

Catherine Piercy KC

Call: 2007 | Silk: 2023

"Catherine is all over the detail, concise, great on her feet, and commercial. It is an absolute pleasure to work with her, and I feel in very safe hands with her."

Chambers and Partners



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Catherine Piercy KC is a successful commercial and insurance, specialist with a particular focus on construction and engineering disputes, property damage and professional liability.

Catherine is called to the bar in England and Wales and also in Northern Ireland. She took silk at an early stage in her career (2023) and continues to have a busy court and adjudication practice.

Catherine appears in all levels of tribunal in procedural applications, substantive hearings and trials. Catherine has appeared in all of the TCCs and acted in adjudications and mediations. Catherine is not only instructed when a dispute has arisen but, as a result of the rapport she builds with her clients, she is often asked to advise clients when they believe a dispute may be about to arise to assist in an understanding of the merits and adopting a strategic approach to resolution.

In consistent high demand from insurers, contractors, employers, construction professionals and insolvency practitioners, Catherine has an incredible rate of retention of clients, which shows that not only is she committed to fighting her client's case to ensure a positive outcome, but that she is personable and works well as part of the team. Her written and oral advocacy is excellent and regularly commended by clients, achieving outcomes either better than or in line with her early-stage advice.

Catherine is *"innovative and commercially minded"* and has a client focused and commercial approach to resolving disputes, giving *"good, practical advice"*. She effectively manages the legal, expert and client teams to achieve the most favourable outcome for her clients. She is described by her clients as *"exceptional"*. Her clients have also commented that *"her advocacy is outstanding and she's always a pleasure to work with."* Chambers UK describes her as having a *"great strategic mind"* and *"proactive, brilliant with clients and gives no-nonsense advice."*

Catherine was shortlisted for "Best Woman in Construction Law" by the Women in Construction and Engineering Awards and won Construction Junior Barrister of the Year at the Chambers UK Bar Awards 2019 before taking silk.

Expertise

Construction Litigation

Catherine's core practice is in construction and engineering disputes, and she is recognised as leading counsel in this field by Chambers UK, Chambers Global and Legal 500. She regularly acts in cases concerning defective works, payment disputes, final account disputes and prolongation claims as well as professional negligence claims made by and against construction professionals.

Catherine excels at understanding and analysing the technical aspects of such claims, in order to provide an appropriate strategy for the case designed to achieve the best outcome for her clients. Catherine acts for contractors, employers, subcontractors, construction professionals and their insurers and has also acted for insolvency professionals in relation to construction disputes.

Recent Work:

- Representing an external wall contractor in relation to cladding claims valued at c£500m.
- Defending structural engineers in relation to defects in the engineering design of three apartment blocks in Salford. A large part of the claim was dependent on the alleged delay caused by the design defect. Catherine succeeded in defending the entirety of the delay claim, reducing the overall value of the claim from c£20m to less than £5m at trial (*Irwell Riverside v Arcadis*).
- Representing an external wall contractor in a payment dispute concerning 38 contracts where the value of the works was £14m. Successful at contested applications and trial, with indemnity costs awarded (*Everwarm v BN Rendering*).
- Representing the building owners in relation to a claim regarding defective cladding against New Home Warranty provider and developer. Successfully defended strike out application by developer on limitation grounds, establishing limitation period applicable to concealment claim where concealment only discovered after normal period expired.
- Representing the cladding sub-contractor in a claim brought by Premier Inn Hotels against the main contractor who had, in turn, issued additional claims against the project team. (*Premier Inn Hotels Limited v McAleer & Rushe Limited v KTD Facades Limited and others*)
- Representing the refrigeration contractor in relation to a £32m claim concerning the alleged defective installation of refrigeration equipment in an abattoir (*Morrison's v Lorien and others*). The claim settled on favourable terms shortly before trial.
- Representing the leaseholders of a residential building in a claim against the contractor that the construction of the property did not comply with building regulations and was unfit for habitation. Favourable settlement achieved at mediation, enabling repayment to be made to the BSF.
- Representing a specialist sub-contractor in relation to the installation of a high-pressure water mist system in the basement of the Houses of Parliament (*The Corporate Officer of the House of Commons and House of Lords v CBRE Managed Services Limited v Marioff*).
- Representing structural engineers in relation to a claim for defective design and construction of the structural steel to a hotel, which allegedly resulted in masonry falling causing personal injuries (*Shepherd Construction Limited v Billington Construction Limited*).
- Representing a subcontractor in relation to a multi-million pound claim concerning the construction of hardstanding at a major car manufacturer's premises (*Volvo v Lindum v Breheny*).

