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Stephen Killalea KC

SILK 2006 CALL 1981



Areas of Expertise

• Personal Injury • Accidents Abroad & International Travel • Employers' Liability • Neurotrauma • Spinal Injury • Health & Safety • ADR in injury cases • Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Personal Injury Silk of the Year at the Chambers UK Bar Awards 2023.

Steve Killalea KC has a leading silk's practice in personal injury specialising in representing claimants in catastrophic brain and spinal cases.

Steve has also extensive experience of Inquests, Health and Safety prosecutions, and civil Actions against the Police, based upon his substantial criminal trial experience.

Recommendations

"He is never afraid to fight on the toughest of cases and has great courage in his convictions. His advocacy skills are excellent - the utmost safe pair of hands." - International Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2026

"Steve has a way getting to the nuts and bolts of a case. He is a leader in the field of brain injury and clients and their families know he is dedicated to getting them the best result." - Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2026

"Superb in every respect. Wonderful trial advocate, excellent with clients, dogged and determined, will fight tooth and nail for his clients." - Personal Injury, Legal 500 2025

"Absolutely brilliant- clients love him for his knowledge and passion and commitment to getting

the right result." - Personal Injury, Legal 500 2024

"Stephen Killalea KC has an outstanding reputation in maximum severity spinal injury cases and for his adroit handling of the most complex liability disputes for claimants who have suffered life-changing injuries. He is able to advise both children and adult claimants on cases with substantial future care complexities. He is also noted for his handling of cases involving industrial injuries." - Star Individual (Personal Injury), Chambers UK 2023

"Stephen is absolutely excellent. He is highly empathetic and sensitive to vulnerable clients as well as being utterly tenacious with opponents." - Personal Injury, Chamber Bar UK 2023

"He is tactically brilliant, excellent in cross-examination and adept at tackling difficult cases." - Personal Injury, Chamber Bar UK 2023

"Stephen is fabulous on his feet, a skilled and natural advocate. He is also a tough negotiator and always thinks several moves ahead." - Personal Injury, Chamber Bar UK 2023

"He is incredibly skilled and works tirelessly to get the best outcomes for his clients." - Travel: International Personal Injury, Chambers UK Bar 2023

'Stephen is outstanding; his down-to-earth nature does not detract from his tremendous authority. He is one of the top silks in the field.' - *Personal Injury, Legal 500 2023*

"He is so skilful, dedicated to what he does and gets fantastic results for his clients." "He is one of the best advocates at the Bar." "He has a huge wealth of experience and gives clients huge confidence and peace of mind when he is handling their case. He is down to earth and a good communicator." - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK Bar 2022.*

An outstanding personal injury barrister who acts for catastrophically injured claimants in high-value, sensitive cases. He is notably good at complex RTA and hotel claims. **"He's very good in high-value international and domestic cases." "Very clever."** - *Travel: International Personal Injury, Chambers UK Bar 2022.*

"An exceptional negotiator and advocate and a thoroughly nice human being." - *Personal Injury, Legal 500 2022*

"He is a talented advocate with very good knowledge of catastrophic brain injury cases. He's also well liked by clients and is very personable." "He is a fantastic courtroom advocate." He is able to advise both children and adult claimants on cases with substantial future care complexities. He is also noted for his handling of cases involving industrial injuries - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK Bar 2021.*

"He is very good on his feet and is always extremely well prepared - he is a force of nature in court. His written work is clear, concise and easy for clients to understand." "Very responsive and provides an excellent service for his clients." He is notably good at complex RTA and hotel claims - *Travel: International Personal Injury, Chambers UK Bar 2021.*

"An exceptional advocate who rises to the challenge however formidable or complex the case may be and invariably with great success." - *Personal Injury, Legal 500 2021*

"A consummate advocate who presents complex arguments in simple terms." "He has huge experience in personal injury matters and a very good manner with clients, which is important

when dealing with very sensitive matters. He's approachable, reacts swiftly to issues and is very easy to work with." Instructed in a case in which a pedestrian sustained multiple orthopaedic injuries and a severe brain injury when he was struck by a car. - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK Bar 2020*

'A gifted advocate who is excellent at cross-examination and always one step ahead.' - *Personal Injury, Legal 500 2020*

'Very strong client care and good instincts for tough cases.' - *Travel law (including jurisdictional issues), Legal 500 2021*

"He is absolutely fantastic with clients." - Travel: International Personal Injury, *Chambers UK Bar 2020*

'Very strong client care and good instinct for tough cases.' - *Travel law (including jurisdictional issues), Legal 500 2020*

"He's an absolute go-to person for complex liability disputes." "He's an approachable, tenacious advocate with a caring and sensible approach to litigation." Instructed in *Noel Wilkinson v Micran* and others, a case concerning a claimant who was rendered tetraplegic following a building site loading accident in London and was then repatriated to Belfast. The case involved a liability dispute with three defendants. - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK Bar 2019*

