Hannah Thornley

Called to the Bar 2003
+44 (0)20 7696 9900
hannahthornley@southsquare.com





Hannah is an experienced advocate and litigator. She appears regularly in the High Court and advises on domestic and international cases which are often of a complex or urgent nature. Hannah has also appeared as a junior in the Court of Appeal, the Privy Council and the House of Lords. She is a certified mediation advocate.

After her studies of company and commercial law at Cambridge University and her study of corporate insolvency law at Oxford University, Hannah has built up a wealth of expertise in disputes relating to companies and insolvencies, as well as cases which include general commercial, contractual and corporate issues during her years of practice at the Bar.

Hannah was appointed to the Attorney General's Panel of Junior Counsel to the Crown (B Panel) from 2 September 2019 for five years. She was on the C panel from 2014 to 2019. As a result of her other international studies at Oxbridge and her appointment to the Attorney General's Panel of Counsel, Hannah has advised or represented Government Ministers and the House of Commons and now also takes cases with a human rights, immigration, constitutional, administrative or international law element.

In 2024 and 2025 Hannah has been working on an extremely complex application for Permission to Appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

In 2024 Hannah worked for the Government on a number of immigration matters relating to Rwanda. In 2024, Hannah also advised on the Covid Inquiry.

In respect of the COVID-19 outbreak and in respect of Brexit Hannah advised and acted for a number of parties on a confidential basis.

In May 2016, Hannah was appointed as a specialist legal adviser to the Work and Pensions and Business Innovation and Skills House of Commons Select Committees in relation to the BHS inquiry. In January 2018, Hannah was again appointed as a specialist legal adviser by the Business and Pensions Committees in relation to the Carillion Inquiry.

Hannah was recommended as an "up and coming" junior in Chambers & Partners 2014. She was ranked in Chambers &Partners 2015 and was described as: "a very robust advocate". She was ranked in Chambers & Partners 2017 where it stated that she "is highly recommended for her technical aptitude and pragmatic approach". It further states that: "Hannah clearly knows the law inside out". Hannah is ranked again in Chambers and Partners 2018 and in 2019 where she is described as "Hugely impressive" and "Very good, knows her stuff and is easy to work with". In 2020 Hannah is described as "Talented and a real team player". In 2021, Hannah is described as having "excellent advocacy skills" and as "good, commercial and responsive". She is also described as "a very able and forceful advocate – she is very effective in court". In Chambers & Partners 2022 it is stated that: "She's very client-focused and user-friendly", "She is really good, deliberate, considered and easy to follow in her advocacy" and "Judges love her as she speaks with assurance." In 2023, her write-up states that: "Hannah is exceptional on the papers" and "she is an excellent advocate".

Hannah has advised, represented or appeared in Court for numerous UK, international and high-profile banks, companies and private individuals. Hannah has acted for or against directors, shareholders, trustees, creditors, debtors, landlords, insolvency practitioners, accountants, solicitors, barristers,

insurers, politicians and celebrities. She has acted for or against the Secretary of State for Business, the Home Secretary, the Insolvency Service, the Official Receiver and HMRC on a number of occasions, including having appeared for HMRC in the winders Court many times with between 100 to 200 petitions per morning. Clients Hannah is able to mention include: *The House of Commons*; *The Secretary of State for Business; The Secretary of State for the Home Department*; *Bail for Immigration Detainees ("BID")*; *The Insolvency Service*; *The administrators of Lehman Brothers; KPMG; Partners of Alixpartners; Partners of Deloitte; Lloyds TSB; HSBC; Natwest; Barclays; Bank of Ireland; Standard Chartered Bank; Abbey National; Anglo-Irish Bank; Volksbank; Commerzbank; Agricultural Development Bank of Trinidad & Tobago; Funding Circle; the Company that previously owned Manchester City Football Club; Swindon Town Football Club; Boris Becker; Johnston Press Group; British Airways Pension Trustees; Unilever; Oracle Corporation, Landlords in Games Station; Landlords in Woolworths; Landlords in AllSaints; Landlords in New Look; Suppliers of Monarch; Suppliers of House of Fraser; LK Bennett; BHS; Phones 4u; Connaught; Barratts; Birthdays; Toys R Us; Courts; Premier International Foods; Thomson Directories; the proposed administrators of the Dial-A-Cab credit union; Dawnay Day; East London Bus Group; London Mining plc; Oilexco; Assetco Group; Lemma Insurance; Independent Insurance; UIC Insurance; Brit Insurance; the National House Building Council and Highways England.*

