Alex Leonhardt



Year of Call: 2018
Email Address: alex.leonhardt@3pb.co.uk
Telephone: 020 7583 8055

Overview

Alex Leonhardt joined 3PB in April 2021 following the successful completion of his pupillage with Chambers under Cheryl Jones and Charlotte Hadfield. He is based in the London office.

Alex accepts instruction in all areas of civil law, and has a particular interest in employment, commercial, property and housing, education and public law.

Prior to coming to the Bar, Alex worked in politics as a researcher to Members of Parliament and in public affairs for a body representing higher education providers. He also worked as a paralegal in a housing and public law department at a London law firm.

Academic qualifications

- Bar Professional Training Course, Cardiff University 2017-18 (Very competent)
- Graduate Diploma in Law, Cardiff University, 2016-17 (Distinction)
- MA Political Philosophy, University of York, 2011-2012 (Distinction)
- BA (Hons) Philosophy, University of Cambridge, 2005-2008

Scholarships

- Astbury Scholarship (Major Award), Middle Temple
- Harmsworth Entrance Exhibition, Middle Temple
- Campbell Foster Prize for performance on the BPTC, Middle Temple

Expertise

Employment and discrimination

Alex is frequently instructed across the full range of Employment Tribunal and civil court employment matters, and is a frequent contributor to 3PB's Employment Newsletter. He has particular experience in acting for schools, universities and education professionals, informed by his education law practice.

He also acts in Equality Act claims brought in the County Court and First-tier Tribunal outside of the employment context, and has experience of claims on behalf of both employers and employees arising from restrictive covenants and non-poaching clauses.

His recent cases include:

- Obtaining a finding that a claimant's belief in English nationalism was not a protected belief for the purposes of a discrimination claim brought against a university employer
- Successfully representing a claimant in a redundancy claim, on the basis of superficial consultation with employees and the recognised trade union
- Securing an order that a claimant pay 100% of the costs of the Respondent in an unmeritorious and unreasonably brought discrimination claim
- Acting pro bono to assist an ex-employee obtain a £15,000 settlement following a failure by an employer to offer contractual hours
- Advising and pleading in a disability discrimination claim brought against a community sports club operating as an unincorporated association
- Providing advice and drafting on jurisdiction issues arising from the State Immunity Act
- Disability discrimination claims arising from "mask mandates" imposed by shops during the coronavirus pandemic.

Commercial

Alex accepts instructions representing individuals and businesses in disputes on all contractual matters. His aim is to always provide clear and practical advice that enables his clients to make confident decisions in litigation.

He has represented clients in a wide range of goods and services and debt claims, at trial and at interlocutory and case management hearings.

His recent instructions include acting for employers and employees/directors in civil claims arising from restrictive covenants, non-compete clauses and non-poaching clauses, and he is keen to develop his practice in these areas.

Owing to his education and discrimination practices he is particularly well placed to act in claims relating to education contracts, and has experience in multi-faceted claims in that arena brought on the basis of breach of contract, discrimination and negligence.

Property and Estates

Alex accepts instructions in residential and commercial landlord and tenant claims, and matters relating to local authorities' duties in relation to homelessness and allocation of social housing under the Housing Act 1996.

He has also acted in claims for injunctions under the Protection from Harassment Act relating to the use and enjoyment of property.

Alex has experience in advising on lease renewals, service charge liabilities and the enforcement of covenants, as well as acting for both landlords and tenants in possession and disrepair cases.

He accepts instructions from both local authorities and claimants in housing matters under the Housing Act 1996, and has a strong understanding of this area from his experience as a paralegal working in a housing and public law team at a solicitors' firm specialising in these areas of work.

Education

Alex accepts instructions in discrimination, breach of contract and negligence claims arising in the context of schools, colleges and universities in the First-tier Tribunal and the civil courts, as well as school admission and exclusion cases and judicial review cases relating to education.

A recent case involved successfully representing a school in defending a discrimination claim on the basis that a pupil's violent behaviour was not something arising from the disability relied upon.

Alex's previous experience of working in higher education policy means that he is particularly interested in cases in the higher education context, including discrimination and breach of contract claims, judicial reviews and cases involving complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

Articles

Alex Leonhardt analyses the case of McKenzie v First Greater Western Limited [2026] EWHC 868 (KB), in which the High Court considered the principles governing injunctions to restrain employers proceeding with disciplinary processes.

View Article

In Milrine v DHL Services Ltd [2026] EAT 31, the EAT considers the impact of a flawed appeal process in circumstances where the dismissal might otherwise be considered to be fair.

Alex Leonhardt reviews the case.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt reflects upon Sogbodjor v WKCIC t/a Capital City College Group 2219358/2024, a recent case in the Central London Employment Tribunal, which raised questions of the limits of employee's powers, and the important distinctions between affirmation and acquiescence.

Alex represented the successful claimant in the proceedings.

View Article

What is the approach to be taken when a claimant seeks to amend their claim while still within the primary limitation period for the events which the amendment concerns? Alex Leonhardt analyses the case of Barbosa Dethling v The Metropolitan Police Service [2025] EAT 58, in which HHJ Auerbach considered this question.

View Article

Naomi Webber and Alex Leonhardt analyse the case of Higgs v Farmor's School [2025] EWCA Civ 109, an important decision which explains how direct discrimination interrelates with the right to hold and manifest religious and philosophical beliefs in the workplace.

Alex and Naomi draw out key points from the judgment and explain how it can be applied in future cases.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt reviews the case of L v The Commissioners for His Majesty's Revenue and Customs [2024] UKFTT 001044 (TC), in which the FTT considers the question of taxation of a settlement of financial losses from discrimination, and in particular when it is said that the losses flow from being prevented from taking on work.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt analyses the case of Tesco Stores Ltd v USDAW [2024] UKSC 28, in which the Supreme Court was asked to consider if Tesco was entitled to terminate certain employment contracts which included an entitlement to "Retained Pay", described as a "permanent" benefit, to then re-hire the same employees on contracts without Retained Pay.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt analyses Christopher Watson v Wallwork Nelson Johnson & Anor [2024] EAT 105, a case concerned with employment status, in which the EAT sets out a thorough statement of the relevant principles in determining the existence of an employment relationship against the background of a potential partnership.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt considers the case of ONEA v Contingent and Future Technologies Ltd [2023] EAT 125, in which the EAT issues its second reminder this year (following Lycatel Services Ltd v Schneider [2023] EAT 81) that applications to stay need to be determined following a decision on which forum the dispute would be "most conveniently and appropriately be tried" as per Bowater Plc v Charlwood [1991] ICR 798, and also considers the relationship between that test and a presumption against the High Court being bound by prior findings of the Employment Tribunal.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt reviews the case of Steel v Spencer Road LLP [2023] EWHC 2492 (Ch), in which the High Court decided with some certainty that though a bonus scheme conditional on the employee remaining in employment for a specified time acts as a disincentive to that employee resigning, it does not constitute a restraint of trade.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt reviews the case of McNicholas v (1) Care and Learning Alliance (2) CALA Staffbank [2023] EAT 127, in which the EAT considered whether a regulator's decision that there was a case to answer, following initial reports made in retaliation for a protected disclosure, constituted an "intervening act" in assessing damages.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt reflects on the case of Jackson v The University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust [2023] EAT 102, in which the EAT considers the application of Hogg v Dover dismissals to an employee in a contractual redundancy situation. The EAT gives guidance on how such claims are to be determined by Employment Tribunals.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt reviews the case of Mrs Kristie Higgs v Farmor's School (The Archbishop's Council of the Church of England intervening) EA-2020-000896-JOJ in which the EAT considers a case involving dismissal on the basis of the manner a protected belief was manifested by an employee in social media posts, and guidance on the question of proportionality in such cases.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt considers the case of Mr J Edward v Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust [2023] EAT 33, in which the EAT carefully considered the relevant principles for approaching questions of failure to mitigate losses, and in particular where percentage reductions similar to "loss of chance" cases are appropriate.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt looks at the case of *Earl Shilton Town Council v Miller*, in which the EAT considered the application of direct discrimination in circumstances where both staff of both sexes shared nominally the same toilet facilities.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt considers the Supreme Court's decision in McCue v Glasgow City Council, a claim against a local authority's decision to not disregard certain disability-related expenses from a means-testing assessment.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt analyses the case of Nexus v RMT & Unite the Union [2022] EWCA Civ 1408, in which the Court of Appeal considered the application of the contractual doctrine of mistake - both common mistake and unilateral mistake - in the context of a collective bargaining agreement, and its potential consideration by Employment Tribunals.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt analyses the case of Hilco Capital Limited v Denise Harrington [2022] EAT 156, in which the EAT considered the evidential burden in respect of claims that an ex-employee suffers disadvantages in the labour market arising from stigma related to whistleblowing or bringing claims against their former employers.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt reviews *Department for Work and Pensions v Mrs Susan Boyers* [2022] EAT 76, in which the EAT gives useful advice on the above matters (for the second time in the same case).

