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+44 (0)20 7583 1770

Harry Adamson



"Harry is extremely intelligent, diligent and forward thinking. He handles highly complex litigation and competing commercial objectives with ease, and provides excellent client service."

— CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, 2026

Year of call:	**2012**
Degree:	**MA in Philosophy (Cantab): Double First (first or second in year in all three years); M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Philosophy (Cantab)**
Languages:	**French (some knowledge), German (some knowledge), Spanish (some knowledge)**

Harry is highly rated in heavy commercial, chancery and financial services litigation, and is frequently instructed in some of the most significant cases in those areas before the Courts. He is also a member of the Attorney General's panel of counsel (B panel), and has a busy practice acting for both claimants and defendants in high profile public/regulatory cases. His practice often operates in the overlap between commercial and public law: for example, in cases involving international corruption; fraud in the banking or financial services sector; or regulatory enforcement (including for or against the FCA, London Stock Exchange, the CMA and the Gambling Commission).

Harry has been recognised as a star junior for some time. He was selected in 2017 as one of Legal Week's 2017 twelve 'Stars at the Bar', having been chosen as a result of interviews with 200 solicitors and barristers working in commercial litigation. Recent comments include:

- Chambers UK, 2026: "Harry is extremely intelligent, diligent and forward thinking. He handles highly complex litigation and competing commercial objectives with ease, and provides excellent client service."
- Legal 500, 2026: "Excellent and technically brilliant. Really gets to the knub of the issue. very client friendly."
- Chambers UK, 2025: "He is extraordinarily user-friendly. Clients and judges love him because he's so charming and smart. He is very smart and very good on his feet: subtle, smart and incisive. He's a joy to watch."
- Legal 500, 2025: "Harry is a pleasure to work with in all respects – efficient, responsive, detailed and practical advice."
- Chambers UK, 2024: "Harry strikes the perfect balance: he is startlingly bright but also incredibly user-friendly. He is a real asset in a case."
- Legal 500, 2024: "Harry is completely brilliant – a formidable strategist, who grasps every detail and is an absolute delight to work with."
- Chambers UK, 2023: "Harry is ferociously intelligent and has an excellent manner with clients and the court."

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- Chambers UK, 2022: "exceptionally bright, extremely skilful, very calm and a highly persuasive advocate"; "an incredibly clever barrister who is very user-friendly"; and "he's lovely to work with, smart, responsive and very commercial".
- Legal 500, 2022: "a brilliant mind"; "a delightful manner with clients (even when they are very difficult) and an exceptional intellect".
- Chambers UK, 2021: “fiendishly bright, a delight to work with, personable and someone to recommend for any sort of commercial dispute”.
- Chambers UK, 2020: “clever, thoughtful, considerate and user-friendly, he’s a pleasure to deal with and is someone with a phenomenal brain”.

Before coming to the Bar, Harry taught philosophy and logic at Cambridge and Harvard Universities, in areas including ethics and human rights, political theory, formal logic, set theory and probability theory.

EXPERIENCE

Commercial

Harry is expert in heavy commercial and chancery litigation. He is instructed on disputes arising in a variety of commercial contexts, including: claims against current and former company officers; regulatory/financial services; contractual disputes; and commercial fraud. He has co-authored the chapter on damages in the most recent edition of Paul Goulding QC (ed.) Employee Competition (OUP) and frequently presents and publishes on commercial law.

“Harry Adamson is a great personality and enjoyable to work with. An intellectual heavyweight, he is highly strategic about how he thinks around cases and how he solves problems.”

— CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, 2026

Cases

Duke of Sussex and ors v Mirror Group Newspapers (Phone Hacking Litigation)

[2023] EWHC 3217 (Ch)

Harry was instructed for the Defendant for the trial of The Duke of Sussex and Others v MGN limited [2023] EWHC 3217 (Ch) in the Mirror Newspapers Hacking Litigation.

The four test Claimants alleged they were subjected to voicemail interception through the hacking of their phones and those of their associates and other forms of unlawful information gathering between 1991 and 2011. Two of the claims raised important issues of limitation with wider implications for other claimants.

In claims where limitation was in issue MGN’s limitation defence succeeded in full, and the claims were dismissed. Of the others, the Court found the Duke of Sussex’s claim to be proved in part; and the claim of Michael Turner was found to be proved to a limited extent

Led by Andrew Green KC.

