



Leading Set - **CHANCERY: COMMERCIAL**

It is the quality of clerking on offer at 11 Stone Buildings that keeps solicitors coming back on a whole host of chancery matters, with interviewees casting light on the “brilliant communication skills” and “attention to detail” provided by Michael Couling’s clerking team. This support network nicely complements the barristers themselves, who offer “reasoned and thoughtful opinions.” Insolvency is the set’s principal strength but it is well capable of handling chancery matters of every kind.

Chief among the stable of juniors at the set is **Tim Penny**, who is awarded plaudits for his “no-nonsense approach” and “compelling advocacy.” He can tackle a wide array of chancery-related issues, but has really won his spurs by developing a niche in freezing orders. Many of his cases are international in nature, as illustrated by his representation of one of the defendants in the Cadogan Oil fraud proceedings. Penny is at a set headed by **Edward Cohen**, a company law, commercial litigation and professional negligence expert who is “probing in his analysis.” Others at Cohen’s set include the “utterly professional” **Iain Pester**, who “adds a dash of inspiration to proceedings” and produces “thorough, well-prepared statements.” Well capable of dealing with a broad range of issues, he is as happy handling civil fraud and insolvency work as he is partnership law and professional negligence. **Jonathan Lopian** has recently come off the Treasury Counsel B Panel and ramped up his commercial chancery caseload on both the litigation and advisory fronts. Trust, breaches of fiduciary duty and partnership disputes all fall within his remit, and his corporate finance background holds in him good stead for anything with a banking or financial services tinge to it. He is recommended along with the “robust” **Birgitta Meyer**. “She has a great tactical appreciation for how the other side works,” says one source, with another adding that “we feel confident she will get her teeth into the details and relate well to the client.” Finally at the set, **Jamie Riley** is a strong presence in the Companies Court.

Leading Silk and Junior - **COMMERCIAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Alan Gourgey QC of 11 Stone Buildings is an “incisive and dynamic thinker” who exhibits a “down-to-earth approach and magnetic courtroom charisma.” His practice comprises

contractual, commercial fraud and IT matters, and he recently defended NatWest against breach of contract and duty of care claims valued at several million pounds. Gourgey can turn to juniors of the calibre of **Max Mallin** at his set. Mallin is a "smooth advocate" who one instructing solicitor considers to be "the most approachable barrister I've instructed." He recently represented the claimant in a multimillion-dollar breach of fiduciary duty claim.

Leading Set - COMPANY

11 Stone Buildings is well known for being a well-regarded insolvency practice that takes in a good deal of personal bankruptcy work. Running parallel to this, however, it also has a selection of very able company barristers who secure a small, although not inconsiderable, share of the market.

Jane Giret QC heads up the company team at the set. Much of her practice centres on work relating to company directors and their conduct, and she regularly handles directors' fraud and disqualification proceedings. Solicitors report that she is "a very good choice if you want someone to take a firm grip of a case and offer a strong strategic overview."

Marcia Shekerdemian was instructed on a number of company matters over the past year. These included acting for a company in its claim against a former director for misuse of company property and breach of trust. She is described as a "clever and hard-working advocate who is clear, straightforward and to the point." Fellow junior **Tina Kyriakides** is "always pleasant to deal with" and praised by clients for her "friendly and approachable advice which is always easy to follow." In *Grapevine Property Limited v Halcyon Days Limited*, she advised on the validity of board-approved transactions and the question of influence upon fellow directors.

Leading Set – FRAUD CIVIL

Members of this set are frequently instructed in fraud matters as part of a wider commercial and chancery workload. The team is particularly renowned for its work in the field of insolvency, and many of the barristers are well versed in relation to the fraudulent elements that can arise from bankruptcy proceedings. The clerks at the set are led by the "very efficient and very helpful" Michael Couling.

Alan Gourgey QC is acclaimed for his impressive work on high-profile international fraud cases. "Very bright, very quick and a purveyor of clear advice, he really dives into the detail of a case." Additionally, Gourgey consistently wows with his ability to turn around high-quality paperwork swiftly and accurately. His recent work highlights are plentiful in the fraud arena, and include his representation of a broker in the recovery of funds following a fraud claim arising from a share brokerage contract. He also represented one of the defendants in the Cadogan case.