Company and Insolvency

Hannah regularly advises on company, corporate insolvency and bankruptcy issues. Recent cases of note include:

- Acting for a party on a complex insolvency and company matter in ongoing proceedings in the ***Isle of Man*** and advising on an application to appeal to the ***Judicial Committee of the Privy Council*** in 2024 – 2025
- Won a directors' disqualification trial in 2024
- Advising in relation to the ***Covid Inquiry*** in 2024
- Acting for three directors in respect of allegations of breach of duty in 2024
- Acting for the Department of Transport in relation to a number of issues including expert evidence in 2024
- Advising on security documents in an insolvent liquidation in 2024
- Acted for a party regarding proceedings against LK Bennett (in administration)
- Acted for ***Barclays Bank Plc*** and provisional liquidators in relation to a fraud
- Acted for the owner of ***Swindon Town Football Club*** in a shareholder dispute
- Acted for the ***Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy*** in respect of two different directors' disqualification trials
- Acted for the ***Secretary of State*** in obtaining a public interest winding up order Acted for a director seeking to avoid disqualification
- Acted confidentially for a number of parties during the ***COVID-19*** pandemic and in respect of ***Brexit***
- Acted for the former joint administrators in Re Rhino Enterprises Properties Ltd [2020] EWHC 2370 (Ch) and in Re Rhino Enterprises Properties Ltd [2021] EWHC 2533(Ch) in the High Court and again in the Court of Appeal in Schofield v Smith [2022] BCC 1265 as junior to Tom Smith

KC

- Acted for an ***Icelandic trustee in bankruptcy*** regarding an Icelandic bankruptcy and property held in England, both in the trial and on the appeal: see ***Jonsson v Karlsson*** [2021] EWHC 1897 (Ch)
- Acted for the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in section 17 permission proceedings in the matter of ***Rwamba v Secretary of State:*** [2019] EWHC 2669 (Ch) and again in [2020] BCC 561 and also in the appeal proceedings: [2020] EWHC 2778 (Ch)
- Acted with Glen Davis KC in relation to the CVA challenge of the landlords in the ***All Saints*** clothing retail group
- Acted for landlords in respect of ***New Look***
- Acted for Oracle Corporation (UK) Limited in a long-running matter including a number of hearings and culminating in winding up of a partnership and bankruptcy orders in respect of the partners: ***Oracle Corporation (UK) Limited v Objectlabs International and two others*** [2020] EWHC 1069 (Ch)
- Acted for ***Unilever*** in relation to an MVL and share matter of subsidiary company
- Acted for ***Highways England Limited*** in respect of a contractual dispute
- Acted for the ***Official Receiver*** in respect of a proof of debt and employee dispute
- Acted for a ***property company*** in respect of fraud, administration and bankruptcy proceedings
- Has acted in a number of director's disqualification disputes for the ***Secretary of State***
- Advised 2 directors regarding a multi-million pound wrongful trading claim
- Acted as junior to Jeremy Goldring KC in respect of an appeal in bankruptcy proceedings in respect of a liquidated debt issue
- Acted as junior to Mark Phillips KC in a major bankruptcy/IVA dispute: ***CFL Finance Ltd v Bass*** [2019] EWHC 1839 (Ch)
- Acted for two members of an LLP in proceedings brought by a liquidator in respect of breach of duty and wrongful trading: ***Mc Tear v Eade*** [2019] EWHC 1673 (Ch)
- Acted for a petitioning creditor in a high net worth bankruptcy
- Acted for ***Toys R Us*** Properties Limited as junior to Andreas Gledhill KC in respect of a dispute about the sale and lease of a number of properties of the chain
- ***The Johnston Press Group*** (publishers of the Scotsman, the Yorkshire Post and the "i" newspaper) in respect of 31 administration applications as a senior junior to Mark Phillips KC
- Advised some suppliers of ***House of Fraser*** regarding retention of title clauses
- Advised the proposed administrators of ***Dial-A-Cab***
- Advised and acted for ***Boris Becker*** in relation to preventing a sale of his memorabilia within his bankruptcy
- Acted for three partners of ***AlixPartners*** in relation to an application for their removal as administrators of 25 companies: ***Zinc and Others v Beveridge and Others*** [2018] EWHC 1936(Ch) acting as junior to Tom Smith KC
- Acted for a creditor regarding the successful appointment of a provisional liquidator over a company being used in a manner similar to a ponzi scheme
- Advised the ***Work & Pensions Select Committee and Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee*** as a specialist advisor on the ***Carillion*** inquiry
- Advised a finance director in proceedings for breach of duty and wrongful trading which was settled two weeks before the commencement of the trial