View Article

Alex Leonhardt analyses ***Clark v Middleton and anor [2022] EAT 31***, a case in which the EAT considered the ET's discretion to make (or not make) an award of compensation for breaches of TUPE Regulations, and the effect of withdrawal of a claim on a defendant's liability to pay compensation, in circumstances where the claimant has no freestanding right to bring a claim against
them.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt analyses USDAW & Ors v Tesco Stores Limited [2022] EWHC 201 (QB), in which the High Court considered the restraints on the ability of employers to terminate with notice in order to impose new terms, in circumstances where there had been a prior commitment to keep a particular term.

View Article

Chell v Tarmac Cement and Lime Ltd [2022] EWA Civ 7,

Alex Leonhardt reviews *Chell v Tarmac Cement and Lime Ltd* [2022] EWA Civ 7, in which the Court of Appeal considers both vicarious liability for employees' practical jokes or "horseplay" and a purported direct duty on employees to prevent the same, with some useful commentary on the relevance of tension or animosity between staff when that contributes to an employees' wrongdoing.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt reviews A v Burke & Hare (EA-2020-SCO-0000067-DT), a case in which the EAT concludes that applications for anonymity orders need to be supported by robust evidence on harm that will arise to the party, going beyond mere embarrassment or social opprobrium, with evidence of impact on labour market outcomes potentially considered relevant and sufficient.

View Article

Mallon v AECOM Ltd, UKEAT/0175/20/LA (V)

Employment and civil law barrister Alex Leonhardt analyses Mallon v AECOM Ltd, UKEAT/0175/20/LA (V), a case in which the EAT again urged caution in the use of strike-out applications in discrimination cases, and warned against only considering the first of the three duties under s20 of the Equality Act in reasonable adjustment claims.

View Article

Articles

View Article

Articles

3PB first-six pupil barrister Alex Leonhardt reviews the case Trecarrell House Ltd v Patricia Rouncefield [2020] EWCA Civ 760 in a detailed article.

View Article

3PB's Head of Property and Estates Group Matthew Cannings and Alex Leonhardt, pupil barrister, have produced an update for residential landlords and tenants during the coronavirus pandemic. The article considers the implications of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and Practice Direction 51Z of the Civil Procedure Rules and what the new provisions mean for residential landlords and tenants, including the imposition of a 90-day stay on most possession proceedings and the new three-month notice requirement.

View Article

Articles

Naomi Webber and Alex Leonhardt analyse the long-anticipated judgment in Higgs v Farmor's School handed down by the Court of Appeal in February, a judgment which offers pertinent lessons for practitioners representing student/parents, schools and universities, where questions of balancing freedom of speech, institutional reputation and the rights of others frequently come into play.

View Article

Alex Leonhardt reflects on the High Court's refusal to grant a Group Litigation Order to UCL students' claim for disrupted learning during the Covid pandemic and possible implications for other higher education providers.

View Article

Alice de Coverley and Alex Leonhardt analyse how the tricky, balancing questions around children's rights, school uniforms and school discipline have been dealt with by the Courts.

This article also appeared in the Education Law Monitor.

View Article

Covid-19 and the Class of 2020.
Pupil barrister Alex Leonhardt examines if students can claim compensation from their universities.

View Article