Clara Johnson

Called to the Bar 2005
+44 (0)20 7696 9900
clarajohnson@southsquare.com





Clara specialises in domestic and cross-border Restructuring and Insolvency, Civil Fraud and Company law and has been recommended as a leading junior in Restructuring and Insolvency, and Offshore for a number of years.

Clara is frequently instructed to act for companies, office holders, directors, creditors and individual debtors in all aspects of corporate and personal insolvency and restructuring. She has been instructed in respect of numerous high profile cases including *McDermott, Hong Kong Airlines, Empire Cinemas, Babylon, Mothercare, BHS, the Bell Group, Marme Inversiones and BetIndex.*

She has particular experience of provisional liquidations, and of cases where urgent injunctive relief is required, most often, freezing or asset preservation orders, freezing orders against third parties under the *Chabra* jurisdiction, search orders, orders for disclosure in relation to the whereabouts of assets or the tracing of funds under section 236 of the Insolvency Act and the Bankers Trust jurisdiction. Clara is frequently instructed on cases which have cross-border elements and acts for foreign office holders in respect of offshore insolvencies.

Clara's civil fraud practice has particular emphasis on multijurisdictional claims in a range of civil and commercial contexts. Clara also regularly acts in shareholder and company law disputes, including claims against directors, unfair prejudice petitions, winding up petitions and derivative claims.

She is commended in the legal directories for *"having total command of her subject area, including all of its darker recesses. She uses that knowledge to produce excellent strategic insight"* as well as being *"excellent on her feet"* and *"well-liked by clients".*

Insolvency and Restructuring

- ***Piacquadio v Sparkes*** [2024] EWHC 2518 (Ch) Continuation of proprietary freezing order and rejection of challenge on the grounds of failure to give full and frank disclosure
- ***Wade v Singh*** [2024] EWHC 1203 (Ch) Trial of Liquidators' claims alleging sham trusts, transactions defrauding creditors under s.423.
- ***Drelle v Servis-Terminal LLC*** [2024] EWHC 521 (Ch) Appeal against a bankruptcy order based on an unrecognised Russian judgment
- ***Mercy Global Consult Limited (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson & ors*** [2024] EWHC 788 (Ch) A defendant subject to a freezing order not permitted to pay the legal fees of co-defendants

- ***Re CB&I UK Ltd*** [2024] EWHC 398 (Ch) ("McDermott") Sanctioning of a restructuring plan exercising the cross-class cram down power against dissenting creditor, with a parallel WHOA in Holland
- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2024] EWHC 171(Ch) Quantification of equitable damages and tracing of assets held on constructive trust following trial of claims arising out of VAT fraud
- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2023] EWHC 3203 (Ch) Trial of Liquidators' claim for fraudulent breach of trust, dishonest assistance and knowing receipt arising out of VAT fraud
- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2023] EWHC 2567 (Ch) Striking out of the Defendants' defences and debarring orders in advance of three-week fraud trial
- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2023] Civ 1073 (Ch) Appeal against order dismissing Defendants' application to amend their defences to plead that supplies of healthcare workers to recruitment agencies were exempt supplies under the VAT Act 1994 in context of VAT fraud claim
- ***Babylon Group Holdings Limited*** – *appointment of administrators over healthcare technology company*
- ***Empire Cinemas*** – *appointment of administrators over cinema chain group*
- ***Hartley Pensions Ltd (In Administration) v Wilton UK (Group) Ltd*** [2023] EWHC 1700 (Ch) Retrospective administration order to regularise invalidity in original out of court appointment
- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2023] EWHC 749 (Ch) Dismissal of Defendants' application to amend their Defences to plead that supplies of healthcare workers to recruitment agencies were exempt supplies under the VAT Act 1994 in context of VAT fraud claim
- ***Re Ernestovich Drelle*** [2023] EWHC 506 (Ch); [2024] BPIR 285 Bankruptcy order on the basis of an unrecognised foreign judgment
- ***Re Hong Kong Airlines Ltd*** [2022] EWHC 3210 (Ch); [2023] BCC 477 Sanction of a restructuring plan, with parallel scheme of arrangement in Hong Kong
- ***Re Hong Kong Airlines Ltd*** [2022] EWHC 2975 (Ch) Permission to convene three meetings of creditors to vote on restructuring plan, with parallel scheme of arrangement in Hong Kong
- ***BKS Assets Limited v PCF Bank Limited*** Injunction removing LPA Receivers appointed over company's assets
- ***Joannou & Paraskevaides (Overseas) Limited (In Liquidation)*****:** acting as junior counsel to the Joint Liquidators of a Guernsey company with construction business based in Middle East, Libya and Cyprus, with debts of c.$1b. Proceedings issued in Guernsey for unlawful means conspiracy, wrongful trading, fraudulent trading and breach of fiduciary duty. Led by Philip Marshall QC.
- ***BetIndex Limited:*** acted for group of creditors of Football Index in relation to the directors' application to appoint administrators over Jersey registered company providing an online football betting service.
- ***Mothercare UK Limited (In Administration):*** acted for the joint administrators of Mothercare in relation to their application to obtain a retrospective administration order