- Acted for the holders of a floating charge – advising on its validity
- Acted for a dissatisfied bondholder in relation to a proposed scheme of arrangement
- Advised creditors on the impact of the insolvency legislation on contractual provisions between shareholders
- HMRC winding up lists
- Acted for a petitioning creditor in a challenge to a winding up petition
- Acted for the former shareholders of a company in relation to a dispute about the price paid for the company
- Acted for the shareholders of a company which had gone into administration, in their attempts to pursue the fraudulent mortgagors
- Acted for the administrators of ***Lehman Brothers Europe Limited*****,** in relation to an urgent application for directions and consideration of distributions to shareholders, as junior to Felicity Toube KC: ***Re Lehman Brothers Europe Ltd*** [2017] EWHC 2031 (Ch)
- Acted for ***KPMG*** and two of its partners, in relation to their successful strike out application regarding trust claims as well as allegations of conspiracy and fraud in the context of an insolvent company, acting as junior to Antony Zacaroli KC: ***Mitchell v RBS plc and others*** [2017] EWHC 1025(Ch)
- Advised the ***Work & Pensions Select Committee*** and ***Business, Innovation and Skills Committee*** as a specialist advisor on the ***BHS*** inquiry
- Advised a public figure on bankruptcy, debt and anonymity issues
- Acted for a hedge fund owner on debt recovery
- Acted for a number of different directors in respect of alleged breaches of duty
- Acted in respect of a number of family and partnership disputes
- Acted in respect of several director disqualification matters
- Acted for a director in respect of alleged breaches of duty
- Acted for a foreign bank on English insolvency actions
- Acted on a just and equitable winding up petition
- Acted for the directors of ***New Store Europe UK Ltd*** in connection with an application for administration and for a validation order, and the administrators in relation to ROT claims
- Acted for the directors of the ***Phones 4U Group*** in connection with administration applications over 10 group companies, and the administrators in relation to an application to sell assets free of security, acting as junior to Antony Zacaroli KC
- Acted for ***Volksbank*** in relation to a COMI dispute in bankruptcy
- Acted for the provisional liquidators of a company in relation to a multi-million pound fraud and trust assets
- Acted for the landlords in the ***Games Station*** case in relation to administration expenses, acting as junior to Antony Zacaroli KC: ***Pillar Denton Limited v Michael John Andrew Jervis*** [2014] EWCA Civ 180 (CA(Civ Div))
- Acted for the ***Bank of Ireland*** in a COMI dispute arising out of the bankruptcy petitions of former Irish millionaire property developers the O'Donnells, acting as junior to the late Gabriel Moss KC: ***O'Donnell v Bank of Ireland*** [2013] EWHC 489 (Ch)
- Acted for the company that previously owned ***Manchester City football club*** in relation to a fraud arising from the sale

Other cases include acting for or advising:

- Many and various Government cases whilst on the Attorney General's Panel of Counsel, including numerous immigration matters
- Many and various directors disqualification
- The liquidator of a ***Gibraltar*** insurance company in relation to multiple claims, acting as junior to Glen Davis KC
- A well-known insurance company in relation to the insolvency of its tenant, a firm of solicitors Two companies that were the subject of public interest winding up petitions and applications
- for provisional liquidation
- The directors of a company in relation to breaches of the duty of care and skill
- A director in relation to section 236 proceedings
- A director in relation to disqualification proceedings which were ultimately discontinued with costs
- A firm of solicitors in relation to a shareholder and internal dispute
- The administrators of the ***Connaught property group*** on a number of matters
- A County Council in relation to an application to rescind a winding up petition
- The administrators of the ***Barratts*** shoe group
- ***Lloyds TSB*** **and the** ***AssetCo fire and rescue services group*** in relation to winding up petitions that had been issued against the group
- The administrators of ***East London Bus Group*** on the distribution of dividends
- The joint provisional liquidators of ***Independent Insurance*** Company in connection with the winding up petition
- ***British Airways Pension Trustees*** in relation to its application for an Administration order over one of its lessees
- The liquidators of certain ***Dawnay Day*** group companies
- ***Anglo-Irish Bank Corporation*** in relation to its Administration applications over debtor companies
- ***Oilexco North Sea*** in relation to an Administration application made by the directors of the company
- The administrators of ***Birthdays*** Landlords in connection with the ***Woolworths*** administration
- ***Langard v Sheldon Lochore***, 2008, dealing with transactions at an undervalue and persons associated with directors of companies
- Provisional liquidators of ***UIC Insurance*** Company
- As junior to Richard Hacker KC on the administration application by the directors of
- ***Courts*****and** ***Courts (UK)***
- Appeared weekly on behalf of numerous petitioners and companies in the Companies Court Winding Up list from 2008 to 2011
- ***Regalway Care v Shillingford*** [2005] EWHC 261 (Ch), defending a company and director accused of VAT carousel fraud and dealing with injunctions

Banking and Finance

Cases include acting for or advising:

- The administrators of ***Lehman Brothers Europe Limited,*** in relation to an urgent application for directions and consideration of distributions to shareholders, acting as junior to Felicity Toube KC: ***Re Lehman Brothers Europe Ltd*** [2017] EWHC 2031 (Ch)
- A private individual against a High Street Bank in respect of personal guarantees
- ***Bank of Ireland*** against Irish property developers Brian and Mary O'Donnell
- ***Abbey National*** and one of their employees in relation to section 236 examination proceedings
- ***Bank of Ireland*** against an English property developer and certain property development companies in relation to personal guarantees
- ***Standard Chartered Bank*** in relation to a multi-party fraud action
- A High Street Bank in respect of a large-scale alleged mortgage fraud by several directors of several companies
- A director accused of breach of duty and fraud
- A party in respect of a fraud and property dispute against the liquidators of BCCI
- ***O'Meara Food Products v Agricultural Development Bank of Trinidad & Tobago*** [2005] UKPC 6, acting as a junior to Michael Crystal KC, banking law issues, charges and issues of statutory construction

Commercial Litigation and Arbitration

Cases include acting for or advising:

- ***South African trustees in bankruptcy*** in relation to a s.426 Insolvency Act 1986 application;
- A ***Tanzanian company*** in respect of a commercial dispute
- A well-known sport and football personality in respect of a number of personal guarantees given in relation to the funding of a football club
- A ***New Zealand company*** in respect of a commercial dispute with an English company
- A well-known TV personality in respect of a commercial dispute and his position as a director of various entertainment companies
- Acted as a junior to Richard Hacker KC for a ***Bermudian company*** in a long-running multi-jurisdictional and multi-party commercial dispute including allegations against directors, allegations of fraud and allegations of money-laundering
- ***Brit Insurance*** in respect of a number of insurance contract disputes
- ***National House Building Council*** in respect of commercial disputes
- ***Premier International Foods (UK)*** in relation to a commercial dispute
- In arbitration proceedings for an Indian company in relation to a contractual dispute
- ***Jones v Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*** [2006] UKHL 26, acting as a junior to Michael Crystal KC, international law, including jurisdiction and state immunity

Professional Negligence

Hannah sat on the ***Council of the Inns of Court Disciplinary Panel*** for members of the Bar for 5 years, overseen by the Bar Tribunals and Adjudication Service. She has also sat as a ***Visitor to the Inns of Court*** on a disciplinary appeal.

