



Chambers & Partners Rankings 2010



Administrative & Public

4-5 Gray's Inn Square is a major player in administrative and public law, and has dedicated specialists at silk and junior level. [Timothy Straker QC](#) has a broad public law practice, and recently represented an asylum seeker in a community care challenge. He also acted in a judicial review relating to the Nursing & Midwifery Council. Straker is also well known for his excellence in local government cases. [Philip Coppel QC](#) is a "tenacious and committed advocate" with a strong academic pedigree, whose practice includes challenges in the health and local government sectors. [Paul Brown QC](#), meanwhile, comes highly recommended in planning, and is valued by clients for his "no-nonsense approach and penetrating arguments." [Lisa Busch](#) has a varied public law practice, that takes in immigration, planning, education, and prisoners' rights. [Andrew Sharland](#)'s practice, on the other hand, encompasses challenges relating to prisoners' rights, coroners, immigration, local government, education and planning. His friendly and approachable manner is seen as one of his many advantages. Fellow junior [James Strachan](#) has appeared recently on control order litigation, and acted for the government in Marper, the case regarding the UK's policy of retention of the DNA of innocent people. Finally at the set, [Charles Bourne](#) acts in judicial reviews for local and central government, covering such areas as transport, hospitals, community care, planning, education, prisons and immigration. [Richard Clayton QC](#) successfully judicially reviewed a primary care trust's refusal to provide life-prolonging treatment to a cancer patient, and has also appeared on numerous occasions before the courts in Trinidad and Tobago.

Agriculture & Rural Affairs

[John Hobson QC](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square specialises in planning, local government and environmental law. As honorary standing counsel to the Campaign to Protect Rural England, he regularly advises on the legal implications of government policy and draft legislation and its impact upon the countryside. He is also an expert on town and village greens and appeared in *Betterment Properties Limited v Dorset County Council*.

Banking & Finance

Also hugely rated, [Hodge Malek QC](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square is "a great presence on regulatory matters," and a master of contentious banking work. He recently advised UBS on issues related to Parmalat.

Civil Liberties & Human Rights

At 4-5 Gray's Inn Square, [James Strachan](#) acts frequently for the UK government. A lawyer of considerable distinction, he lately appeared in the Marper DNA case. A highly prized silk is [Richard Clayton QC](#). Clayton recently intervened successfully for Liberty in Marper v UK, the ECHR case concerning the UK's retention of innocent people's DNA. Clients praise his fine preparatory work and his friendly, approachable manner.

Commercial Dispute Resolution

At 4-5 Gray's Inn Square, [Hodge Malek QC](#) is recognised for his leadership in the high-value Independent Insurance v Watson Wyatt case. He also acted in the Buncefield oil depot explosion litigation. [James Ramsden](#) of the same set is commended as a superb tactician, well versed in the complexities of cross-border commercial dispute work

Consumer

At 4-5 Gray's Inn Square, [Damian Falkowski](#) continues to offer expert counsel on consumer credit and mortgages. His clients, many of whom are financial institutions and lenders, are full of praise for him. They comment that "he analyses facts thoroughly and in a refreshing way, whilst also cross-examining with admirable tenacity"

Defamation/Privacy

[Richard Spearman QC](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square is recognised as a practitioner who "knows the law relating to defamation and privacy better than anyone." In addition, clients admire his "desire to push the law forward." He has been defending News Group and Mirror Group against the action being brought by Ashley Cole.

Education

4-5 Gray's Inn Square may not have the strength in depth of silks compared to 11KBW but has nevertheless built a formidable reputation within the education sector. Its barristers have experience of acting on behalf of parents, schools, universities, local authorities and SENDIST. "No matter how complex the issue, the advice they provide is delivered quickly and confidently." [Richard McManus QC](#) is "one of those rare silks who is technically superb whilst always keeping an eye on the practical consequences." He has been engaged in the prolific case of D v Bedfordshire CC which sought to ascertain whether local authorities are liable to provide transport to after-school clubs. McManus has a number of gifted juniors to lead. The impressive levels of client care offered by [Jonathan Moffett](#) were commented upon by sources, who added that he has a "sound tactical mind useful for getting to grips with the local authorities." One recent highlight for him was his successful representation of the Department for Children, Schools and Families in the case of Elphinstone v Westminster

