



James Ayliffe QC

Call: 1987

QC: 2008

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Clerks' details

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Qualifications and Appointments

- First in Philosophy Politics & Economics
New College, Oxford
- Distinction in Diploma of Law.
City University, London

“Simply excellent. He’s hugely intelligent, hard-working and a master tactician. Superb on his feet, hugely persuasive and always a real pleasure to work with.” Chambers & Partners 2022

Memberships

- Chancery Bar Association
- COMBAR
- Commercial Fraud Lawyers Association
- Professional Negligence Bar Association
- Property Bar Association
- Member of the Bar of the British Virgin Islands

Publications

- [Transaction Avoidance in Insolvencies](#), OUP (2012)
- [Hill and Redman’s Law of Landlord and Tenant](#) (2016) Specialist Editor

Practice Overview

James is an experienced QC providing advice and advocacy services across a wide range of commercial fields, including business and financial contracts, banking, company, insolvency, financial services, civil fraud, professional negligence, real estate and contentious trust matters.

Disputes and issues arising, directly or indirectly, from the ownership or exploitation of real property assets feature particularly prominently in James’s work.

Much of James’s work has an international dimension with cases involving jurisdictions as diverse as BVI, Cayman Islands, Channel Islands, Cyprus, South Africa, Netherlands, Isle of Man, Gibraltar, New York and Ukraine.

James is currently ranked in the legal directories (Chambers & Partners, Chambers Global and/or Legal 500) in the following fields:

- Commercial (Chancery)
- Financial Services
- Real Estate Litigation
- Professional Liability
- International & Offshore.

The 2022 edition of Chambers and Partners describes James as *“simply excellent. He’s hugely intelligent, hard-working and a master tactician. Superb on his feet, hugely persuasive and always a real pleasure to work with.”* He’s *“a very calm barrister who wears his intelligence lightly,”* with *“a fantastic mind. He brings together the financial and real estate worlds seamlessly.”* *“He is a superb, technically outstanding barrister.”*

While Legal 500 2021 describes him as *“hardworking. An excellent team player. Cautious but proactive, with strategic ideas and suggestions. Paperwork is very clear and precise, and work is produced on time.”* *“James has good broad commercial practice and is highly experienced.”*



Practice Overview continued

Comments in past directories include: "excellent"; "exceptionally intelligent" with a "brilliant ability to analyse contractual situations", providing "very balanced and measured advice"; "the epitome of the modern QC"; "an excellent legal brain"; "a real team player" who "works alongside everyone to achieve the right result"; "always adopts a practical commercial approach"; "superb at anything", "excellent", "a fine barrister with a charming manner", "very good with clients", "a first rate intellect with a user-friendly manner that engenders confidence", "has the ability to digest information and advise coherently on the most complex of legal arguments", "an excellent communicator who provides supremely intelligent advice", "very confident in implementing the advice he gives", "a real specialist", "his advocacy is fantastic and he is able to sway the judge's mind", "a great guy to work with", "fantastic", "dynamic", "level-headed and focused", "easy to deal with", "always on top of his cases", "a splendid understated style", "held in high regard", "widely respected", "meriting the most notable compliments", "intellectually tough", "will stand up to anyone", and "a star of the commercial Bar".

James also acts as an arbitrator, mediator and expert.

Trusts, Tax, Probate & Estates

Although not a 'private client' practitioner, James has extensive experience of complex, high-value contentious trusts and estates disputes, where his wide commercial experience is often invaluable.

Some representative matters include:

- acting for action group of investors on claim against Channel Islands trustee company for recovery of £45 million invested in failed beachfront development in St Lucia;
- acting for trustees of substantial Channel Islands trust in defence of multi-million pound claim for alleged breach of trust in relation to management of investment portfolio;
- representing an international bank trustee company in contested application by beneficiary for appointment of judicial trustee in respect of UK and offshore trusts;
- acting for principal beneficiary of trust of large landed estate in wide-ranging dispute with trustees and others regarding validity of trust and her rights as a beneficiary;
- advising trustees of Isle of Man trust regarding potential claim against investment advisers in respect of losses suffered on investments in a failed Lehmans fund;
- advising trustee in bankruptcy of well-known UK property tycoon in proceedings to recover hundreds of millions of pounds owing to creditors from assets held in Channel Islands trusts;
- acting for well-known trust/tax consultant on application for removal and replacement of Belizean trustee of multi-million pound trust;
- acting for South African judgment creditor seeking to 'break open' a trust structure established across a number of offshore jurisdictions in order to enforce against hundreds of millions of pounds of assets transferred into trust by the judgment debtor;
- acting for trustees of a Jersey property unit trust in dispute as to priority of their rights of indemnity and associated lien against trust property;
- acting for trustee facing a multi-million pound claim alleging breach of trust in relation to his dealings with trust property comprising shares in a real estate company;
- advising well-known firm of solicitors facing a multi-million pound claim arising out of a disastrous Beddoe application;
- acting for a high-net worth individual seeking to set aside trusts set up for the purpose of mitigating tax and to claim damages and an account of 'secret profits' from the advisers involved in setting up the trusts;
- advising a settlor regarding avoidance of a multi-million pound Bermudan trust on the grounds of mistake;



Trusts, Tax, Probate & Estates continued

- acting for a firm of solicitors in successful defence of wide-ranging claims by beneficiary in relation to conduct of earlier trust litigation;
- acting for Hong Kong bank in proceedings to set aside a multi-million pound 'sham' trust established with a view to defrauding creditors; and
- advising on issues arising out of dispute between Russian oligarchs involving challenges to the validity of trust and nominee arrangements.