following *Gregory v A.R.G. (Mansfield) Ltd* [2020] BCC 641, and an extension of the period of administration.

- ***TMG Brokers Ltd (In Liquidation)* [2021] EWHC 1379**: acted for Liquidator in claims against two former directors and shareholders of the company, in relation to their misfeasance and breach of fiduciary duty.
- ***Ingram v Singh* [2021] EWHC 639**: acted for Liquidator in the Inquiry as to loss against the former directors of the company found to have acted in breach of fiduciary duty.
- ***ING Bank NV v Banco Santander SA* [2020] EWHC 3561**: acted for Banco Santander in its application against ING Bank challenging the jurisdiction of the court on the basis that the claim fell under the Insolvency Regulation 1346/2000 and within the bankruptcy exception under article 1(2)(b) under the Brussels Recast Regulation 1215/2012. Led by Robin Dicker QC.
- ***Maplecross Properties Limited (In Liquidation)*:** advising Joint Liquidators of Guernsey company in relation to the realisation of assets (part of which are indirectly owned by the LIA).
- ***BHS Limited (In Liquidation):*** acted for former director of BHS Limited in relation to disqualification proceedings brought by the Secretary of State.
- ***Hilsdon v Weir* [2017] EWHC 983*;* [2017] B.P.I.R 1088**: appeal by bankrupt against order suspending discharge from bankruptcy indefinitely.
- ***Rahman v Pickard* [2017] EWHC 770**: appeal by bankrupt's spouse in relation to order for possession and sale of matrimonial property.
- ***Coventry v Lawrence* [2015] UKSC 50**: acted for R3 as interveners in the Supreme Court costs appeal considering whether to strike-down CFAs under the Access to Justice Act ('AJA') scheme.
- ***Re Listowel Trading Limited (In Liquidation)* [2015] 2WLUK 238**: three-day trial against director for wrongful trading, misfeasance and breach of fiduciary duty.
- ***Re Parkwell Investments Limited* [2014] EWHC 3381; [2014] BCC 721**: acted for provisional liquidator in relation to the company's appeal against the provisional liquidation order. Company alleged to be engaged in MTIC fraud.
- ***Ensygnia Limited v David Rickard* [2014] EWHC 1184**: successfully represented creditor in opposition to an injunction restraining presentation of a winding up petition.
- ***Mahon v FBN Bank (UK) Limited* [2011] EWHC 1432; [2012] BCLC 83**: debtor's appeal against order dismissing application setting aside statutory demand based on debt due under a personal guarantee.
- ***UK Communications Limited (In Liquidation) v Nahim* [2010] EWHC 1691**: dishonest assistance and conspiracy arising out of MTIC fraud.
- ***Holmes v Mainstream Ventures Limited* [2009] EWHC 3330**: costs following dismissal of winding petition.
- ***Brittain v Noskova* [2009] EWHC 2294**: scope of a possession order under an order appointing an enforcement receiver.
- ***Official Receiver v Southey* [2009] BPIR 89**: bankruptcy restrictions order.

Commercial Litigation

- ***Piacquadio v Sparkes*** [2024] EWHC 2518 (Ch) Continuation of proprietary freezing order and rejection of challenge on the grounds of failure to give full and frank disclosure
- ***Kwaji v Shaw* [2019] EWHC 1467**: Acting for Defendant in dispute concerning ownership of property, in which claimant alleges fraud and collusion. Obtained order for security for costs.
- ***The Belgravia Trichological Group Limited v Exterion Media (UK) Limited*** (QBD, 2014): acted as junior counsel to the defendant in respect of a claim for damages in respect of breach of an advertising agency contract. Led by Peter Knox QC.
- ***Intertrade Europe SRL & Intertrade Europe (UK) Limited v Pearce*** (ChD, 2011): obtained injunctions for the claimants to restrain defendant's continued unlawful use of and access to its domain names