City Council, a judicial review of the decision to shut Pimlico School and replace it with an academy. [Andrew Sharland](#)'s broad scope of practice encompasses cases of admissions, exclusions, SEN and employment. He regularly represents SENDIST, as well as local authorities and further and higher education institutions. Clients like him as he is "always positive and clear in his advice." A highlight case of [Jonathan Auburn](#)'s year was the three-day High Court trial of Sarika Singh v Aberdare School. This was a challenge to the school's decision to refuse a pupil to wear a Kara bangle, citing a breach of uniform policy. In this as in other cases he demonstrated that he is "a powerful advocate who demonstrates a phenomenally detailed understanding of the law." [Sarah-Jane Davies](#) adopts a broad public law practice which has given rise to experience in handling local authorities, while the "always responsive" [Lisa Busch](#) extends a similar focus to encompass environmental and planning matters. Judicial review claims remain her forte. Over the last year [Paul Greatorex](#) has been kept occupied with a raft of SENDIST cases on behalf of local authorities and parents. Interviewees remark that "his breadth of practice makes him an ideal choice when there is more than one angle to an issue." Others note that he is "equally good on paper as he is as an advocate."

Employment

One satisfied solicitor said: "I would trust [Andrew Tabachnik](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square with my life - he is thorough, very pleasant to work with and has a tremendous win rate." His practice continues to centre around discrimination and high-value City claims. Also at his set, [Stephen Whale](#) is noted for his "courteous and common-sense approach." "A real team player, he provides incisive and timely advice," report sources

Environment

This set has been hugely successful in the environment arena. Boasting expertise in renewable's, contaminated land and the environmental implications of planning, its barristers attract high-profile clients and are well supported by efficient clerks. The set as a whole is congratulated for being "forward-thinking, proactive and prepared to move with the times," say clients. Leading lights here include [Thomas Hill QC](#), an expert in aviation, who has excelled in a number of environment cases related to carbon emissions flowing from airport developments. According to observers, he has "an awareness of clients' needs, an ability to set out advice cogently, persuasively and authoritatively, and a refreshingly relaxed working style." [Timothy Straker QC](#) is experienced in complex environmental issues. He has a great understanding of EIA procedures, and is highly respected in the water and energy sectors. [Garrett Byrne](#) has a more than respectable track record in bringing and defending prosecutions and appeals for the Environment Agency, and is considered to be "very pragmatic, quick-witted and good at cross-examination." Also recommended, [James Strachan](#) is recognised for his excellent work in waste, EIA and habitat issues, while [Lisa Busch](#) is an impressive advocate in matters relating to EIAs, nuisance and pollution.

Financial Services

[Hodge Malek QC](#), a successful commercial silk practising at 4-5 Gray's Inn Square, is counsel of choice for instructions with an international element. He has recently worked on proceedings in Italy and Oman, and continues to represent Jermyn Capital LLC in its dealings with UK and Indian financial services regulators.

Fraud (Criminal)

[Hodge Malek QC](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square is praised for being "incisive, judicious and shrewd". He is regularly instructed by foreign governments and is deemed to be well versed in commercial fraud and asset recovery.

Immigration

On the other side of the equation, [Alex Goodman](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square enters the tables in recognition of his sterling work for claimants. "A true expert on immigration detention," Goodman has proven himself to be "more than capable of holding his own against far more senior counsel in the High Court."

Licensing

[Stephen Whale](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square recently appeared in *Yasotharan v Spelthorne Borough Council*, successfully resisting an appeal under the 2003 Act against a decision to revoke a premises' licence.