Arbitration

As a result of her busy construction practice, Catherine is regularly involved in arbitrations involving construction and insurance disputes.

Recent Work:

- Successfully acted for the insured in relation to a coverage dispute concerning the construction of a substantial sewer. The claim concerned the proper interpretation of LEG3.
- Representing a high net worth individual in a £10m+ professional negligence claim against his architect for failing to obtain planning permission in relation to substantial renovation works to two very high end, listed properties.
- Advising a main contractor in relation to recovery of substantial sums from a structural engineer (and its insurers) for defective works to a care home, rendering it structurally unsafe.
- Advising the main contractor in relation to adjudication and arbitration proceedings in which a subcontractor was claiming substantial sums in relation to the construction of a temporary dock facility.

- Acting on behalf of homeowners in relation to defects in the construction of their new home, in particular concerning the ventilation system.
- Advising a homeowner in relation to arbitration proceedings concerning the defective tiling installation to their high-end property.

Adjudication

As Catherine's core practice area is construction and engineering, she is regularly instructed in adjudications for both referring and responding parties. Catherine has experience in substantial, as well as small but significant, final account disputes, technical payment disputes, substantial professional negligence claims, defect claims and delay and disruption claims.

Catherine is particularly skilled at leading the client, expert and legal team to produce the required material in the short time available, without compromising on the depth of analysis or technical detail required to achieve a successful outcome.

Recent Work:

- Leading counsel in relation to a c£40m dispute concerning delay and disruption to the construction of a central London office block, reported to be one of the most complex construction sites in London.
- Representing engineers in relation to a c£20m professional negligence adjudication concerning the conversion of a former fire station into a mixed-use site, housing a school, recreation and sports facilities and residential properties.
- Representing a subcontractor in a multi-million pound final account dispute in relation to a landmark London development, which involved the full range of issues including contract interpretation and claims for variation, delay, loss and expense and liquidated damages. Catherine succeeded in proving her client was entitled to a substantial further payment.

Property Damage

As a result of her reputation and excellent understanding of technical issues in construction claims, Catherine is regularly instructed at an early stage to advise on and act in claims concerning damage caused by fire, floods, leaks and explosions. She is then able to lead on the strategy to ensure a successful outcome.

Catherine's clients include insurers, property owners and contractors. As a result, she is well placed to understand all possible sides of the litigation, ensuring she is able to provide the best advice to her clients from initial instruction and all the way through to trial.

Recent Work:

- Successfully defended structural engineers in relation to a multi-million pound claim concerning water damage to modules stored pending installation on apartment blocks.
- Acting for insurers in relation to a substantial claim concerning water damage to museum property following completion of renovation works.
- Acting on behalf of a facilities and maintenance contractor in respect of proceedings issued by ITV concerning the defective installation of a generator, causing smoke damage and a power outage.
- Representing a piling subcontractor alleged to have caused damage to a sewer which, in turn, caused property damage.
- Advising a train manufacturer in relation to the recovery of damages for remedial works necessary to a train following a fire caused by defective engineering works.
- Advising the owners of an energy waste plant in relation to a multi-million pound fire damage claim.
- Advising a homeowner and their insurers in relation to a multi-million pound claim concerning damage caused by repeated sewerage leaks.
- Advising a college in relation to fire damage caused by the installation of solar panels during the construction of a further education building.
- Advising a major high street pharmaceutical store in relation to a fire damage originating from a cosmetics stand.
- Advising a plumbing subcontractor in relation to substantial water damage following a repair to pipework.
- Acting for a drainage contractor alleged to have caused an escape of sewage at a luxury Mayfair property causing the extensive

property damage.

- Acting for insurers in relation to a flood damage claim in respect of a residential property.

Construction Insurance

As a result of her construction, professional negligence and property damage work, Catherine acts for insurers and insureds in complex insurance disputes, primarily in relation to PI and CAR policies. She is sought after by clients for her clear and practical advice.

Catherine's Construction, Professional Negligence and Property Damage profiles outline her extensive experience of construction and engineering claims, many of which involve insurers. The focus of this profile is on coverage disputes.

