections of all the leading directories, which have described him as “a go-to junior for employment litigation and associated high court work” and as a “go-to counsel, who is hugely responsive and great with clients… always well prepared, never misses a trick, and his advocacy is strong”.

The directories have noted Michael’s strength in “injunctive relief and restraint of trade matters” and in “complex discrimination matters and employment issues with a commercial twist”. The most recent editions describe Michael as someone who “will give you the time, effort and insight you dream of from a real star of the employment Bar”.

> ***Michael Lee is very smart, committed, and he has excellent judgement. He rolls up his sleeves and gets involved and produces excellent-quality work.***

Expertise

Commercial Litigation

Michael undertakes a range of commercial work. He is frequently instructed in cases involving injunctive relief and restraint of trade issues, conspiracy and economic tort claims, and cases involving breaches of directors' duties, fiduciary duties and duties of confidence. Chambers and Partners has stated that Michael "is noted for his work on injunctive relief and restraint of trade matters", whilst Who's Who Legal has commented that he is "lauded as 'a go-to junior for employment litigation and associated High Court work'".

> ***Michael Lee is very smart, committed, and he has excellent judgement. He rolls up his sleeves and gets involved and produces excellent-quality work.***

Michael's work in this field includes a speedy trial concerning a team-move, led by David Craig KC (***Guy Carpenter v Howden***, which settled on the first day of six-week trial) and a non-compete injunction led by Daniel Oudkerk KC and Amy Rogers (***AstraZeneca v Sheldon* [2022] EWHC 2447**). Michael (led by Richard Leiper KC) also represented one of the Defendant insurance brokers in an alleged team move conspiracy case heard over 14 days (***Alesco Risk Management Services Ltd v Bishopsgate Insurance Brokers Ltd* [2019] EWHC 2839 (QB)**).

Michael is currently acting as part of a large counsel team, led by David Craig KC, in a case involving an alleged team-move conspiracy listed for trial over 12 weeks in early 2027. He is also (led by David Craig KC) acting for a Claimant bank seeking declaratory relief in the High Court in relation to a contractual dispute with a former-employee (and in seeking a stay of related proceedings brought by the employee in the Employment Tribunal).

As sole counsel Michael acted for the Claimants in a Commercial Court dispute involving contractual claims against Defendants in multiple jurisdictions and represented the individual defendants in a trial concerning misuse of confidential information (***Trailfinders Ltd v Travel Counsellors Ltd* [2020] IRLR 448**).

Employment

Michael has acted in a wide variety of complex, high value Employment Tribunal cases, both as sole and junior counsel. His work in this field covers a broad spectrum of employment law issues and has been recognised by the legal directories for several years. As Chambers and Partners has recognised, Michael acts for a diverse range of clients, and has particular experience in the financial services and education sectors. The directories have commented that Michael has a particular strength in "complex discrimination matters and employment issues with a commercial twist".

Michael's recent work covers the full spectrum of work in the employment law field. He was instructed (led by Daniel Stilitz KC) by Chelsea FC and José Mourinho to defend high profile claims brought against them by a former doctor. Michael was also instructed (led by Simon Devonshire KC) in a sex and age discrimination claim brought against an investment bank. In 2025 Michael (led by Richard Leiper KC) acted for a hedge fund defending a disability discrimination claim which settled shortly before a three-week hearing. Michael (led by Diya Sen Gupta KC) also represented a private equity firm in its defence of an equal pay and sex discrimination claim, heard over three weeks in early 2026. He is currently acting (led by Daniel Stilitz KC and Julian Milford KC) for Sainsburys in its defence of a long running equal pay dispute. Michael is also (led by David Craig KC) acting for a bank in seeking a stay of proceedings brought by a former-employee in the Employment Tribunal on the basis that the dispute is better determined in the High Court.