Competition and Markets Authority v X

Harry advises companies in merger cases where the CMA has taken enforcement action.

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European Topsoho v GLAS et al

2022

Acted for CELF Advisors LLP, a company within the Carlyle Group (the well-known private equity firm), successfully resisting a claim for Norwich Pharmacal relief relating to a €250m bond dispute. The claim was refused and indemnity costs were awarded.

FCA v X

Instructed by the FCA on significant (and confidential) enforcement actions

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2022

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2022 (Ongoing)

Acting for a former director of Carillion in relation to enforcement action taken by the FCA following that firm's well-publicised collapse.

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Instructed as sole counsel for a public body on a claim to recover loans provided pursuant to the Government's Covid-19 support policies.

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(2016)

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[2020] EWHC 3273 (Comm)

Harry acted as sole Counsel for HSBC, successfully resisting an application for pre-action disclousure/Norwich Pharmacal relief by individuals who purported to invest in a series of tax mitigation schemes. The application was dismissed as a "fishing expedition of some considerable proportion". He is currently acting for HSBC on the follow-on group action brought by the individuals concerned.

Commercial Bank of Dubai PSC v Al Qebaisi & ors

(Commercial Court, ongoing)

Acting for the claimant bank in a Part 8 claim for injunctive and other relief under s.25 of the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982 against two high-net worth Emirati individuals connected with the Abu Dhabi royal family, and with the collapse of NMC Healthcare group, a substantial UAE healthcare provider. Relief was obtained in support of substantive claims in UAE proceedings for c.£200 million (with Robert Anderson QC).

Rowe et al vs HSBC (the Ingenious Litigation)

Acted for HSBC in the Ingenious Litigation, a group action which was one of the largest and highest-profile claims of 2022, defending a claim in fraud brought by a large number of investors in a film finance scheme (ultimately compromised before trial). The case has been widely reported: e.g. https://www.law360.com/articles/1156958/hsbc-says-fraud-claims-hopeless-in-movie-tax-relief-row

PJSC Tatneft v Bogolyubov et al

[2019] EWHC 1400

Harry acted for the Fourth Defendant (led by Tom Weisselberg QC) for the period leading up to trial in a US$330 million claim brought under Russian law by a Russian state owned oil company against four Ukrainian businessmen, arising out of a refusal by a Ukrainian oil refinery to pay the claimant for oil delivered in 2007. Harry appeared in several important interim decisions, including the currently leading authority on obtaining security for costs against Russian domiciled claimant.

Magdeev V Tsvetkov [2019] EWHC 1557 (Comm)

Successfully acted for the First Additional Party in a commercial fraud case concerning a franchise of Graff Diamonds in Cyprus, ultimately operated by Russian investors, which attracted wide press interest. In an important and widely reported judgment the Court struck out the claim against the First Additional Party finding the claim had no realistic prospect of success. An appeal was roundly rejected by the Court of Appeal. The case has become an important authority on additional claims, the discretion to strike out and on reflective loss.

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Angel Group v Davey

[2018] EWHC 1781

Harry acted for a group of property development companies (in liquidation), bringing successful claims in fraud against their former director and sole shareholder. The Claimants alleged that the Defendant created various false records of company decisions, which appeared on their face to show that the Claimants had transferred their interests in certain properties to the Defendant. The Court found that those records were indeed false, and therefore that the properties were in fact were still held on trust for the benefit of the Claimants. Indemnity costs were awarded in the Claimants' favour. Led by Robert Anderson QC. The judgment can be found here:

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Fraudsters had sought to defraud potential investors by impersonating the applicant online and on the telephone to entice individuals to pay over money. Acted as sole Counsel in the High Court, successfully obtaining a Norwich Pharmacal order for the disclosure of information necessary to identify the wrongdoers.

Angel Group v McBrides et al

Acted for a Group of companies in liquidation, in a claim in fraud and negligence brought against their former auditors and advisers. The Claimants alleged that the Defendants dishonestly assisted their former director and shareholder to misappropriate company assets when the Companies were facing impending insolvency; alternatively that the First Defendant was negligent in allowing the director to do so. (Compromised before trial) Led by Robert Anderson QC.

Real D Europe Limited v Agora et al

Harry acted as sole counsel for the Defendant group of French cinema companies in a claim brought by a licensor of 3D projection systems. The Defendants successfully obtained summary judgment on an issue of construction before the Master; and successfully resisted a rolled up permission to appeal hearing in the High Court.