Recent Work:

- Advising insurers in relation to a coverage dispute concerning late notification, delayed declinature and estoppel. Advising insurers in relation to whether claims under the Third Party (Rights Against Insurers) Act 2010 concerning allegedly defective works to new student accommodation have been properly notified under a CAR policy. Successfully acted for an insured JV and statutory undertaker in relation to a claim to be indemnified under a CAR Policy. Insurers' attempt to rely on LEG3 to decline most of the claim was unsuccessful at trial.
- Advising insurers in relation to a claim under a CAR policy to determine whether water ingress which damaged both the works and valuable property is covered by the policy and whether cover extends to the main contractor. Successfully acted for the main contractor and insurers at trial in recovering an indemnity under the insolvent subcontractor's PI policy, effectively enforcing an adjudicator's award.
- Catherine acted for consulting engineers in relation to a claim by the RFU in which the contractor claimed to be a co-insured under the CAR policy and, therefore, had no liability in contribution to Catherine's client (*RFU v FMC*). Catherine withdrew from the case before the hearing in the Court of Appeal as she was elevated to silk.
- Successfully represented an insured in obtaining an indemnity under a PI policy despite insurers' allegation that Catherine's client had breached its duty of fair presentation.
- Representing insurers who provided new home warranty policies in respect of a block of flats in relation to a multi-million pound claim proceeding through the TCC.
- Advising freeholders, leaseholders, managing agents and local authorities in relation to claims under new home warranty policies.

Professional Negligence

Catherine regularly acts in professional negligence disputes concerning architects, contract administrators, quantity surveyors, project managers and structural engineers in all aspects of professional negligence claims against construction professionals, including cases concerning negligent design, overvaluation of works, inadequate contract administration and failure to inspect/supervise.

Catherine accepts instructions directly from clients and insurers regarding subrogated claims. She provides advice, drafts protocol letters and pleadings as well as representing clients in court.

Her recent work includes:

- Representing an external wall contractor in negligence claims arising out of the use of ACM cladding valued at c£500m.
- Defending structural engineers in relation to defects in the engineering design of three apartment blocks in Salford (*Irwell Riverside v Arcadis*).
- Representing an acoustic consultant in a multi-million pound negligence claim concerning alleged inadequacies in the acoustic design of student accommodation being constructed above a nightclub.
- Representing the refrigeration contractor in relation to a £32m claim concerning the alleged defective installation of refrigeration equipment in an abattoir (*Morrison's v Lorien and others*). The claim settled on favourable terms shortly before trial.
- Representing the cladding sub-contractor in a claim brought by Premier Inn Hotels against the main contractor who had, in turn, issued additional claims against the project team. (*Premier Inn Hotels Limited v McAleer & Rushe Limited v KTD Facades Limited and*

others)

- Representing engineers in relation to a c£20m professional negligence adjudication concerning the conversion of a former fire station into a mixed-use site, housing a school, recreation and sports facilities and residential properties. The claim settled on favourable terms shortly prior to the decision being issued.
- Representing the main contractor in a c£9m claim against its structural engineering subcontractor in relation to defective design and construction works to the roof of a care home, which resulted in the site being closed due to safety concerns.
- Representing the M&E designer in a multimillion-pound claim brought by Southend Hospital concerned allegations of negligent design (*Southend Hospital v WSP and others*)

Insurance Coverage

Catherine advises on coverage issues in relation to various consumer, commercial and reinsurance policies.

Recent Work:

- Advising insurers in relation to a coverage dispute concerning late notification, delayed declinature and estoppel. Advising insurers in relation to whether claims under the Third Party (Rights Against Insurers) Act 2010 concerning allegedly defective works to new student accommodation have been properly notified under a CAR policy. Successfully acted for the main contractor and insurers at trial in recovering an indemnity under the insolvent subcontractor's PI policy, effectively enforcing an adjudicator's award.
- Catherine acted for consulting engineers in relation to a claim by the RFU in which the contractor claimed to be a co-insured under the CAR policy and, therefore, had no liability in contribution to Catherine's client (*RFU v FMC*).
- Successfully represented an insured in obtaining an indemnity under a PI policy despite insurers' allegation that Catherine's client had breached its duty of fair presentation.
- Representing insurers who provided new home warranty policies in respect of a block of flats in relation to a multi-million pound claim proceeding through the TCC.
- Advising insolvency practitioners in relation to a claim against insurers for the destruction of an energy waste plant caused by a fire.
- Advising insurers in relation to seeking to recover a payment made to an insured which was also paid by an insurer to its subcontractor that caused the damage, but such payment was not passed on before the subcontractor became insolvent.
- Advising on quantum issues in respect of business interruption, loss of stock and property damage.
- Assisting in a coverage dispute in respect of motor insurance arising as a result of modifications made to the vehicle and incorrect answers on the Proposal Form.