As sole counsel Michael recently represented a financial services institution in its successful defence of a highly publicised whistleblowing claim heard over 9 days. He also acted for the Claimant against an investment bank in proceedings which settled on the first day of a three-week trial in 2025. In the Court of Appeal, Michael acted for the respondent to an appeal against an Employment Tribunal's findings on disability in the field of mental health (***Sullivan v Bury Street Capital* [2022] IRLR 159**), and in the EAT for the respondent to an appeal in a case concerning TUPE (***Tuitt v Richmond Upon Thames LBC* [2022] IRLR 1035**). Michael acted for a former-Chief Executive in a well-publicised claim for sex and pregnancy discrimination which settled on the first day of the hearing. He also acted for Dr Carpos-Young in her successful high-profile victimisation claim against the Royal Academy of Music (***Carpos-Young v Royal Academy of Music***).

> ***Mike is a superb advocate, a go-to and reliable team member, and offers real strategic insight on the most complex cases. He will give you the time, effort and insight you dream of from a real star of the employment Bar.***
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> LEGAL 500

In the High Court, Michael's work in this field includes a speedy trial concerning a team-move, led by David Craig KC (***Guy Carpenter v Howden***, which settled on the first day of six-week trial) and a non-compete injunction led by Daniel Oudkerk KC and Amy Rogers (***AstraZeneca v Sheldon* [2022] EWHC 2447**). Michael (led by Richard Leiper KC) also represented one of the Defendant insurance brokers in an alleged team move conspiracy case heard over 14 days (***Alesco Risk Management Services Ltd v Bishopsgate Insurance Brokers Ltd* [2019] EWHC 2839 (QB)**). Michael is currently acting as part of a large counsel team, led by David Craig KC, in a case involving an alleged team-move conspiracy listed for trial over 12 weeks in early 2027.

As sole counsel Michael acted for the Claimants in a Commercial Court dispute involving contractual claims against Defendants in multiple jurisdictions and represented the individual defendants in a trial concerning misuse of confidential information (***Trailfinders Ltd v Travel Counsellors Ltd* [2020] IRLR 448**).

Public

Michael undertakes a range of public law and regulatory work.

Michael (led by Jonathan Moffett KC) acted for Surrey County Council in its defence of a challenge to its Special Educational Needs budget, heard by a Divisional Court in 2018 (**R (Hollow) v Surrey CC [2019] EWHC 618 (Admin)**. Michael also acted (led by Clive Lewis KC) in judicial review proceedings concerning a challenge to a European-wide prohibition on the sale of certain meat products (**R (Newby) v Food Standards Agency [2013] EWHC 1966 (Admin)**), including acting as sole counsel in defence of the Claimant's application for an interim injunction to dis-apply the prohibition. Michael (now led by Jason Coppell KC) represented the Food Standards Agency before the Supreme Court in that case in 2019 (**R (Newby) v Foods Standards Agency [2019] UKSC 18**).

Michael's public law practice has a particular focus on cases involving the Asserts of Community Value regime in the Localism Act 2011. He has extensive expertise in this field, having acted in a large number of appeals, such as ***Patel v Hackney* CR/2013/0005** (the first appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal under ACV regime), **Kicking Horse Ltd v Camden CR/2015/0012** (an appeal considering the extent to which individuals parts of a building should be given separate consideration under the ACV regime), and **Mendoza Ltd v Camden CR/2015/0015**) (an appeal considering the requirements that an organisation must meet to make a valid ACV nomination). Michael regularly advises on and appears in appeals to the First-Tier Tribunal in this field.

Recent cases

Aon & Ors v Howden & Ors

(ONGOING)

Acting (led by David Craig KC) for the Defendants to a team move dispute due to be heard over 12 weeks in early 2027.

A v B

(JANUARY 2026)

Acting (led by Diya Sen Gupta KC) for the Respondent private equity firm in its defence of an equal pay and sex discrimination claim, heard over three weeks.

C v D

(JUNE 2025)

Acting for the former-employee of an investment bank in a whistleblowing and discrimination claim which settled on the first day of a three-week hearing.

E v F

(APRIL 2025)

Acting (led by Richard Leiper KC) for a hedge fund defending a disability claim by a former-employee. The proceedings settled shortly before the start of a three-week trial.

Ahmed v Sainsburys

(2024 & ONGOING)

Acting (led by Daniel Stilitz KC and Julian Milford KC) for the Respondents to a long-running equal pay dispute. The Stage 2 Hearing was heard over 4 weeks between April and July 2024. The Stage 3 hearing is listed for November 2027-January 2028.