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Company

- ***Bird v Lantern Recovery LLP* [2021] EWHC 1379*:*** acted for Defendants in relation to a claim for repayment of dividends (and other monies), which were waived as a result of the alleged undue influence of the defendant. Led by Thomas Roe QC.
- ***Stubbins Marketing Limited v Stubbins Food Partnerships Limited (In Administration) & 6 ors* [2020] EWHC 1266:** acted as junior counsel to the claimant in respect of claims against former directors and related parties arising out of a management buyout. Led by Thomas Roe QC.
- ***Tonstate Group Limited; Matyas & ors v Wojakovski*:** acted for Petitioner in respect of s.994 petition in relation to the Tonstate Group companies, which purchased and developed Hilton Hotels. Acted in relation to mandatory injunction requiring the repayment of a director's loan.
- ***Re Resourceful Earth Limited* [2018] EWHC 1185; [2018] 2 BCLC 251**: represented defendants in relation to claim for allegedly wrongful use of 'Drag Along' provisions in a Shareholders' Agreement.

Civil Fraud

- ***Piacquadio v Sparkes*** [2024] EWHC 2518 (Ch) Continuation of proprietary freezing order and rejection of challenge on the grounds of failure to give full and frank disclosure
- ***Wade v Singh*** [2024] EWHC 1203 (Ch) Trial of Liquidators' claims alleging sham trusts, transactions defrauding creditors under s.423.
- ***Mercy Global Consult Limited (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson & ors*** [2024] EWHC 788 (Ch) A defendant subject to a freezing order is not permitted to pay the legal fees of co-defendants

- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2024] EWHC 171(Ch) Quantification of equitable damages and tracing of assets held on constructive trust following trial of claims arising out of VAT fraud
- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2023] EWHC 3203 (Ch) Trial of Liquidators' claim for fraudulent breach of trust, dishonest assistance and knowing receipt arising out of VAT fraud
- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2023] EWHC 2567 (Ch) Striking out of the Defendants' defences and debarring orders in advance of three-week fraud trial
- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2023] Civ 1073 (Ch) Appeal against order dismissing Defendants' application to amend their defences to plead that supplies of healthcare workers to recruitment agencies were exempt supplies under the VAT Act 1994 in context of VAT fraud claim
- ***Mercy Global Consult Ltd (In Liquidation) v Adegbuyi-Jackson*** [2023] EWHC 749 (Ch) Dismissal of Defendants' application to amend their Defences to plead that supplies of healthcare workers to recruitment agencies were exempt supplies under the VAT Act 1994 in context of VAT fraud claim
- ***OEC v Dean & 8 ors*** **[2018] EWHC 2759; [2019] 1 WLR 82** represented two defendants in relation to a claim for $87m arising out of the purchase of an oil rig in Iran.
- ***OJSC Aeroflot v Berezovsky & Forus Group*** (ChD, 2017): acted as junior counsel to *Aeroflot* in relation to its applications for freezing orders against the Defendants and permission to enforce the orders in Switzerland (applying the Dadourian Guidelines). Led by Aidan Casey QC.
- ***BFS Group Limited v Ricotta*** (QBD, 2017): acted as junior counsel to a group of defendants in relation to claims brought by BFS for rescission of a share purchase agreement worth £45 million on the grounds of bribery and deceit. Led by Thomas Roe QC.
- ***Inn Take (UK) Limited (In Liquidation)***: three-day High Court trial against four defendants arising out of "creditor-resistance" fraud perpetrated against various utility companies.
- ***Re Parkwell Investments Limited*** [2014] EWHC 3381; [2014] BCC 721: acting for provisional liquidators in relation to the company's appeal against the provisional liquidation order. Company alleged to be engaged in MTIC fraud.
- ***UK Communications Limited (In Liquidation) v Nahim*** [2010] EWHC 1691: dishonest assistance and conspiracy arising out of MTIC fraud.

Offshore

- ***Hollysys Automation Technologies Limited*** *– acted for Ascendant Capital Partners Limited in respect of proposed merger with Hollysys Automation, a company registered in BVI and listed on NASDAQ*
- ***Otaki Holdings Limited (In Liquidation)*** *– acted for Liquidators of Jersey registered joint venture company.*
- ***BSG Resources Limited (In Administration)*** *– acted for Liquidators of Guernsey registered*

company in respect of letter of request.

- ***Highbridge Investment LP (In Liquidation)*** [2021] GRC 062 Acted for Liquidators of limited partnership registered in Guernsey in respect of application for letter of request to bring claims in England for fraudulent trading under section 213 of the Insolvency Act 1986
- ***Joannou & Paraskevaides (Overseas) Limited (In Liquidation)***: acting as junior counsel to the Joint Liquidators of a Guernsey company with construction business based in Middle East, Libya and Cyprus, with debts of c.$1b. Obtained recognition order under s.426 in High Court.
- Acting for Liquidator of group of companies, including a Guernsey limited partnership, in relation to claims against its directors and third parties for alleged fraudulent trading in relation to a scheme which defrauded hundreds of consumers.
- ***Maplecross Properties Limited (In Liquidation)*:** advising Joint Liquidators of Guernsey company (whose 50% UBO is the Libyan Investment Fund) in relation to sanctions issues concerning the sale of land in England, the move from voluntary liquidation to compulsory liquidation and the merits of a claim against International Group pending in the High Court.

Awards and Recommendations

Chambers and Partners 2024

Ranked as leading junior (Restructuring and Insolvency)

"Clara is clever and technical, with great client-handling skills"

"She is very good on her feet, has really good delivery in court and is quick to see the angles of opportunity"

"She is very good at cutting through the noise to get to the finer detail"

Chambers and Partners 2023

Ranked as leading junior (Restructuring and Insolvency)

Chambers and Partners 2022

Ranked as leading junior (Restructuring and Insolvency)

Chambers and Partners 2021

"She is really pleasant to deal with – very measured, very detailed and provides very good-quality advice. She is also understated on her feet and is calm, confident and assured in court".

Chambers and Partners 2020

"Clara provides excellent advice and is well liked by clients, who appreciate her easy-going manner and team approach."

"She is very impressive – she provides very clear advice and she knows where to push and how hard. She is very good tactically and intellectually, and her drafting and advocacy skills are very good."

"Her knowledge of the insolvency regimen is incredible. She is very good with clients and sees their legal problems in a commercial context and finds solutions to difficult situations."

Chambers and Partners 2019

“She is technically brilliant and an extremely able barrister who is very easy to deal with. She is very bright, analyses things well and represents clients very well in court.”

“She is very hard-working and provides confident advice.”

Chambers and Partners 2018

‘She is very good on the paperwork, knowledgeable on the law and provides good client service – she is proactive and commercial.’

‘She works extremely hard for her clients and goes the extra mile.’

‘She is user-friendly, practical and efficient’.

Chambers and Partners 2017

‘She is personable and provides practical, timely advice.’

Chambers and Partners 2016

‘She deals with papers and advice promptly and her advice is sound and succinct.’

Legal 500 (2025)

Ranked as leading junior (Insolvency)

“Clara is a specialist in world-class drafting. She routinely turns in word-perfect briefs that balance comprehensiveness and conciseness. She also boasts an impressively strategic mind.”

Ranked as leading junior (Offshore)

“Calm under pressure, ability to listen and work with the clients. Strong commercial legal mind and a team player with clients and insolvency practitioners.”

Legal 500 (2024)

Ranked as leading junior (Insolvency)

“Clara has total command of her subject area, including all of its darker recesses. She uses that knowledge to produce excellent strategic insight. She has a great written style, which delights clients, since it is brisk but detailed.”

Ranked as leading junior (Offshore)

“Calm under pressure, ability to listen and work with the clients. Strong commercial legal mind and a team player with clients and insolvency practitioners.”

Legal 500 (2023)

Ranked as leading junior (Insolvency and Offshore)

Legal 500 (2022)

Ranked as leading junior (Insolvency)

Legal 500 (2021)

“My go-to junior counsel for insolvency, complex fraud and asset recovery claims. She is calm in the

face of pressure, regularly dealing with injunctions and urgent applications. She has a rightly deserved reputation for excellence in her practice areas''.

Legal 500 (2020)

"She is excellent on her feet and her document work is superb"

Legal 500 (2018)

'Good attention to detail and a calm manner with clients.'

Legal 500 (2017)

'She takes a commercial and practical approach to litigation.'

Legal 500 (2015)

'Spots things that others miss.'

Legal 500 (2014)

'Excels at unravelling complex and difficult issues.'

Memberships

London Common Law and Commercial Bar Association

Education

2003 UCL – Masters in Legal and Political Philosophy (Distinction)

2001 University College, Oxford, BA (Honours) Politics, Philosophy and Politics (2:1)

Prizes and Scholarships

Pegasus Scholar

Inner Temple Scholarship (Full Scholarship for CPE year)