Qualifications and Awards

- LLM European Law (University of Nottingham)
- BA (Hons) Jurisprudence (University of Oxford, St. Catherine's College)
- Bar Vocational Course
- Lord Astbury Scholar, Middle Temple

Legal Texts

Catherine is a contributor to *Construction All Risks Insurance*, published by Sweet & Maxwell.

Recent Recommendations

Catherine is recommended by Chambers UK, Chambers Global, Who's Who Legal and Legal 500 as a leading junior in construction and professional negligence. She is also recommended by Chambers UK for property damage. She won Junior Construction Barrister of the Year at the Chambers UK 2019 Awards.

"Catherine immediately understands the issues, comes up with a plan and ensures it is implemented accurately. She gives clients great comfort. Her advocacy is robust."

"Her pleadings are beautifully crafted and persuasive."

"Catherine Piercy is excellent and very easy to deal with. She is very into the detail and focused."

Construction, Chambers UK Bar 2026

"Catherine is able to grasp complex issues quickly and get to the nub of the dispute."

"She's fantastic, legally strong and also great with clients."

"Catherine Piercy is excellent and very easy to deal with."

Construction: Professional Negligence, Chambers UK Bar 2026

"Catherine Piercy's advocacy is very strong and she is excellent in all respects."

Property Damage, Chambers UK Bar 2026

"Catherine is a real pleasure to work with, very user-friendly and passionately fights for her clients. She is technically strong and a very capable advocate."

Insurance, The Legal 500 2026

"Able to quickly get to grips with the key issues of the case and distil the key points in dispute for clients and solicitors alike. Excellent drafting skills and tactically very sharp."

Construction, The Legal 500 2026

"Her advocacy is outstanding and she's always a pleasure to work with."

"A real star. Her written work is excellent and she doesn't miss a beat. She's clear, concise and robust in her analysis. She's an incredibly strong advocate and she works incredibly hard."

"She is clear, concise and robust in her analysis and she works incredibly hard."

Construction, Chambers UK Bar 2024

"A talented and able advocate."

Construction, The Legal 500 2024

"She provides creative solutions to legal problems." "An incredibly able junior and forceful advocate whose written work is fantastic."

"Catherine works well under pressure."

"She understands commercial issues, not just legal issues."

"Catherine has a good feel for construction work; she's at the forefront of limitation issues and does well there."

"She is incredibly able and very good on technical things."

"An excellent senior junior. She's very easy to work with and understands commercial issues, not just the legal issues."

"She's excellent to work with, is always engaged with the issues; her pleading work is excellent as is her advocacy."

"A fantastic, committed, brilliant and clever all-rounder."

"Catherine is a real superstar in the making. She is incredibly good on her feet. She is a really robust advocate with fantastic client-handling skills and produces excellent written work."

Professional Negligence: Technology & Construction, Chambers UK Bar 2023

"Catherine is well liked by clients, for good reason. She is able to explain complex legal arguments clearly to lay clients and help them understand the relative merits of the same, which is invaluable for them to make informed commercial decisions."

"Catherine is an excellent junior. Her written work is first class, her analysis is always spot on and she is an excellent advocate."

"She has a quick grasp of technical claims, a great client manner and is strong on her feet in court."

Professional Negligence, The Legal 500 2023

"She rolls her sleeves up and clients really like her. She's down to earth and user-friendly, with good attention to detail and the ability to make points clearly."

"Her written work is very good and she is known as a strong advocate."

Professional Negligence, Chambers UK Bar

"Very robust and technically excellent."

"Impressive."

"She has very strong communication skills that inspire confidence and bring a positive energy to the room."

Professional Negligence, The Legal 500

"Catherine Piercy is very passionate about the cases she takes and she really gets stuck in and gives it her all. She's also very good technically and over the detail – you are in it together with her. She's a pleasure to work with."

"She is brilliant – super smart and super on top of it. She is an excellent barrister all round"

Property Damage, Chambers UK Bar 2024

"She's exceptionally hard-working and great with clients."

"A first-class advocate."

"She always provides good, clear analysis."

"Bright, hard-working and responsive."

"Her written work is brilliant and she's incredibly good with clients."

"Very clever and down-to-earth."

"Clever, incredibly industrious, very easy to work with and utterly reliable."

"She's very bright, very accommodating, and very good with clients. Both her writing and advocacy skills are impressive."

Property Damage, Chambers UK Bar

Memberships

- COMBAR
- TecBar
- SCL
- Adjudication Society
- British Insurance Law Association
- Society of Construction Law