

# CATASTROPHIC INJURY CONFERENCE



St John's  
CHAMBERS

## Rehabilitation following Serious/Catastrophic Injury



Thursday, 25th September 2025



9.00am - 4.30pm

£130 + VAT



Bristol Beacon, Trenchard Street, Bristol, BS1 5AR

CPD  
5 hours

## Our **Catastrophic Injury** conference returns on 25th September 2025 at the iconic **Bristol Beacon**.

Join us for a day of topical sessions delivered by our team of leading barristers and a selection of sought-after experts, who'll be discussing aspects of Rehabilitation following serious/catastrophic Injury. This conference is kindly sponsored by **Temple Legal Protection**.

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Delegates will hear from our experts, **Dr Michael Gross**, Consultant Neurologist, **Helen Hobbs**, Clinical Director and Co-founder of Hobbs Rehabilitation, and **Anna Watkiss**, Registered Psychologist, Clinical Lead and a Senior Case Manager at Tania Brown Ltd.

Head of Personal Injury, **Andrew McLaughlin** alongside **Rachel Russell** will chair the conference, and this year you'll also hear from Nathan Tavares KC.

**This event is aimed primarily at experienced claimant and defendant fee-earners, but there will be something for everyone working in this challenging and ever-changing field.**

Raffle proceeds go to

**Headway Bristol**  
improving life after brain injury



# Programme

<b>9.00 - 9.30</b>	<b>Registration and welcome refreshments</b>
<b>9.30 - 9.40</b>	<b>Introduction from Chair</b> <b>Andrew McLaughlin, Head of Personal Injury &amp; Rachel Russell, Barristers</b>
<b>9.40 - 10.00</b>	<b>Sponsor</b> <b>Temple Legal Protection</b>
<b>10.00 - 10.40</b>	<b>Transforming lives: The impact of technology-integrated rehabilitation</b> <b>Helen Hobbs, Hobbs Rehabilitation &amp; Alison Gomes Da Silva, Lead Neurophysiotherapist, Hobbs Rehabilitation, Intensive Neurotherapy Centre, Bristol</b>  Hobbs Rehabilitation - the importance of the holistic approach to rehab. The talk will deliver inspiring case studies plus a patient telling their own lived experience with a demo of the ABLÉ exoskeleton.
<b>10.40 - 11.20</b>	<b>Dealing with prosthetics claims: Rolls-Royces (?) and rehab</b> <b>Nathan Tavares KC &amp; Dr Rachel Segal, Barristers</b>  Nathan and Rachel will discuss some of the key features (and challenges) of prosthetics claims.
<b>11.20 - 11.40</b>	<b>Break - Refreshments</b>
<b>11.40 - 12.20</b>	<b>Psychological considerations within a case-managed package of rehabilitation</b> <b>Anna Watkiss, Practitioner Psychologist, Senior Case Manager and the Clinical Lead of TBL</b>  Anna will review psychological elements which arise as a case manager working with clients in the community who are undergoing rehabilitation. This will include client engagement, MDT working and barriers to rehabilitation, whether they arise due to cognitive compromise of the individual, adjustment to injury or other factors arising within community rehabilitation.
<b>12.20 - 13.00</b>	<b>Future therapeutic treatment claims</b> <b>James Marwick &amp; Jonathan Lindfield, Barristers</b>  An overview of some key therapy and treatment options for catastrophically injured claimants, including how they impact recovery, quality of life, and the valuation of claims.
<b>13.00 - 14.00</b>	<b>Lunch</b>

# Programme

<b>14.00 - 14.40</b>	<b>Catastrophic brain injury</b> <b>Dr Michael Gross, Clinical neurophysiology, Neurology</b>  Dr Michael Gross will expand on what catastrophic brain injury means, not just vegetative states but also how much less but focussed brain injury can also have devastating consequences. Simple examples being the loss of ability to lay down memory after a delayed diagnosis of herpes simplex encephalitis, or total vestibular failure from excess "mycin" therapy or head injury.
<b>14.40 - 15.20</b>	<b>Stairs, storage &amp; space; tactics in accommodation claims</b>  <b>Justin Valentine, Barrister</b>
<b>15.20 - 15.40</b>	<b>Break - Refreshments</b>
<b>15.40 - 16.20</b>	<b>Case Law Update</b> <b>Ben Handy &amp; James Hughes, Barristers</b>  James and Ben will summarise the key cases and take-home messages of the last twelve months in catastrophic personal injury litigation.
<b>16.20 - 16.30</b>	<b>Closing remarks</b>  <b>Andrew McLaughlin, Head of Personal Injury &amp; Rachel Russell, Barristers</b>
<b>16.30</b>	<b>Closed - followed by drinks reception</b>

# Expert Speakers



**Helen Hobbs**

Clinical Director and Co-founder of Hobbs Rehabilitation and The MiNT Academy

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Helen is a consultant neurological physiotherapist with over 25 years of specialist clinical experience and extensive clinical expertise. She has a special interest in clinical education and research. Helen is the Co-founder of Hobbs Rehabilitation, established in 2005 and she now leads the largest independent therapy team in the UK with over 100 clinicians. Hobbs Rehabilitation is an early adopter of technology into clinical practice. Recognising the challenges this posed, and the gaps within device development and clinical application, Helen was inspired to found the MiNT Academy.

Alison Gomes Da Silva, Clinical Service Lead at the Bristol Intensive Neurotherapy Centre, is a specialist neurological physiotherapist with extensive experience spanning 25 years in different neurological settings including neurosciences, spinal cord injuries, stroke, neurorehabilitation and outpatients. During her 21 years working in the NHS, Alison was the clinical lead for neurorehabilitation at King's College Hospital for 10 years. Ali joined Hobbs Rehabilitation in 2018 and now leads a team of 10 therapists including amputee and trauma therapists, who use a combination of neurotechnology and conventional therapy to achieve client-centred goals.



**Alison Gomes Da Silva**  
Clinical Service Lead at the Bristol Intensive Neurotherapy Centre

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**Anna Watkiss MSc HCPC**

Practitioner Psychologist,  
Clinical Lead Tania Brown Ltd

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With over 30 years' experience working in the case management sector, Anna is TBL's Clinical Lead and a Senior Case Manager. She has taken an active part in writing BABICM's competencies, standards and code of conduct and delivers these principles within her day to day practice with clients and staff. She is passionate about placing the client at the heart of all she does, empowering them and maximising their engagement in the rehabilitation process to achieve positive outcomes. Anna has a particular interest in co-ordinating community rehabilitation packages and running rehabilitation programmes for individuals who have sustained brain injury. Anna is a panel member of IRCM and part of the professional development committee. Anna is also an expert witness, reporting on care and case management needs for clients who have sustained brain injury or below knee amputations.



**Dr Michael Gross**

Clinical neurophysiology,  
Neurology

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Michael attended Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge before clinical training at The London Hospital. After resident posts at The London Chest, Hammersmith, Royal Free, The National Queen Square and St Mary's appointed Consultant Neurologist and Chairman of Neurosciences at The Royal Surrey County Hospital. He was the Clinical Director of the RES Neurology Research Unit doing extensive work in the fields of headache, epilepsy and fatigue. In 1978 he and Ray Brettle first described the successful use of plasma exchange in the Guillain-Barre syndrome. In 1998 and 1999 he was shortlisted "UK Hospital Doctor of the Year". He left the NHS in 2001 concentrating on full-time private clinical and medicolegal practise. Michael has joint accreditation in clinical neurology and neurophysiology. He belongs to a Central London Forensic Neurosciences Research Group meeting five times each year over the last 20 years. In 2012 he and his wife Karen, a career nurse, opened a 6000 sq ft. not for profit, outpatient Rehabilitation and Therapies Centre in Harrow, ([www.bodyfactory.org.uk](http://www.bodyfactory.org.uk)). When not in court he prefers to be on court, and enjoys 6 grandchildren, travel and photography.

# Barristers



**A market-leading set on the Western Circuit, St John's Chambers is well regarded for its formidable personal injury offering."**

Chambers UK, 2025



**Nathan Tavares KC**  
Year of call: 1992

**"Nathan is a fierce advocate, takes no hostages and is fantastic in court. His determination to get a good result for the client is impressive. He brings thoughtful excellence to every case. He is very thorough in preparation, kind and supportive with clients, and not afraid of a fight with his opponent."** Chambers UK, 2025

Nathan is a respected practitioner in complex or catastrophic personal injury claims. He has particular expertise in: traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, aviation accidents, equestrian accidents, and industrial disease claims. He carries out both claimant and defendant work. Instructing solicitors include: Stewarts Law, Irwin Mitchell, Slater & Gordon, Royds Withy King, Hodge Jones & Allen, Bird & Bird, Bevan Brittan, Clyde & Co., BLM, Weightmans, Bond Pearce, and Foot Anstey. He has been involved in some of the largest individual personal injury claims including several with values in excess of £10 million and one in excess of £20 million, and a number of significant multi-party actions (mass tort claims). Nathan often writes on personal injury topics and is an editor of the Journal of Personal Injury Law (Sweet & Maxwell).



**Andrew McLaughlin**  
Head of Personal Injury  
Year of call: 1993

**"Andrew's technical expertise is second to none. The forensic approach that he adopts means that he always gets the right results. Clients really enjoy working with him."** Chambers UK, 2025

Andrew is a leading barrister with a national practice in the fields of personal injury, industrial disease and clinical negligence. Andrew is ranked as a Tier 1 barrister in The Legal 500 for personal injury and Band 1 in Chambers UK for personal injury and industrial disease for which he is ranked as a national expert in the Spotlight Table. With a high-value multi-track practice, Andrew's cases are usually in the High Court and Court of Appeal. He is regularly instructed as a leading junior on cases where silks have been instructed on the other side. Notably, in 2021 he comprehensively defeated a well-known KC in the case of Walkden v Drayton Manor Park, securing a finding of fundamental dishonesty. The claim was originally pleaded at £1.6m.

# Barristers



**Justin Valentine**  
Year of call: 1999

**“Justin is a strong and astute advocate who has good levels of awareness and can judge the mood of the courtroom. He is empathetic with clients and appropriate with witnesses in examination and cross-examination.”**

The Legal 500, 2025

Justin specialises in clinical negligence and personal injury litigation in cases of substantial value or complexity. In the clinical negligence context he has expertise in cauda equina syndrome, vascular diabetes claims, delayed cancer diagnosis claims, sepsis, obstetric and gynaecological claims. In relation to personal injury he has a particular interest in workplace claims (especially where liability expert evidence is required) and claims involving vulnerable road users (children, pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists). He is counsel in many ongoing multi-million pound claims.



**Rachel Russell**  
Year of call: 2001

**“Rachel’s ability to make complex concepts understandable is exceptional.”** Chambers UK, 2025

Rachel has over 20 years’ experience in dealing with personal injury cases, acting for both claimants and defendants with extensive expertise in claims concerning catastrophic injuries of the utmost severity. She is currently instructed as junior counsel to Christopher Sharp KC in a particularly complex traumatic brain injury case. Rachel’s regular clients include national insurers and top-tier claimant firms, as well as numerous local authorities throughout England and Wales and the NHS. Rachel has gained a reputation for her robust advocacy, well-reasoned but no nonsense approach to complicated issues, and her friendly manner with clients. She is highly respected both in chambers and on circuit. Whilst the focus of her practice is on cases of higher value, she will accept instructions on lower value matters where there are novel or complex issues to consider.



**James Marwick**  
**Deputy Head of Personal Injury**  
Year of call: 2008

**“James is very knowledgeable and experienced. He is a safe pair of hands and persuasive in advocacy.”** Chambers UK, 2025

James has been recognised as a leading junior in personal injury work for a number of years. He specialises in high-value claims and undertakes work for claimants and defendants involving serious injury. He is Deputy Head of the Personal Injury Team at St John’s Chambers. James accepts instructions in all areas of personal injury work but with particular specialisms including local authority liability, construction work, military and workplace injury & disease, and cases involving allegations of dishonesty and fraud, where James is recognised as a specialist in the field. His work encompasses the full range of injuries but with a particular focus on cases involving spinal injury, pain disorders and traumatic brain injury.

# Barristers



**Ben Handy**  
**Deputy Head of**  
**Personal Injury**  
Year of call: 2008

**“Ben is an excellent barrister with a sharp intellect. He is astute and adept at quickly grasping the complex issues in a case and offers practical and commercial solutions. His advocacy skills are exceptional.”** Chambers UK, 2025

Ben is Deputy Head of Chambers’ Personal Injury team, a mediator and part-time Crown Court judge. He is widely recognised for his “resourceful and highly adaptable” trial advocacy and “excellent advice on strategy” in relation to catastrophic injury claims. He is ranked as a leading junior in the major legal directories on the strength of his clients’ endorsements. They say that Ben is “user friendly and approachable”, “provides a high standard of technical advice” and “combines great client care skills with tactical nous”. Chambers Guide to the Bar praises his “knowledge” and skill in “finding a way through the minefield of liability issues”. The Legal 500 praises his reliability and “reassuring presence”, explaining complex legal issues to clients in a sensitive, down to earth and respectful way.



**James Hughes**  
Year of call: 2011

**“James has a keen eye for detail and provides thorough advice. His pleading of court documents is thorough and concise. He is good on his feet in trials, especially in getting the point across clearly and concisely.”** Chambers UK, 2025

James is a specialist personal injury and clinical negligence practitioner. He has extensive experience across the full spectrum of such work, including public and employer’s liability, road traffic accidents, industrial disease and travel claims. He is a highly experienced interim hearing and trial advocate. He acts for claimants and defendants in roughly equal measure. He is regularly instructed on behalf of defendants or their insurers where allegations of dishonesty or the disapplication of QOCS are argued.



**Rachel Segal**  
Year of call: 2013

**“To class Rachel as exceptional is to merely scratch the surface. Rachel has a gift for articulating complex issues and distilling intricate matters into understandable concepts.”** Chambers UK, 2025

Rachel is ranked as a leading junior in The Legal 500 for personal injury, clinical negligence, and inquests and inquiries, and in Chambers and Partners for Personal Injury. Rachel advises and represents claimants and defendants in a range of RTA, Highways Act, employers’ liability and public liability matters. She advises on professional negligence matters in both clinical negligence and personal injury, and is currently working on cases of up to £7m in value. Rachel also advises and represents parties on both sides of relief from sanctions applications across the spectrum of civil litigation, publishes The Denton Resource annually and delivers training on the topic.

# Barristers



**Jonathan Lindfield**  
Year of call: 2017

**“Jonathan has excellent attention to detail. He reviews instructions thoroughly and can highlight details in a case.”** The Legal 500, 2025

Jonathan is an experienced, sought-after, specialist personal injury barrister, whose practice encompasses all aspects of personal injury litigation. Jonathan regularly acts for both claimants and defendants on the fast and multi-track, in claims worth up to £1m. From straightforward liability disputes to complex causation issues, his caseload often involves claims with multiple expert disciplines. He is frequently asked to advise and act on cases where fundamental dishonesty or exaggeration is alleged. Jonathan is comfortable dealing with the whole spectrum of personal injury work, and his particular interests and specialisms include claims under the Highways Act, employers' liability claims, and claims involving animals.

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# EXHIBITORS



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**MAGGIE SARGENT  
& ASSOCIATES**



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