"He cuts to the chase and is able to identify the key issues in a case immediately." "Great with clients, puts people at ease and helps to make them feel comfortable in difficult circumstances." - *Travel: International Personal Injury, Chambers UK Bar 2019*

'Probably one of the best negotiators at the PI Bar; he is fearless and thinks outside of the box.' - *Personal Injury, Industrial Disease and Insurance Fraud, Legal 500 2019*

"A class act and a phenomenal advocate who has real charisma and is mesmerising." "The most formidable advocate I have come across." Acted in a claim involving a 13-year-old boy who sustained a brain injury in a road traffic accident. - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2018*

"A very able silk, very good on high-value cases and focused on detail. He's a great advocate." - *Travel: International Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2018*

"He is a brave and determined advocate with an excellent track record." - *Personal Injury, Legal 500 2017*

"A real fighter, whose presence is reassuring for vulnerable clients." - *Health and Safety, Legal 500 2017*

"He is very good with clients and has a real eye for detail on quantum." "He cuts to the chase and addresses the important matters whilst also identifying novel issues that others wouldn't have thought of." "He's particularly clued up on jurisdiction issues." Acted in Emslie v RII, representing a claimant who was catastrophically injured in an RTA in the USA. The claimant alleged that the vehicle was unsafe to drive on the terrain in question. - *Travel PI, Chambers UK 2017*.

He receives plaudits for his excellent client care, powerful advocacy and standout negotiation skill. **"He's very affable and great with clients. He's a real street fighter and very tenacious."**

"He's very approachable, highly intelligent and a ferocious cross-examiner." "Just the most persuasive advocate." Appeared in Bridie Young (by her Mother and Litigation Friend Frances Young) v Goldern Coast Sporting Villas Limited. Represented the claimant, who suffered a brain injury when she was nine years old after falling off a zip wire in a pub garden. A settlement of £3.5 million was reached. - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2017*

"A brilliant catastrophic brain injury silk." - *Personal Injury, Legal 500 2016*

"A no-nonsense advocate who gets directly to the key issues in a difficult case" - *Health and Safety, Legal 500 2016.*

Defends corporate and individual clients in criminal prosecutions brought by government regulators following workplace accidents and also provides non-contentious advice with respect to such issues as risk management. - *Health & Safety, Chambers UK 2016*

A leading expert in catastrophic head, brain and spinal injuries. He is particularly valued by his clients for his aptitude for dealing with liability disputes in serious accidents. His practice is further bolstered by his extensive experience acting in health and safety prosecutions. **"He will roll his sleeves up and get the results for your client; he is not scared of a fight." "He is one of the best PI silks, with particular expertise in spinal cord injury cases."** Instructed in the Court of Appeal in Morcom v Biddick, a case concerning a duty of care dispute. - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2016*

Best known for his catastrophic brain injury work that touches on foreign law issues. He is noted for his activity on the claimant side. Strengths: **"He's a very tough, determined advocate who is not afraid to get stuck in." "He is always pushing at the boundaries and trying to move the law on."** - *Travel, Chambers UK 2016*

"Strong client care and clear legal analysis." - *Environment, Health and Safety, Legal 500 2015*

"He is fantastic with clients and will fight passionately on their behalf." - *Personal Injury, Legal 500 2015*

Has a background in criminal law and is an expert in risk assessment. He specialises in complex cases, including those relating to corporate manslaughter and serious injury. **Expertise: "He is particularly good at sorting the wood from the trees." "He provides pragmatic advice, and is able to immediately engage with the client." Recent work:** Advised a defendant in a case concerning a gas cylinder which exploded while being filled with nitrogen gas, causing the accidental death of an employee, major injury to a member of the public and extensive property damage. - *Health and Safety, Chambers UK 2015*

Identified by instructing solicitors and peers as an astute neurotrauma and spinal injury silk. He is particularly sought after for his careful and measured approach to cases involving children. **Expertise: "He's got very good judgement, is well prepared, and has an easy and relaxed manner with clients and opponents alike. He gets the job done in the right way - by being combative but not aggressive." Recent work:** Instructed in a seminal cross-border motor claim involving the TBI of a motorcyclist in Germany. - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2015*

Handles catastrophic injury abroad matters for claimants. He demonstrates particular expertise in cases concerning brain and spinal damage. **Expertise: "He's got very good judgement, is well prepared and has an easy and relaxed manner with clients and opponents alike." "He's very clear and precise, and obviously knows his stuff inside out." Recent work:** Represented Holly

Raper, who sustained catastrophic injuries in a quad bike accident in Tasmania. - *Travel: International Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2015*

Ranked as a Leading Silk in Environment, Health and Safety and Personal Injury. Described as **"an exceptional advocate and tactician," "very experienced"** and **"combines being a true leader with being a real team player."** - *Legal 500 2014*

Noted in particular for his handling of matters relating to liability, he specialises in complex, high-value catastrophic claims relating to extremely severe brain and spinal injuries. He is commended by instructing solicitors for his advocacy and for his ability with clients. **"If he believes there are prospects he'll fight a case. He's utterly brilliant at advocacy - it's a pleasure to watch [...] he's brilliant with clients - he has a down-to-earth, matter-of-fact manner. He always gets a handle on the key issues and his advice is succinct and to the point."** - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2014*