Guy Carpenter v Howden

OCTOBER 2023

Acted (led by David Craig KC) for the Defendants to a team move dispute which settled on the first day of a 6 week speedy trial.

Maugars v Deutsche Bank

(OCTOBER 2022)

Acted (led by Simon Devonshire KC) for the Claimant in her age and sex discrimination claim against the Respondent investment bank.

AstraZeneca v Sheldon

[2022] EWHC 2447 (KB)

Acted (led by Daniel Oudkerk KC and Amy Rogers) for AstraZeneca in its application for an interim injunction to enforce a non-compete covenant.

Tuitt v Richmond Upon Thames LBC

[2022] IRLR 1035

Acted for the Respondent to a TUPE dispute before the ET in 2020 and before the EAT in March 2022.

Sullivan v Bury Street Capital

[2022] IRLR 159

Acted for the Respondent to a disability discrimination claim in the financial services sector, heard over 9 days by the ET in November 2018, by the EAT in July 2020, and by the Court of Appeal in November 2021.

G v H (June 2021)

Acted for a financial services institution in its successful defence of a highly publicised whistleblowing claim heard over 9 days.

Trailfinders Ltd v Travel Counsellors Ltd

[2020] IRLR 448

Represented the individual defendants in a trial concerning misuse of confidential information.

Alesco Risk Management Services Ltd v Bishopsgate Insurance Brokers Ltd

[2019] EWHC 2839 (QB).

Acted (led by Richard Leiper KC) for one of the Defendant insurance brokers in an alleged team move conspiracy case heard over 14 days.

R (Newby Foods Limited) v Food Standards Agency

[2013] EWHC 1966 (ADMIN) [2013] EWHC 2132 (ADMIN) [2019] UKSC 18

Represented the Defendant in relation to the Claimant's challenge to a European prohibition of certain meat products (led by Clive Lewis KC) and acted for the Defendant in relation to the Claimant's application for interim relief. He later (led by Jason Coppell KC) represented the Defendant before the Supreme Court.

Carpos-Young v Royal Academy of Music

(OCTOBER 2018)

Represented the Claimant lecturer in her high-profile victimisation claim against the Royal Academy of Music.

Ozkaptan v Citibank N.A

(2016 AND 2017)

Represented the Claimant (an FX trader) in a 6-day ET hearing and subsequent remedy hearing.

Carneiro v Chelsea FC; José Mourinho

(2016)

Acted (led by Daniel Stilitz KC) for the Respondents in defence of claims brought in the ET by a former-doctor, which settled on day 2 of a 10 day hearing.

Keppel Seghers v Hinds

[2014] ICR 1105

Acted for the Claimant (the Respondent in the EAT) in an appeal concerning the extended definition of "worker" for the purpose of whistleblowing claims.

Personal Management Solutions Ltd v Brakes Bros Ltd

[2014] EWHC 3495

Acted as sole counsel in a High Court trial concerning breach of confidence.

Lonmar Global Risks Ltd v West & Ors

[2011] IRLR 138

Represented the Claimant in a 3-week trial concerning team moves, employees' fiduciary duties, and conspiracy (led by Richard Leiper KC).

Achievements

Education

Michael graduated with a first-class degree in Law from St Catharine's College, Cambridge University.

Other

Michael is a member of the Commercial Bar Association, the Employment Lawyers Association, the Employment Law Bar Association and the Constitutional and the *Administrative Law Bar Association.*

> ***The biggest strength is his commitment. He is intellectually top rate and he combines that with sheer hard work and attention to detail. He has been extremely well prepared for everything. He is also very responsive to queries and a team player.***
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> LEGAL 500

> ***Very down-to-earth and clearly very bright***
>
> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

> ***He is extremely thorough, very personable and good with the client***
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> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

Very commercial, very sensible and very user-friendly

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

He is extremely hard-working, diligent and is able to pick up the facts of a case very quickly

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

He provides sound and practical advice, and is one to watch

LEGAL 500

Good with clients, skilful, confident and persuasive. He is able to adapt his approach appropriately to the claimant, witness and case in hand

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

Responsive, bright and enjoyable to work with. He really gets engaged with the case and makes you feel supported throughout

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

He grasps complicated and complex matters easily

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