



serle court

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Paul Johnson

Year of Call: 2006 (Solicitor 1990)

"Paul Johnson at is always very well prepared and completely focused on getting a deal. In my view, he is the best in the business"

The Legal 500, 2023

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Practice Overview

Paul is one of the leading mediators in the UK. He is a former solicitor/partner (1990 to 2006) who transferred to the Bar in 2006 to focus solely on mediating disputes.

He has mediated over 1000 disputes. Paul has a wealth of experience of many types of disputes in a wide range of areas. He has been listed as a Leading Mediator in Chambers & Partners and The Legal 500 since 2008.

He has been described as: *“brilliant”, “sensational”, with a “wonderful understated” and “affable manner” that “belies his steely determination and intelligence” together with a “skill and expertise” that “inspires confidence in the process” and “makes mediation appear easy”.*

Paul’s success rate as a mediator is very high. If the only benchmark of settlements mediated by Paul is the quantum of legal costs saved by the parties, then such amount exceeds £300m.

Paul endeavours to create a confidential and focused environment for parties to reflect on the issues and consider how they could agree solutions that work. He has helped many litigants achieve settlements that have enabled them to progress from the dispute, both personally and professionally.

Areas of Expertise

Mediation

Paul has mediated many types of disputes within areas listed below:

Banking

- Enforcement
- FSMA/COBS
- Fraud
- Hedging and derivatives products

Commercial/Contract

- Competition
- Defective machinery
- Franchises
- Logistics
- Mismanagement of a steam boiler plant
- Renegotiation of contracts: a luxury car design contract
- Service contracts; for example, the wrongful termination of a contract between a Greek co and UK company with a value of circa £37m
- Theft of valuable goods (£m’s) from safe in hotel accommodation
- Warranty claims

Construction

- Cases involving many of the large construction companies in the UK in both the commercial and domestic house-building sector
- Design and construction claims against subcontractors, architects and surveyors
- Development projects - value range in excess of £100m
- High value domestic property/construction disputes (£10m range)
- M&E claims

Divorce

- High value ancillary relief disputes

Employment

- Covenant claims
- Disability discrimination
- Fiduciary duties
- Race discrimination
- Share options
- Springboard injunctions
- Wrongful and unfair dismissal

Fraud

- Financial advisers
- Local Authorities
- Insurance
- NHS trusts
- Supply chains
- Unlawful diversion of trade and assets

Group Action

- Costs in a group action
- Noise nuisance
- Traveller's community against a local authority

Inheritance/Probate

- Capacity
- Duress
- Farming partnerships and proprietary estoppel claims
- Forgery
- Fraudulent calumny

- Removal of Executors
- Trustee claims
- Undue influence
- 1975 Act claims

Insolvency

- Financial assistance
- Fraudulent trading
- Public interest winding up petitions
- Voidable transactions
- Wrongful trading

Intellectual Property

- Copyright and design
- Website ownership
- Branding

International/Overseas Parties

- Belgium
- Brazil
- Canada
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Italy
- Japan
- Singapore
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Taiwan
- UAE
- USA

Nuisance

- Noise
- Odour

Partnership

- Accountants
- Architects
- Doctors
- Farming
- Hedging and derivatives products
- Solicitors
- Surveyors

Personal Injury

- Civil damages claim for alleged serious assault
- Disability discrimination

Professional Negligence

- Accountants
- Architects
- Barristers
- Financial advisers
- Insurance brokers
- Solicitors
- Surveyors

Property

- Boundary disputes
- Developments
- Dilapidations
- Forfeiture
- Hazardous waste disposal
- High value domestic property/construction disputes (£10m range)
- Mismanagement of commercial property
- Overage
- TOLATA

Sport

- Cricket
- Football
- Rugby
- Triathlon

Shareholders

- Directors' duties
- Shareholder disputes
- Quasi partnership
- Warranty claims

Trustees

- Breach of duties
 - Removal
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Quotes

Legal Directories

Paul has been consistently recommended in Chambers and Partners and The Legal 500 since 2008. He is also listed in the Legal 500 Hall of Fame, Dispute Resolution: Mediators Category.

"Paul Johnson is thorough, well prepared and personable." Chambers and Partners 2023

"He is a very strong mediator who does not let parties get away with taking unreasonable stances or refusing to engage." Chambers and Partners 2022

"Bright, reliable, trustworthy and fun to work with." The Legal 500 2022

"Always on top of the papers and very affable." "He is very good at de-escalating disputes." Chambers and Partners 2021

"Excellent at gaining the trust of all parties and very pragmatic and empathetic, which helps see where the settlement is likely to lie and encourage all parties towards it." The Legal 500 2021

"A mediator who 'doesn't take any nonsense from the parties. He gets them really focused on what they need to do, which makes him particularly good at handling disputes involving numerous parties.'" ... "He is capable of handling the full range of commercial disputes and has added experience of mediating clinical negligence and probate cases." Chambers and Partners 2020

"Approachable, commercial, pragmatic and persistent - if anyone can get a settlement, Paul can." The Legal 500 2020

"Valued by his clients for his ability to 'get the legal arguments and factual issues very quickly, and then concentrate on finding a pragmatic solution" ... and is "very experienced and has a commercial approach that can cut through the issues." Chambers and Partners 2019

"A mediator of choice for complex and high-value disputes' ... who "understands complex factual and legal issues and has an enviable ability to digest and recall the facts of the matter being mediated." The Legal 500 2018

"Paul Johnson impresses market sources with his "relaxed style which delivers results in difficult situations" ... "He

can bridge the unbridgeable ..." Chambers and Partners 2018

"An excellent mediator for complex, multi-party disputes; he has the ability to cut to the chase and change the position of the most intransigent parties ..." Legal 500 2018

"Well regarded" mediator Paul Johnson has continued to build upon his Manchester-based practice. He has significant experience as a commercial litigation solicitor, having transferred to the bar in 2006. He has undertaken mediations in a number of areas including employment, healthcare and insurance disputes. One source states that his *"switched on, astute approach"* is particularly effective. Chambers and Partners 2017

Previous entries describe Paul as: attracting praise for his 'calm, realistic and measured' approach and his ability to 'engage with the parties' *"the top choice for many with technically challenging disputes"*; being *"incredibly patient"*, with a *"clear structure in mind"*; an *"ability to focus on finding a commercial solution"*; and one who is *"not afraid to tackle the big issues from the start"*; whilst at the same time allowing parties *"to feel that they are in control of the process"*.

Client Testimonials

Below are some extracts from comments received from parties and their lawyers:

"Paul's affable manner belies his steely determination and intelligence"

"Quick to engage with the parties and quick to identify and communicate the issues that mattered. Equally quick and adept at facilitating constructive negotiations"

"Brilliant"

"A wonderful understated manner"

"He was sensational. The most accomplished mediator I've ever come across"

"He is unfailingly charming and persuasive, even in challenging and seemingly intractable disputes"

"His style was very positive and encouraged open constructive dialogue. He was excellent"

"Very courteous, but tough when needed to be"

"The facilitative approach worked wonderfully ... settlement would have been far less likely within the time span we had, if you had not been the mediator"

"I liked the way he got to know everybody and got everyone talking without realising they were actually talking"

"(He) has a wealth of experience and knowledge and as a practitioner in this field he excelled"

Education

- St Joseph's RC Comprehensive School Port Talbot
- Brunel University London 1983 - 1987
- College of Law 1987 - 1988

Beyond the Bar

Paul and his wife Samantha live in Chester with their two children. His interests range from cycling, surviving on a

snowboard, music, struggling to play the guitar and above all coping with the pleasure and pain of supporting the Wales rugby union team.

Memberships

- Bar ADR Committee
 - Sport Resolution - Mediation Panel Member
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