Local Government

4-5 Gray's Inn Square has had a long history of success in this area. It benefits from having a very strong local government base across a wide range of sectors, and is particularly well known on the planning side. Its members are held in high esteem, especially at the lower end, a fact that causes commentators to predict a rosy future for the set. [Timothy Straker QC](#) is one of the set's highest-profile names in local government law and is incredibly popular amongst local authorities. He has built up a wealth of expertise over his lengthy career, and is an "invaluable resource to his clients." Straker's practice covers a lot of ground, but his particular areas of specialism include public procurement, planning and local government reorganisation. Of late, he has advised Breckland District Council on its challenge to the Boundary Committee's proposed reorganisation of Norfolk and Suffolk local authorities. Equally respected, [Timothy Corner QC](#) "sits right at the top of the tree" when it comes to planning matters. He is praised for his hands-on approach and for the fact that he is "never afraid to get his hands dirty." He was recently appointed to the Welsh Assembly Government's panel of leading counsel to deal with public law cases. [John Hobson QC](#) is a firm favourite when it comes to planning and compulsory purchase order (CPO) matters.

Project work is the order of the day when it comes to Hobson's practice, particularly in the waste management sector. Local authorities particularly appreciate [John Steel QC](#)'s "robust yet user-friendly approach." His practice is heavily tilted towards planning and environmental law, and he is often to be seen working on major redevelopment projects. He has recently been joined in silk by [Paul Brown QC](#), who is "always sensible in his approach" and "never fails to get the job done." Observers feel that "there was no more deserving a candidate for silk than him." With "one foot placed firmly in the local government camp," [Philip Coppel QC](#) continues to build on his profile and establish himself as a major name in the field. It is his expertise in election law that primarily wins him plaudits, but he is also an expert planner and is developing a reputation for his work in the freedom of information sphere. Interviewees say of him: "He took silk very early and that speaks volumes about his talents." [Lisa Busch](#) is one of the set's leading juniors and has cultivated an impressive local government practice. Much of her success is built upon her profile in the planning arena. [Jonathan Auburn](#) made his name as an expert on education-related matters but his practice covers vast swathes of areas including community care, Court of Protection work, planning and general local government powers and governance. "Whatever he undertakes, he does a very fine job," according to clients. [Jonathan Moffett](#) has enjoyed another stellar year after being appointed to the Welsh Assembly Government's panel of counsel. Other highlights for him included advising the London Borough of Barnet on a complaint made to the Local Government Ombudsman about Barnet's policies on charging top-up fees to residents of care homes. [Andrew Sharland](#) has an extensive local government practice that stretches far beyond the remit of planning. He handles education, community care and local government finance and reorganisation. [James Strachan](#) is one of the set's up-and-coming cadre of barristers. He is billed as a high-flyer and sources say: "He's definitely one to keep an eye on. He's going to go all the way." Although [Richard Clayton QC](#) is primarily known as one of the masters of human rights work, he also has a thriving local government practice and advises authorities on community care, CPO and compensation, environmental and planning matters, and code of conduct issues.

Media & Entertainment

The "superb, reassuring and extremely confident" [Richard Spearman QC](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square is one of the leading silks for media litigation, defamation and privacy work. Working regularly for claimants as well as newspapers, he has an "added insight and empathy" that is sometimes lacking in some barristers. He has been advising the BBC on the use of music and film copyright material in its programmes and was retained in a copyright dispute for the music industry.

Planning

This set's "diligent yet relaxed and unpretentious attitude" was a consistent talking point among interviewees. "The Chambers exudes a warm and welcoming atmosphere without ever compromising on efficiency," concur sources. "It's a lot friendlier than most other sets, and it has great clerking too." Indeed, the selection of members here leads many to applaud 4-5 Gray's Inn Square as a particularly well-resourced Chambers. Much of this reputation is

