hailshamchambers

Clerks: **020 7643 5000**



Imran Benson

Call: 2005

Overview

Imran is an experienced commercial litigator who is well known for a robust but charming style of advocacy alongside responsive and highly personable client service. He enjoys working closely with his clients to find the right strategy to achieve their commercial goals and to build the best possible case. He has a substantial practice in commercial disputes, professional negligence (including construction), insurance, costs and group actions. He is regularly instructed in hard-fought domestic and international business cases involving fraud, fiduciary duty, shareholder conflict, director misconduct, earn-outs, failed transactions, breach of contract and urgent interim relief. