

Jo Laxton

Year of Call: 2022

Solicitor: 2000

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Overview

Jo Laxton qualified as a solicitor in 2000 and is now a specialist employment and discrimination barrister. A much sought-after junior barrister, Jo has 25 years' experience as an employment specialist.

Jo worked as a solicitor for over twenty years, holding senior positions with TfL (Transport for London), Sodexo, Pennon Group (South West Water) and Vodafone. As well as specialising in employment law, Jo held senior general legal roles such as General Counsel and Company Secretary.

Having transferred to the bar, she is regularly instructed in complex and lengthy claims acting for respondents and claimants across a huge variety of sectors, sizes of employers and experience in litigation. Her practice is principally focused on acting for private and public sector respondent organisations, including SME's and multinational businesses, NHS Trusts, Local Authorities and education providers. Jo though is as comfortable advising and working with individuals who have no litigation experience as with household name employers.

She specialises in unfair dismissal, redundancy disputes, discrimination, harassment, victimisation, whistleblowing, flexible working requests and disability claims. Jo is also regularly instructed to advise in-house legal teams, boards and their CEO's on sensitive internal investigations, grievances, disciplinary hearings, risk management, strategy, employment policies and governance issues.

Jo is very experienced in managing bulk tribunal litigation and providing support and assistance on large scale redundancy exercises, and has advised extensively on TUPE.

Jo is also frequently instructed to assist in settlements both individually and as part of a negotiating team resolving industrial disputes at ACAS, and is known as a practical and pragmatic negotiator.

Jo receives rave reviews from clients with feedback such as "I don't think anyone could have represented us better," "you have been the only light in all of this darkness" and "you have been nothing short of fantastic."

Indicative of the exceptional quality of her advisory and drafting work as well is her frequent re-instruction by clients to assist in drafting pleadings, advice on quantum, merits and approach in employment and discrimination cases.

In addition to representation and advice, Jo regularly provides case law updates, lectures, seminars, mock tribunals and bespoke training to solicitors, employer clients (including Board level training), and Human Resources and Procurement professionals. Such training has included whistleblowing, positive action in the workplace and employment and pensions issues in commercial transactions

Outside of her busy work demands, Jo enjoys touring on her motorcycle, and is a keen motorsports fan.

Recommendations

"Thank you for all your hard work. I don't think anyone could have represented us better." - **Lay respondent client**

"You have been the only light in all of this darkness." - **Lay claimant client**

"You got to grips with the case quickly, you were incredibly helpful throughout, and you dealt with the client perfectly. From the initial conference call on Monday to the de-brief after Judgment, you really put them at ease. This was crucial given their inexperience. You kept me updated throughout too, which was very much appreciated... You have been nothing short of fantastic." - **Instructing solicitor**

Academic qualifications

- LLB Law, University of Hertfordshire, 2:1 (Hons)
- LPC, Diploma in Legal Practice, Pass, College of Law

Scholarships

- Winner of Cavendish Prize, University of Hertfordshire

Professional bodies

- Employment Lawyers Association
- Lincoln's Inn

Expertise

Employment and discrimination

Jo Laxton was a highly experienced solicitor who has worked in senior legal roles, most recently as Lead Counsel (Employment) at Vodafone and previously South West Water, Head of Employment and Legal Compliance at Rotork Plc. She is no longer a practising solicitor, having elected to transfer across to the Bar and is now a practising barrister with 3PB.

Redundancy

She already has experience as an advocate, for example successfully representing a major motor car manufacturer in unfair dismissal/ collective redundancy proceedings. She also handled interim final hearings extensively in sex discrimination/equal pay proceedings (so called 'part time pensions' cases).

Having strong relationships with colleagues in HR and employee relations, Jo has enjoyed the opportunity of advising on both individual and collective redundancy, s188A obligations and selection criteria.

TUPE

Jo has supported procurement teams and HR in the progression of outsourcing/ insourcing activity, advising on the application of the TUPE regulations, consultation and measures, the provision of employee liability information, and changes to terms and conditions/ harmonisation.

Labour law

Jo has advised public sector and commercial entities on range of trade union issues, including industrial action, picketing, release and facility time, S.145B inducements and detriment generally. She also advised on the status of collective terms, assisted with the negotiation of collective agreements, and advised on compulsory recognition through the CAC.

Discrimination

Devising and supporting policy on equal opportunity and diversity has been a constant theme of Jo's in-house work, and she has taken responsibility for advising and training on common workplace issues. She's advised on the definition of disability and making reasonable adjustments. She has also handled sensitive race and sex discrimination matters, including the careful investigation of complaints, allegations of harassment, resolving workplace issues, dismissal, litigation and dispute resolution. She has provided training on unconscious bias, and harassment.

Service delivery

Jo's previous work as a solicitor in house has allowed her to develop experience in legal services delivery, having held responsibility for bulk claim management and team management. She has undertaken panel firm reviews mainly for the provision of employment law services, and has devised tools designed to provide effective case management.

Articles

Jo Laxton on the case of *Douglas v North Lanarkshire* [2024] EAT 194 in which the EAT considered if, in granting an application to amend, it was an error of law for a tribunal to address the issue of limitation at the final hearing, noting the decisions in *Amey Services v Alridge* and *Galilee v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis*.

The decision also briefly addresses a more discrete, secondary point, about the application of *Sainsbury's Supermarkets Limited v. Hitt*.

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Jo Laxton considers the EAT's decision in the case of *Kaler v Insights ESC Ltd* [2024] EAT 195, where is upheld the findings of an employment tribunal regarding discrimination arising from disability, and requests made by the Claimant during the final hearing for a postponement.

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Jo Laxton analyses the case of *Bauhaus Educational Services Limited v Elemide* [2023] EAT 161, in which the EAT considers the guidance in *Minnoch* to determine if a claimant had complied with the terms of an Unless Order.

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Jo Laxton reviews *Charalambous v National Bank of Greece* [2023] EAT 75, a case in which the EAT had to decide if the process followed by the Respondent amounted to unfair dismissal.

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[Jo Laxton](#) provides an analysis of the Presidents of the Employment Tribunals' updated guidance on hearing evidence from witnesses who are abroad.

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The Government has opened a consultation exercise to garner input on an administrative approvals process designed to create scrutiny and afford assurance in relation to certain public sector exit decisions.

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Joanna Laxton reviews *Ineos Infrastructure Grangemouth Ltd v Jones and others* and *Ineos Chemicals Grangemouth Ltd v Arnott and others* [2022] EAT 82, in which an employer cannot designate the end of pay negotiations of its own volition, as to do so would undermine the aims of S145B TULRCA.

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An employer cannot avoid the requirements of the ACAS Code of Practice (and the award of an uplift to compensation) by disguising a dismissal as redundancy, says the EAT: Joanna Laxton reviews *Rentplus UK Ltd v Coulson* [2022] EAT 81.

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Employment pupil barrister [Joanna Laxton](#) analyses the case of *Law by Design v Saira Ali* [2022] EWHC 426 (QB), in which the claimant was successful seeking to restrain the defendant from breaching the terms of her restrictive covenants. The article provides a useful reminder of the principles that apply when determining the enforceability of restrictive covenants.

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