thanks to the sterling efforts of [Timothy Corner QC](#), "a first-class mind and exceptional advocate" who "understands the court process inside out; he's unflappable, incredibly client-friendly and always gets the balance of his arguments absolutely right." This year, he acted in an inquiry into three proposals for housing extensions in Daventry, and represented the London Borough of Southwark in a separate inquiry into tall buildings proposals at Blackfriars. Also contributing heavily to the strong profile of the set is [Timothy Straker QC](#), "an exceptional intellect and highly effective advocate" who clients report "hits the mark every single time." His practice is varied, and encompasses the full range of planning-related issues, including infrastructure, urban regeneration, housing, mineral permissions and enforcement. At present, he is promoting the Mersey Gateway - the first new bridge over the Mersey in 50 years - and also representing Thurrock Thames Gateway Development, in an inquiry over permission granted to construct a Royal Mail distribution centre on West Thurrock Marshes, a habitat for endangered wildlife. Similarly exceptional praise is afforded to [Peter Village QC](#), "a fiercely loyal and highly effective advocate who performs to a consistently high level for many extremely important clients." Among other successful instructions, he secured planning permission for Taylor Wimpey for Sir Terry Farrell's mixed-use development proposal on the Quayside, between the River Tyne and the Ouseburn. [Brian Ash QC](#) has built up a sound profile at the set, which over the last year has been cemented by his promotion of several major development proposals. These include a rail/freight/canal interchange and racecourse/forest park in Salford, as well as a large mixed-use development in the Trafford Centre. Sources consider [John Steel QC](#) "an excellent silk - particularly when it comes to cross-examining - and a really superb team player." He recently acted on behalf of the Turweston Aerodrome, in an enforcement appeal concerning the movements of helicopters and light aircraft permitted to land at the site. [John Hobson QC](#) is credited with having an extremely effective and client-friendly approach to his work. Sources highlight his "commanding presence" and the fact that "he has a manner that immediately secures people's trust". One of a clutch of new silks at the set, [Paul Brown QC](#) "is a barrister of enormous intellect," according to sources. As part of his practice he acts for local planning authorities, developers and third-party interest groups across the full range of planning inquiries, appeals and challenges. Also taking silk in 2009 is [Philip Coppel QC](#), who is highly experienced in contentious disputes relating to all aspects of planning law - particularly highways. The third practitioner at the set to be elevated to silk level this year is [Thomas Hill QC](#), who reportedly demonstrates "a solid awareness of client needs as well as the ability to set out advice cogently, persuasively and authoritatively. He has a refreshingly relaxed working style, but still maintains his strong legal expertise and skill for detailed analysis." Hill is especially revered for his understanding of aviation-related planning issues, including large-scale airport developments. [James Strachan](#) is singled out as a particularly talented junior with a sharp, penetrative style. Recently, he successfully represented the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in defence of a decision to grant planning permission to Gypsies in the Cambridgeshire Green Belt. Sources view [Robert White](#) as "deft, pragmatic, hard-working and very thorough." Proficient in all areas of planning law, he is especially well-regarded for village green issues. [Andrew Tabachnik](#) is "a formidable operator" with strong capabilities in housing, retail, listed buildings, green belt and leisure developments. Lately, he represented Surrey Cricket Club in its proposal to develop a substantial part of the Brit Oval. He is newly joined in the tables by [Andrew Fraser-Urquhart](#) who has "great tactical awareness and the ability to highlight and concentrate on the main issues of a case." He focuses mainly on residential development, and also has an interest in planning issues concerning minerals. As another new entry into the ranks, [Stephen Whale](#) is quickly establishing himself as "a highly skilled planning barrister offering clients sound, robust and extremely useful advice". He is currently working on the ongoing Stansted airport second runway inquiry, and is also advising Maidstone Borough Council in connection with the largest planning application in the council's history.

Professional Discipline

This set focuses on financial regulatory work, although its members also undertake matters relating to solicitors, accountants and police officers. [Hodge Malek QC](#) benefits from having a commercial law background when acting for and against regulators such as the Law Society, the FSA and the Institution of Civil Engineers. He has recently been involved in an investigation into a law firm suspected of dishonesty, and has acted for a banker who has allegedly mishandled client accounts. [Andrew Tabachnik](#) represents NHS trusts and prosecutes solicitors. He is complimented for his "astounding attention to detail." [Andrew Carnes](#), "a knowledgeable and adept tactician," also focuses on financial regulatory matters, while [Garrett Byrne](#) is recognised for his police disciplinary work. He is "exceptionally fair and very balanced when acting as legal adviser to the tribunal."

Real Estate Litigation

[Damian Falkowski](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square caught the market's eye due to his "pragmatic approach and ability to come to proper and well-reasoned conclusions."

Sport

[Richard Spearman QC](#) of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square is widely lauded for his defamation and privacy law expertise, and whilst the media sector is his main stomping ground, sources confirm that "his name has been heavily associated with sport for years."