



Andrew O'Connor KC

Call 1996 | Silk 2015

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Andrew O'Connor KC has extensive experience of public law and general common law litigation.

In recent years, he has also appeared in a series of high-profile inquests and inquiries, including the 7/7 inquests, the Hillsborough inquests, the Litvinenko Inquiry, and the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. He has experience of representing corporate bodies in such proceedings – he acted for the operators of the Manchester Arena in the Manchester Arena Inquiry and for Pinterest in the recent Molly Russell inquest.

He is currently instructed as Leading Counsel to the Dawn Sturgess Inquiry (relating to her death in Salisbury from Novichok poisoning) and also as one of the Counsel to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry. In addition, he is acting for the Ministry of Defence in the recently announced Independent Inquiry Relating to Afghanistan.

Expertise

Inquests & Inquiries

Andrew is listed as a Band 1 silk for Inquests and Inquiries (Chambers UK and Legal 500). He has been involved in many of the highest profile inquests and inquiries of recent years. He has a breadth of experience, having acted both as Counsel to the Inquest / Inquiry, and also on behalf of private and governmental participants.

Notable Inquests & Inquiries cases

Molly Russell Inquest

Representing the social media platform Pinterest in the inquest into Molly Russell's death, which raises issues concerning teenagers' access to potentially harmful material on the internet.

East London Inquests



Acted as Counsel to the Inquests in the inquests into the deaths of the four young men killed by Stephen Port, the so called 'Grindr Killer'. The substantive hearings took place over 10 weeks in Barking Town Hall, towards the end of 2021.

Dawn Sturgess Inquest

Acting as Counsel to the Inquest into the Death of Dawn Sturgess, who died in 2018 as a result of Novichok poisoning in Salisbury. The proceedings will be converted into a public inquiry.

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Acting for SMG, the company which operates the Manchester Arena, in the public inquiry into the deaths of those killed in the May 2017 terrorist attack. In hearings that took place during the second half of 2020, the Inquiry conducted a substantial investigation into security arrangements at the Arena at the time of the attack.

Undercover Police Inquiry

Representing the National Crime Agency in this ongoing Inquiry.

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

Acted as Leading Counsel to the Inquiry in two of the investigations conducted by IICSA – the investigation into allegations of child sexual abuse linked to Westminster and the investigation into institutional responses to allegations of child sexual abuse made against the late Lord Janner.

Litvinenko Inquiry

Acted as Junior Counsel to the Inquiry in the inquiry (formerly as inquest) into the death of Alexander Litvinenko from polonium poisoning in 2006.

Sousse Inquests

Represented the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in the inquests into the deaths of the 30 British nationals who died in the terrorist attack at Sousse, Tunisia in June 2015.

Gareth Williams Inquest



Represented SIS and GCHQ in the inquest into the death of Gareth Williams (the so-called 'body in the bag' case).

7/7 Inquests

Acted as Junior Counsel to the Inquests in to the deaths of those killed in the 7/7 bombings.

Administrative Law

Andrew continues to act, primarily for government clients, in public law challenges in the Administrative Court. Many of the cases involve issues of national security and closed material procedures. He also conducts similar cases before the Special Immigration Appeals Commission and the Investigatory Powers Tribunal.

Personal Injury

In the early years of his practice, Andrew had a purely common law / PI practice and was therefore routinely involved in a variety of PI cases, including often being led in larger cases. In more recent years, his practice has moved more towards public law, but Andrew has continued to be involved in civil actions.

In 2016/17 Andrew was instructed in a high value and complex damages claim brought on behalf of a young man who had been left very severely disabled following complications of diabetes. He was living in a probation hostel at the time and the claims of negligence were brought against the Claimant's treating doctors, the Probation Service (whom Andrew represented) and the company that ran the hostel. Following pleadings and the exchange of expert evidence, the claim was eventually settled with contributions from each of the three defendants.

Andrew has also acted for government clients in large scale and long-running High Court litigation relating to allegations of misfeasance / torture, including the Belhaj case about rendition of terrorist suspects to Libya and also the recent claims (including personal injury claims for damages) brought by a group of Cypriot EOKA veterans alleging mistreatment dating from the 1950s. Both cases were settled following mediation.

Andrew is currently representing the Foreign Office in the civil damages claims brought by the victims of the Tunisian terrorist shooting in 2015, although his role in that case has been limited to disclosure issues (the FCO is not a defendant).

Memberships

- Administrative Law Bar Association



Recommendations

Recommended as a Band 1 Silk for Inquests and Public Inquiries in the 2023 editions of both Chambers UK and the Legal 500. He is also listed as a Band 3 Silk for Administrative & Public Law.

- “Andrew is a calm and persuasive advocate. He is a go to counsel for national security-type inquiries and inquests. He can cut through complex issues with ease and ensures he explains things clearly to clients.” **Legal 500 2023 Inquests & Inquiries**
- “Andrew has impeccable judgement and he sees straight through problems. He has a very good manner with clients – he’s perfect for the most sensitive cases.” “He just has such great knowledge of inquest law; I can’t recommend him highly enough.” “A first choice for complex and sensitive inquests and inquiries.” **Chambers UK 2021 Inquests & Public Inquiries**
- “Bright, fluent and unflappable, with a steely and effective court manner.” **Legal 500 2018 Inquests & Inquiries**