Cases include:

- Regularly advises solicitors and insolvency practitioners on issues relating to professional negligence
- Acted for the ***Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal*** in relation to enforcement of costs orders regarding a solicitor having been struck off
- Acted for a solicitor in negligence and breach of trust proceedings which included an application for anonymisation
- Acted for the insurance company of a potentially negligent Trustee in Bankruptcy
- Acted for the supervisor of an IVA in relation to a potentially defective IVA
- Acted for a solicitor in professional negligence proceedings

Trusts and Property

Cases include:

- Acting as junior to Antony Zacaroli KC in a strike out application regarding trust issues as well as allegations of conspiracy and fraud ***Mitchell v RBS plc and others*** [2017] EWHC 1025(Ch);
- Advising on a trust issue in relation to a deceased individual
- Advising and appearing for a high net worth individual in relation to a claim about the ownership of a luxury car
- Advising the trustees of a pension scheme on the validity and scope of a debenture
- Advising a Jersey trust company in relation to various property issues, including a bankruptcy and charging orders
- ***Avis v Turner*** [2007] BPIR 6, dealt with the workings of the Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996
- ***Franses v Oomerjee*** [2005] BPIR 1320, after-acquired property in insolvency

Pro Bono

2020 – 2022 – Trustee and director of the Atlas Multi-Academy Trust (comprised of 3 schools)

2020 – date – Acts as an advocate for detention centre detainees on behalf of the charity, Bail for Immigration Detainees (“BID”)

2019 – 2022 – Trustee and director of Stepping Stones Luton (a charity that helps women with

mental health, drug and domestic abuse problems)

2016 – date – Social Mobility Foundation E-Mentor

2014 – 2021 – Governor at Beech Hyde School, Wheathampstead, Vice-chair 2017-2018 and Chair of Governors from 2019 to 2021

2014- 2018 – Trustee of Home Start Welwyn Hatfield Charity

2013- 2018 – Member of Bar Disciplinary Tribunal Panel

2012 – date – Chancery Bar Association female barrister mentor (for two mentees)

2010-2015 – Member and then Chair of St Albans and Wheathampstead Children's Centre Advisory Committees

2008-2009 – Citizens Advice Bureau Volunteer

Awards and Recommendations

Chambers & Partners 2023	Ranked: "Hannah is exceptional on the papers" and "she is an excellent advocate"
Chambers & Partners 2022	Ranked: "She's very client focused and user-friendly"; "She is really good, deliberate, considered and easy to follow in her advocacy" and "Judges love her as she speaks with assurance".
Chambers & Partners 2021	Ranked and described as "good, commercial and responsive"; "She has excellent advocacy skills" and "a very able and forceful advocate – she is very effective in court"
Chambers & Partners 2020	Ranked and described as "Talented and a real team player"
Chambers & Partners 2019	Ranked and described as "Hugely impressive" and "Very good, knows her stuff and is easy to work with"
Chambers & Partners 2018	Ranked
Chambers & Partners 2017	Ranked and described as: "highly recommended for her technical aptitude and pragmatic approach". It further states that: "Hannah clearly knows the law inside out"

Chambers & Partners 2015	Ranked and described as “a very robust advocate”
Chambers & Partners 2014	Recommended as an up and coming junior in Insolvency Law

Career

YEAR OF CALL 2003 Called to the Bar of England and Wales

Appointments

2019 Appointed to the Attorney General’s Panel of Junior Counsel to the Crown (B Panel) from 2 September 2019 for 5 years

2014- Appointed to the Attorney General’s Panel of Junior Counsel to the crown (C Panel) for 5 years

2013 – 2018 Appointed to sit on the Bar Disciplinary Panel

2012 – 2015 & 2017 – 2018 & 2019-2020 Appointed as Chambers Equality and Diversity Officer (1 appointment and 2 maternity covers)

2012 – 2015 Elected onto the Chambers Executive Committee

2017 – 2020 Re-elected onto the Chambers Executive Committee

Publications

Contributor to *Gore-Browne on Companies*
Contributor to *Company Directors: Duties, Liabilities and Remedies* (Mortimore, OUP)
Contributor to *Professional Negligence and Liability* (Simpson)

Education and Qualifications

2003-2004Pupillage at South Square
2002-2003Bar Vocational Course, ICSL
2001-2002Brasenose College, Oxford University, BCL
1998-2001Downing College, Cambridge University, MA Law

Prizes and Scholarships

Scholarship Accommodation in Temple (Middle Temple)
Major Scholarship Queen Mother (Middle Temple)
Harmsworth Entrance Exhibition (Middle Temple)
Seton Scholarship (Downing College, Cambridge University)
Rebecca Flower Squire Scholarship (Cambridge, University)