hailshamchambers

Clerks: **020 7643 5000**



Erica Bedford

Call: 2012

Overview

Erica Bedford is a leading senior junior who practices exclusively in the law of costs and litigation funding.

She is widely regarded as one of the most accomplished senior juniors at the Costs Bar. Having previously qualified as both a Costs Lawyer and a Solicitor prior to her transfer to the Bar, she brings with her a rare understanding of costs from every side of the profession. Together, she has a career dedicated to this specialist and niche area spanning more than two decades.

Erica has a formidable court practice, frequently appearing in high profile cases and appeals. Unusually, she has appeared across the full spectrum of appellate courts, from the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court, including appearing alone against silks.

She is routinely brought in at appellate level to argue complex, technical and important points of principle, often addressing groundbreaking, first principle issues. Her submissions before the Supreme Court in Oakwood Solicitors v Menzies were described by Lord Hamblen in the Judgment as "persuasively presented". Unusually for a junior, she has led more junior counsel in the Court of Appeal in authorities that now shape the law of costs.

As well as acting in this jurisdiction, she has also been engaged to advise in proceeding in other jurisdictions, including being instructed on what was understood to be the first listed detailed assessment before the High Court in Gibraltar.

Combining a rigorous technical command of costs law alongside a strategic, commercially astute approach, she is equally at home arguing a fine point of principle or marshalling a factually heavy, multi-day detailed assessment or budgeting hearing. She is well regarded for her meticulous attention to detail. Clients value her tenacious advocacy, her practical and astute advice, and a personable approach that makes her a trusted and integral member of any litigation team.

She has consistently appeared in the directories for over a decade, being regularly praised for her "*impeccable preparation*", "*towering intellect*", "*tenacious advocacy*" and holding "*a presence in the court room which few can match*".

Wider Practice

Erica's practice spans the full range of costs litigation:

- Clinical negligence and high-value personal injury
- Assessments of costs in the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom
- Applications concerning and arising out of the application of Part 36
- Wasted costs and non-party costs orders
- Litigation funding, including both advisory and drafting
- Security for costs, both in substantive proceedings and in detailed assessments

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Core Specialisms

Solicitors Act Assessments

Erica is one of the Bar's foremost practitioners in solicitor–client costs disputes, having appeared in several of the leading authorities expanding this jurisdiction, including appearing as lead counsel before the Court of Appeal in *Turner v Coupland Cavendish*, now the leading authority on the scope and function of a s.70 assessment, and before the Supreme Court in *Oakwood Solicitors v Menzies*, the defining decision on the meaning of "payment" under s.70(4). Her wider work covers interim statutory bills, CFA termination and costs caps, Protected Party Assessments under CPR 46.9, and recovery of costs by supervised, unqualified fee earners under the Legal Services Act 2007.

Commercial Claims

Erica is regularly instructed in the costs of high-value and high-profile commercial litigation, including claims involving cryptocurrency, insolvency and the enforcement of international arbitration awards. Her commercial work often involves multi-jurisdictional and international aspects, arising from both litigation and arbitral proceedings.

Her recent instructions include multi-billion-pound fraud litigation, sanctions-driven international banking disputes which generated over £27m in costs, and one of the longest detailed assessments in recent memory. She also appears in high-value costs budgeting hearings and on applications to vary budgets before the High Court.

Group Litigation

Erica regularly advises on every stage of the costs of group actions, including:

- funding structures
- costs budgeting and ongoing costs management
- the making of costs orders
- the assessment of costs in a group setting

She is engaged as sole costs counsel in the largest Proceeds of Crime Act claim ever brought in the UK. She has acted the Claimants in several of the most recent and significant personal injury group actions before the High Court, as well as advising on funding aspects arising from both the *Pan NOx Litigation* and *Mariana Dam Litigation*.

Costs Mediation

Erica acts as a mediator across a wide range of costs disputes. These include family, personal injury, clinical negligence and commercial matters, as well as disputes between solicitors and their former clients.

Professional Recognition & Industry Leadership

Outside of court, Erica's is recognised as a leader in the wider costs community and a driving force behind the development of the profession as a whole.

Judicial Appointments

In 2021, Erica was appointed a Deputy Costs Judge of the Senior Courts Costs Office. She has since delivered landmark judgments that are now reported in the White Book. Her appointment has recently been extended to authorise her to hear costs cases arising from land disputes in the First-Tier Land Tribunal. Sitting judicially gives her direct insight into how costs judges approach the issues before them, and that insight informs the advice and advocacy she gives her clients.

Founder of Women in Costs

In 2022, Erica founded Women in Costs, an organisation dedicated to promoting and supporting the professional growth of women in the costs industry. She leads its five-person board, which oversees an annual conference of around 200 guests. The conference features awards for Women of Impact and Rising Star, alongside a national mentoring scheme and a scholarship fund.

