

Melvyn Harris

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Melvyn Harris specialises in all aspects of employment law including unfair dismissal, TUPE, advising on and drafting employment contracts, and has a particular interest in discrimination issues.

He advises and represents both Claimants and Respondents in the private and public sectors and regularly appears in Employment Tribunals and the EAT.

Melvyn also has an extensive practice advising and representing clients in a range of commercial and chancery matters. His experience includes dealing with a wide variety of commercial and contractual disputes, as well as issues in partnership, probate and property.

Melvyn had a successful career in business before coming to the Bar and therefore understands first-hand the practical issues likely to arise in the employment and commercial context.

Clients are “*very impressed*” with Melvyn and describe him as: “*high calibre*”, “*a very determined and combative advocate*” with “*superb attention to detail*”.

Melvyn regularly provides training for solicitors and HR managers on all aspects of employment law.

Melvyn is qualified to accept Public Access work.

Expertise

Employment

In acting on all aspects of employment law, examples of Melvyn’s recent successes include:

- Succeeding for an employee of a substantial multi-national who had issued a claim of unfair dismissal and age discrimination over 13 months after the primary time limit to bring the claims had expired. Melvyn obtained a decision that it had not been reasonably practicable for the employee to have brought his unfair dismissal claim in time and that the claim was issued within a reasonable period. He also obtained a decision that it was just and equitable to extend time for the age discrimination claim. The matter will now go to a trial of both claims.
- Resisting claims by a Care Home Manager for overtime, holiday pay based on overtime pay, and bonus pay against a care homes group.
- Representing a claimant in an automatically unfair dismissal for making protected disclosures, instructed by Paul Whitfield of Fox Whitfield
- Representing a store manager in an unfair dismissal claim against a major supermarket group who had been dismissed for alleged gross misconduct.
- Obtaining a six figure sum for a senior executive at a mediation relating to a claim under the employer’s incentive scheme. This represented over 80% of the

sum he had been claiming.

- Resisting an injunction application against two ex-directors who had left and started their own business that was competing with the company with whom they had previously been employed.
- Resisting a claim for unfair dismissal and sex and race discrimination by a senior employee of a Housing Association who was represented by an important member of her trade union.
- Resisting a claim for constructive unfair dismissal and sex discrimination by an employee of a retail group who resigned over the way she had been treated by her male line manager.

In September 2022 the Head of Group Business Affairs for whom Melvyn acted under Direct Access in agreeing terms with an employee to leave wrote:

“Just want to say it was a pleasure to work with you and thank you for your effort and support. If [the employee] had hired you instead of us, it all could have gone a different way for [us].”

David Williams of D C Kaye & Co Solicitors wrote to Melvyn on 9 June 2020 when talking about working with him for 11 years:

“I must say that the most rewarding experiences of my legal practice in all of that time have come from working with you on cases and I am and always will remain profoundly grateful to you for that.”

Caroline Walker of Cavendish Employment Law, award-winning employment lawyers for the City, wrote to Melvyn in July 2019:

“I very much like the way you work and how promptly and thoroughly you attend to matters”.

Education & Qualifications

- 1997 – Called to the Bar by Lincoln’s Inn

Memberships

- Employment Law Bar Association (ELBA)
- Employment Lawyers Association (ELA)