Ametek v Mersen UK

Acted for the Defendant manufacturing/components company, in a breach of contract claim brought by an aircraft component manufacturer.

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Canouan Resorts Development Limited v CDCH Ltd

Acted for the Claimant shareholder company in a shareholder dispute relating to a large Caribbean hospitality operation. Sought a declaration that shares could not be issued without the Claimant's consent.

(1) Cattles (2) Welcome Financial Services v PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP

Harry was instructed as junior counsel for the Claimants in what would have been one of the largest Commercial Court trials of 2015 (compromised before trial). The Claimants were, respectively, the parent company and principal trading arm of one of the largest UK consumer finance groups. It was alleged that (i) PwC had negligently audited the Claimants' 2006 and 2007 accounts; and (ii) had the audit been properly performed the Companies would have realised they were lending unprofitably, were insolvent, and would have ceased to trade. The Companies claimed losses in the hundreds of millions flowing from continuing their unprofitable business. Led by Michael Bloch QC.

D v LAH

Acted for a company claiming in fraud for sums stolen by its former Chief Financial Officer

N v I and K

Acted (with Andrew Hunter QC, Adam Baradon and Tom Coates) for the Defendants in a £165m claim involving allegations of fraud, breach of fiduciary duty and contract.

Substantial LCIA arbitrations

Junior counsel for the Respondents in multiple joined and complex LCIA arbitration claims, involving allegations of breach of contract and a multi-jurisdictional shareholder dispute.

LCIA Arbitration

Junior counsel for a Respondent to a claim involving allegations of conspiracy and breach of Article 101 TFEU (led by Tom de la Mare QC and Tom Richards).

X v Y

Acted for the defendants, who brought a claim for damages to reflect the losses they suffered as a result of a without notice anti-suit injunction (led by Tom Weisselberg QC).

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Civil Fraud, Asset Recovery & Injunctive Relief

Harry has become rapidly established as a leading junior in civil fraud and in injunctive relief (including the grant of freezing and Norwich Pharmacal orders) and has been instructed on some of the most significant and high profile cases before the English Courts. He is frequently instructed on claims for Norwich Pharmacal relief, having successfully represented the London Stock Exchange and HSBC on two of the leading cases concerning the jurisdiction.

"Harry is amazing. He is incredibly bright, and he is very personable. He has great style on his feet, with written work, and when dealing with clients."

— CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, 2026

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Burford v London Stock Exchange

[2020] EWHC 1183 (Comm)

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Public & Regulatory

Harry has a busy public law practice, and has been instructed as sole counsel or led in a range of judicial reviews in the High Court, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court. He is a leading junior in financial services, and is experienced in enforcement cases with a range of regulators (including the FCA, London Stock Exchange, CMA and the Gambling Commission). He also has particular knowledge of the regulation relating to fertility treatment, having been instructed on several occasions by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority. Harry's practice frequently involves cases which require expertise in both public and commercial law, including judicial reviews with a commercial component and regulatory enforcement.

"He is very bright, responsive, unflappable and always cheerful"

— LEGAL WEEK - STARS AT THE BAR, 2017

Cases

Gambling Commission v X

2022

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FCA v Carillion

2022 (Ongoing)

Acting for a former director of Carillion in relation to enforcement action taken by the FCA following that firm's well-publicised collapse.

R (Khyam) v Secretary of State for Justice

[2023] EWHC 160 (Admin)

Instructed as lead counsel for the Secretary of State for Justice, successfully resisting a judicial review of the security conditions of a prisoner convicted of terrorism offences.

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Asylum Aid v Secretary of State for the Home Department (Rwanda Litigation)

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Jefferies v (1) BMI Healthcare Ltd, (2) Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority

[2016] EWHC 2493 (Fam); [2016] Med. L.R. 656

Acted as sole counsel for the HFEA in in the widely-reported case of Jefferies v (1) BMI Healthcare Ltd, (2) Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority [2016] EWHC 2493 (Fam).