Contribution to the Profession

Erica is closely involved in shaping practice and procedure in costs. She sits on the Association of Costs Lawyers' working groups on Precedent G and the Solicitors Act. She speaks regularly at national conferences, including the Association of Costs Lawyers conference, the Costs Law Reports conference and the Blume Women in Leadership conference. She teaches advocacy on the Costs Lawyer Course, helping to train the next generation of practitioners, and has previously trained on the Solicitors Act for MBL Seminars.

Awards and Recognition

- 2023: Awarded the Association of Costs Lawyers' Chairman's Cup for outstanding contribution to the profession
- 2026: Shortlisted as Female Trailblazer of the Year at the Modern Law Awards

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Notable Cases

Solicitors Client Assessments

- **Oakwood Solicitors v Menzies [2024] UKSC 34:** Represented the Respondent in the Supreme Court on the correct interpretation of "payment" under s.70(4) Solicitors Act, led by Craig Ralph of Kings Chambers. Lord Hamblen described her submissions as "persuasively presented".
- **Turner v Coupland Cavendish [2026] EWCA Civ 1204:** Acted successfully for the Appellant in the Court of Appeal, leading Tom Mason of Hailsham Chambers. This is the leading authority on the scope and function of a s.70 Solicitors Act assessment, the purpose of a Cash Account and the threshold test for a Part 18 Request.
- **Boodia v Richard Slade (t/a Richard Slade & Co) [2023] EWHC 2963 (KB):** Represented the Appellant in the High Court on whether solicitors owe a duty to explain, and obtain informed consent to, the delivery of interim statutory bills.
- **Sellers v Simpkins [2023] EWHC 3296 (SCCO):** Represented the client in a Solicitors Act assessment on the interpretation of CFA termination clauses. The case also addressed whether the client could rely on an overall costs cap after terminating the retainer.

Costs in Commercial Claims

- **LLC Eurochem North-West 2 & Eurochem Group AG v Société Générale SA & Ors [2025] EWHC 1424 (Comm):** Acted for the paying parties in a £27m costs claim. The claim arose from a €280m international dispute over bond payments and the impact of EU sanctions following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- **SKAT v Solo Capital Partners LLP [2024] EWCA 371:** Acted for one of the successful Defendant receiving parties in the £1.4 billion commercial fraud claim involving the Danish tax authority.
- **Micula v Romania [2020] UKSC 5:** Represents the Receiving Parties on a 33-day detailed assessment. The assessment covers the Supreme Court costs before the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal and High Court costs in the SCCO, in the arbitration and commercial proceedings between the Micula Brothers, Romania and the European Commission.
- **Heathcote v Asertis [2024] EWCA Civ 242:** Represented the Appellant in the Court of Appeal, leading Chelsea Carter of Kings Chambers. The appeal concerned the correct approach to costs orders where there is mixed success

across plural commercial claims.

- **Bitcoin.org ("Cobra") v Dr Craig Wright [2023] EWHC 2292:** Represented the Appellant on appeal in the High Court arising from the high-profile dispute as to the origin of Bitcoin and the ownership of the website www.Bitcoin.org. The appeal itself concerned the first principle issue of whether the common law duty of open justice requiring a party to identify themselves extends to detailed assessments.
- **Simpsons (Preston) Ltd v MS Amlin Underwriting Ltd [2023] EWHC 1370 (Comm):** Represented the Defendant Respondent on an application to vary a Costs Budget, which addressed what amounts to a "significant development".
- **The Official Receiver v Camila Batmanghelidjh (In the Matter of Keeping Kids Company) [2021] EWHC 175 (Ch) (Detailed Assessment 2021):** Acting for the Paying Party in the costs dispute following the high-profile director disqualification proceedings against the former Trustees of the well-known children's charity Keeping Kids Company.

Group Litigation

- **"Blue Sky" Crypto Group Action:** Acts as sole costs counsel for the Government in the largest POCA claim brought in the UK, which concerns over £5bn of crypto assets arising from the "Blue Sky" Ponzi-style fraud in China.
- **Abbott & Ors v Ministry of Defence [2026] EWHC 2083 (KB) ("Military Deafness"):** Acts for the Claimants in high-profile group litigation brought by thousands of military personnel. Erica advises on funding structures and appeared before Mr Justice Garnham on the costs order and payment on account.
- **Bargh & Ors v Ministry of Defence ("Non-Freezing Cold Injury"):** Acts for the Claimants, and appeared before Mr Justice Garnham on the costs order and payment on account.
- **Schreuder & Ors v Cape Intermediate Holdings Ltd ("South Africa Asbestos"):** Acts for the Claimants in the ongoing group litigation.