An adept silk with a strong standing in the related area of personal injury. He is a popular choice for acting for companies in connection with fatal and life-changing injuries sustained by employees. **"He is extremely sharp and incisive [...] in addition to being a first-rate advocate, he has a great ability to connect and understand what a client wants; he is exceptional."** - *Health & Safety, Chambers UK 2014*

"Expertly handles the full range of maximum severity cases." His practice is split between health and safety and personal injury, and he is widely regarded for his representation of claimants in catastrophic brain and spinal injury cases. Instructing solicitors positively enjoy working with a barrister who is **"simply a delight with clients, but also offers all-round tactical ability."** - *Chambers UK 2013*

"Wonderful client management skills and an easy communication style ... technically superb and always approachable" - Personal Injury, *Chambers UK 2012*

"An exceptionally skilled advocate ... brilliant with figures, great with clients and a real fighter ... he can achieve some excellent results against the odds" - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2011*

A **"formidable advocate" -** *Personal Injury, Legal 500 2011*

A class act due to his **"charming, refreshingly measured"** approach. Health & Safety - *Chambers UK 2011*

"Never fails to get his point across, leaving clients feeling confident that no stone has been left unturned" - Health and *Safety and Environment, Legal 500 2010*

An impressive trinity of qualities: **"Tactical acumen, an ability to build a rapport with clients and awe-inspiring performances in court"** are all present in the make up of this hugely popular advocate - *Health and Safety, Chambers UK 2010*

Stephen Killalea QC is highly regarded and is ***"the personal injury silk of choice"*** for many interviewees - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2010*

Stephen has a **"quality of advocacy and tactical awareness that are second to none"** - *Personal Injury, Legal 500 2009*

"A hard-working silk with international jurisdiction expertise," Stephen Killalea QC is known for

his focus on highly complex brain and spinal injury litigation. **"He is one of the most powerful and impressive advocates I have come across, yet still has the ability to obtain the trust and respect of clients by speaking at a level appropriate to them"** - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2009*

"Combining skill and technical knowledge with the necessary amount of flamboyance in court," he has achieved impressive results in a number of complex cases over the past year - *Health & Safety, Chambers UK 2009*

"The straightforward and down to earth Stephen Killalea QC wins a wealth of commendations. He speaks in a language you can understand say clients... one of the rising stars of the field... [he] specialises in catastrophic spinal and brain injury cases and is often employed in multi-million pound cases" - *Personal Injury, Chambers UK 2008*

Former winner of Chambers UK **"Personal Injury Junior of the Year"**

Expertise

Personal Injury

Steve is a leading personal injury silk (Star Individual - Chambers UK 2024), with one of the most substantial catastrophic injury practices in the country. He acts for claimants with significant brain and spinal injuries both nationally and internationally

He is known for his advocacy and ability to tackle the most difficult and contentious cases whilst being attentive to the needs of clients. He is frequently instructed in high-value cases in which there is a need for delicate and sensitive handling of the claimant, and family, with a substantial number of cases involving brain damaged children.

Recent notable cases include:

- In November 2023, Stephen secured a brain-injured child Claimant's claim in the sum of £9 million plus an indexed PPO of £140,000 per annum for life. The settlement, made on a provisional basis with the Claimant able to return to Court should she develop epilepsy in her lifetime, capitalised at approximately £19.5 million.
- Stephen succeeded in resisting a Defendants' application for permission to appeal in a case on employers' liability in an accident at work in which the Claimant, the owner and director of the Defendant company, fell from the upper deck of a car transporter and suffered catastrophic brain injuries.
- Stephen acted for a brain damaged Claimant in an employer's liability case establishing liability against the employer, subject to a reduction for contributory negligence.
- Stephen secured a settlement of £12.5M, plus provisional damages, for a client who suffered a spinal injury with paraplegia and amputation of the left leg following a motorbike accident in September 2019.
- Acting for a 67 year old Claimant who sustained a catastrophic spinal and traumatic brain injury, rendering him tetraplegic, when his car was struck by a Turkish lorry on the M1 near Luton in November 2017. Although Claimant was not wearing a seatbelt, medical causation

led to the case being compromised on a full liability basis.

- Acting for a 58 year old male who was injured in an RTA, rendering him incomplete tetraplegic, when Defendant driver allegedly had a heart attack. Liability in dispute but approached by Claimant as full liability case at JSM. Compromised at £3,500,000. An unusual element was a claim for costs of spending four months a year for several years in Australia.

Health & Safety

CV upon request

Coroners & Inquests

CV upon request

Memberships and Associations

APIL, PIBA, HSLA

Awards and Scholarships

Cycling proficiency in 1968.

Awards


The
LEGAL
500
UNITED KINGDOM
2026


Chambers
RANKED IN
UK
Bar
2026

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