Iain Pester has fast become a favourite amongst clients in Ukraine and Russia for fraud-related work. This "confident, approachable and professional" Pester was also instructed in the *Abbey Forwarding* case concerning alleged excise duty fraud. He is ranked alongside former solicitor **Ian Smith**, a hugely experienced practitioner who is said to

"combine the practicality and decisiveness of a solicitor with the thoroughness and academic ability of a barrister." His expertise in proceeds of crime adds another string to his bow. Alan Gourgey QC recently led him in the 4 Eng v Harper matter. **Max Mallin** brings a penetrating insight into the financial world, having worked as a merchant banker prior to his call to the Bar. Solicitors warm to him as he is "hard-working, very clever and driven." Mallin has been acting for the liquidators of Convergence Group in relation to a number of actions against former directors. Lastly here, **Tim Penny** is "an excellent team player with a fine head on his shoulders." His recent cases include Cadogan Petroleum & Others v Tolley.

Leading Set - INSOLVENCY

11 Stone Buildings acts for office holders, directors and debtors in all aspects of contentious and non-contentious personal and corporate insolvency. The set is home to "approachable and committed" barristers who are "fantastic team players and incredibly easy to work with." Sources are keen to praise the clerks, led by Michael Couling, who will "bend over backwards to find the right person for the job."

Jane Giret QC is a "technically gifted and approachable lawyer, who shows a genuine passion for her work." She excels in matters of directors' misfeasance, but also focuses on general chancery and commercial litigation. **Raquel Agnello QC** is "talented, articulate and enthusiastic." She is praised for her "immediate understanding of the important issues in a case" and the clear direction she gives clients. She acted for the administrators of Sports Betting Media, and has also represented the Pensions Regulator with regard to insolvency-related issues.

Marcia Shekerdemian is a thorough and robust litigator who "cuts through complex issues to give clear, pragmatic advice." She has been representing the administrator of Bahrain Bank in the collapse of the Saad Group of companies, both in the High Court and in the Grand Court of the Cayman Islands. **Tina Kyriakides** excels in directors' disqualification cases, and has acted as an inspector for BERR to investigate insider dealing. In addition, she has also advised a liquidator on the sale of a ship, and acted in the liquidation of Oakland Finance Limited. Clients admire her advocacy style: "She doesn't rant and there is no hyperbole. She just puts her arguments across lucidly and effectively." **Christopher Boardman** is a tenacious advocate, who puts up a tremendous fight for his clients. He wins praise along with **Adam Deacock**, a lawyer who is "extremely bright and sees the bigger picture quickly." He has good management skills and provides "detailed and commercial advice." Also praised for his attention to detail is **Jonathan Lopian**. He is defending the Ministry of Justice against an allegation brought by the trustee of the estate of Louise St John Poulton of breach of statutory duty and/or common law negligence. **Jamie Riley** is a commercial litigator who has "a solid understanding of the insolvency landscape." He recently advised the administrator of Innovate Logistics, and is acting for the directors of Aqua Design & Play International in a wrongful trading claim brought by that company's liquidator. **Iain Pester** is praised for his "complicated forensic investigation work." He is "very approachable and grasps the important issues quickly." He is currently acting for the administrators of Checkprice (UK) in relation to allegations of excise duty fraud. Also winning the market's approval, **Thomas Robinson** is "an excellent advocate with a fine academic mind." Clients like his "detailed and thoughtful opinions" and his "friendly, approachable manner."

Leading Junior - MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

Also recommended, **Robert Deacon** of 11 Stone Buildings is “very thorough, hard-working and a man who fights his client's corner.” His recent work includes acting for a record producer in an infringement of copyright claim, and acting for a pop star manager in a claim for commission involving a high-profile act.

MEDIATORS UK WIDE - DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Arkush has a broad commercial and chancery-based mediation practice with a particular focus on land, inheritance and trust disputes. He brings a calm and patient approach to the mediation process, as well as judicial expertise gained from his work as a Chancery Master. "He's got the right degree of gravitas to carry both parties and gives people a lot of confidence," say sources.

Leading Junior - MEDIATORS ALL CIRCUITS

Jonathan Arkush of 11 Stone Buildings has a commercial and chancery-based mediation practice with a particular focus on land, inheritance and trust disputes. He brings a calm and patient approach to the mediation process, as well as judicial expertise gained from his work as a Chancery Master. "He's got the right degree of gravitas to carry both parties and gives people a lot of confidence," say sources.

Leading Silk - PENSIONS

He is recommended along with **Raquel Agnello QC** of 11 Stone Buildings, who has established a niche for herself acting for the pensions regulator. Not being a pure pensions specialist, she offers a different skill set to many of the people in the table, but is, nevertheless, viewed as being "someone with great judgement who isn't afraid to bounce ideas off instructing solicitors."

Leading Junior - POCA WORK & ASSET FORFEITURE: ALL CIRCUITS

The "outstanding" **Ian Smith** of 11 Stone Buildings has a "very commercial and responsive" approach, according to sources. Top-ranked in this guide for his civil fraud work, Smith is a recognised expert in the asset recovery elements of fraud cases and is applauded for his business-savvy mentality.