Procedure

- **Ward v Rai [2026] EWCA Civ 816:** Acted for the Respondent in the Court of Appeal, leading Tom Mason, on the limits of judicial discretion in case management of defective Points of Dispute.
- **JXC v NIS [2023] EWHC 1000 (SCCO) and EVX v Smith [2022] EWHC 1607 (SCCO):** Erica was instrumental in shaping the, then, embryonic Protected Party Assessment procedure for seeking shortfalls in personal injury claims under CPR 46.9.
- **Allen v Brethertons LLP [2019] 5 WLRUK 135:** Represented the Receiving Party on whether unqualified individuals supervised by a qualified Costs Lawyer could recover their costs under the Legal Services Act 2007.
- **Havenga v Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust [2014] EWHC B25 (QB):** Represented the Respondent in the first appeal from the budgeting

regime on the threshold to be applied when interfering with a Costs Management Order.

Supreme Court Assessments

- **Afzal & Ikieke v SSHD [2023] UKSC 46 (Detailed Assessment, 2025):** Represented the Paying Party in a Supreme Court detailed assessment, including the Legal Aid Board's liability for interest to the Lord Chancellor.
- **Hussain v SSHD [2021] 12 WLRUK 64 (Detailed Assessment, 2024):** Represented the Paying Party on the interpretation of the Supreme Court Costs Guide as it applies to recovering fees for more than one counsel.

What the Directories Say

"Erica Bedford has a towering intellect". *Legal 500, 2026*

"Erica Bedford holds a presence in the court room which few can match". *Legal 500, 2026*

"She's phenomenal." *Chambers UK, 2025*

"Erica Bedford is an absolute force to be reckoned with." *Chambers UK, 2025*

"Erica is great in conference, great in court and great in terms of her written work." *Chambers UK, 2025*

"She is very tenacious and certainly understands what is best for her client, having previously worked in private practice." "She has amazing insight and always keeps an eye on the commercial realities of running a point." *Chambers UK, 2025*

"Erica's advice is clear and helpful, her skeleton arguments focus on the issues with razor-sharp precision, she knows her subject inside and out, and always approaches her cases with passion and precision. Attention to detail is her modus operandi and it always pays off, as her breadth of knowledge, ability to communicate and advise productively, and her attention to the finer details is impressive." *Legal 500, 2025*

"Erica is the epitome of what you want in a costs advocate. She has an incredible grasp of the technicalities in costs law, and her advocacy is both tenacious and extremely thorough." *Chambers UK, 2024*

"Erica is a no-nonsense barrister who will always give her clients a firm opinion and very clear advice. She is able to deal with all types of costs work." *Chambers UK, 2024*

"She is a formidable opponent." *Chambers UK, 2024*

"Erica Bedford is a pioneer in the field. She has developed the area of costs law not only personally but for women generally. She is a sharp and precise advocate who

packs a punch.” *Chambers UK, 2024*

"Erica has great tenacity, drive, energy and client care, and she provides clear explanations and gets excellent results. She is a fearless advocate who is undaunted by any problems presented and she never fails to deliver." *Legal 500, 202*

“She has in-depth knowledge of the area and is a tenacious advocate.” *Chambers UK, 2023*

“She is a fearless, tenacious advocate who provides no-nonsense, common-sense advice to clients.” *Chambers UK, 2023*

“Erica has a strong depth of knowledge which is unparalleled.” *Chambers UK, 2023*

“Always well-prepared, with an eye for detail and technically excellent.” *Legal 500, 2022*

“Incredibly hard-working and knows costs backwards.” *Chambers UK, 2022*

“You always up your game when Erica is against you – her preparation is impeccable, she knows the case law and she’s a devil for the detail.” *Chambers UK, 2021*

“Her written work is superb and the level of research she engages in is fantastic.” *Chambers UK, 2021*

“Always stunningly well prepared. Excellent advocate with great courtroom presence.” “Can be relied upon to deliver excellent service in costs matters.” *Legal 500, 2020*

“Her technical knowledge is second to none and is well beyond her year of call. When you instruct her you can have every confidence that she will do the very best for the client.” *Chambers UK, 2020*

“Erica is a tenacious litigator. She has won consistently for us even when we thought we could not win, because of the power of her advocacy and arguments.” *Chambers UK, 2020*

“Erica is always willing to go that extra mile for her clients. She is a bright advocate and always a pleasure to deal with.” *Chambers UK, 2018*

“A skilled advocate who is professional in her manner and convincing both in her presentation to the court and in her advice to the firm.” *Chambers UK, 2017*

“She is a strong advocate and a pleasure to work with.” *Chambers UK, 2017*

“Her knowledge of the CPR and case law is second to none and her application of case law to the problem in question is impressive. She is a formidable advocate, with lightning fast recall of case law and a rare ability to interpret the CPR.” *Chambers UK, 2016*

“Erica has a strong work ethic, a personable approach and the ability to provide astute advice on a variety of issues.” *Chambers UK, 2016*

“She’s got experience beyond her year of call. You get a lot more than you paid for, and she also gives the impression that she will work her hind legs off for you." *Chambers UK, 2015*

“She’s incredibly well prepared, very willing to help and excellent on her feet. She argues your corner until she’s blue in the face." *Chambers UK, 2015*