The Claimant's husband had died unexpectedly in April 2014, just before the Claimant was due to commence a third round of IVF using stored embryos that had been created with their gametes. Under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, embryos can only be stored pursuant to the written, signed consent of both gamete providers. It subsequently emerged that although the Claimant's husband had originally ticked a box on the relevant consent form permitting storage for 10 years, that tick had been crossed out, and another box permitting storage for 2 years ticked instead. The 2 year storage period had expired. The Claimant applied for a declaration from the court that it was lawful for the embryos to be stored for a period of 10 years, so that they could be used by the Claimant to have a child. The HFEA supported the Claimant's application, on the basis that the Claimant's husband had originally provided valid consent for a period of 10 years, and the subsequent amendment to 2 was invalid under the relevant statutory provisions. The Claimant's application was successful.

R (Lord Carlile of Berriew and others) v Secretary of State for the Home Department

[2015] A.C. 945

Led by Lord Pannick QC, Harry acted for the appellants: fifteen cross-party MPs and peers, and Maryam Rajavi, a dissident Iranian politician resident in Paris. The appellants challenged a decision by the Secretary of State to maintain Mrs Rajavi's exclusion from the UK. Mrs Rajavi sought entry to the UK in order to speak, at the invitation of the Parliamentary appellants, on the subject of democracy and human rights in Iran at the Palace of Westminster. The Secretary of State excluded Mrs Rajavi not because of anything Mrs Rajavi might say or do here but because the Secretary of State thought Mrs Rajavi's presence in the UK would have a damaging effect on Britain's relations with Iran, and may lead to retaliatory action by Iran against British interests abroad. Each of the five Justices hearing the case provided important judgments on how a court is to judge the proportionality of interferences with fundamental ECHR Rights in the context of decisions raising foreign policy issues.

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R v Commissioner of Police for the City of London

(2016)

Instructed by an Interested Party (a media company) in relation to a challenge to the legality of a search warrant. The case raised issues as to the police's duty of disclosure on ex parte applications, and ECHR Articles 8 and 10.

RE: S

Advised in relation to a potential claim against a football club for training compensation payments under FIFA Regulations on the Transfer and Status of Players

A v B

Instructed by Liberty to act for a former serviceman bringing a judicial review against a decision of the armed forces (led by Hanif Mussa and Monica Carrs-Frisk QC).

C v Secretary of State for Defence

Acted for the claimant, alleging breach of ECHR Article 2 right to life due to the deaths of his immediate family from drone strikes (led by Shaheed Fatima).

Financial Services & Banking

Harry is a leading junior in financial services cases, and has acted in some of the most significant financial services cases of the last few years. He has particular expertise in the LSE's AIM Market.

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Civil Liberties & Human Rights

Harry has been instructed in a range of judicial reviews. He has particular experience (in the High Court and Supreme Court) of representing claimants in human rights cases against the Government, and is currently instructed by Asylum Aid (led by Charlotte Kilroy QC) on its claim for judicial review of the SSHD's Rwanda policy. He is also a member of the Attorney General's panel of counsel (B Panel) and acts for the Government as sole counsel in a wide range of cases.

Cases

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Acted for the claimant, alleging breach of ECHR Article 2 right to life due to the deaths of his immediate family from drone strikes (led by Shaheed Fatima).

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ACHIEVEMENTS

Education

MA in Philosophy (Cantab): Double First (first or second in year in all three years); M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Philosophy (Cantab); Kennedy Scholarship (non-degree Special Student, and Teaching Fellow) to Harvard University; Graduate Diploma in Law (City): Distinction; Bar Vocational Course (City): Outstanding, 2nd in year.

Prizes & Scholarships

- Kennedy Scholarship to Harvard
- Inner Temple Advocacy Prize, for best performances on the Pupil Advocacy training course.
- Stephen Chapman Scholarship, Inner Temple.
- Scarman Scholarship for exam performance, City University.
- Benefactors Scholarship, St. John's College, Cambridge, offering full M.Phil. and Ph.D. funding.
- Arts and Humanities Research Council Award, also offering full M.Phil. and Ph.D. funding.
- Bachelor's Scholarship, Christ's College, Cambridge.

Other Information

While studying for his graduate degrees Harry taught part-time at Cambridge and Harvard Universities. He specialised in ethics (including human rights), but also taught formal logic, set theory and probability, political philosophy, and history of philosophy. Unusually for Cambridge University, he was asked to teach in the year immediately following his undergraduate philosophy degree. He broadened to political and legal theory at Harvard University, leading a series of seminars as a Teaching Fellow on a course entitled "Equality and Democracy".

Harry has also founded a charitable group that specialises in teaching philosophy to people who have suffered social isolation or mental distress.

VAT registration number: 170893584

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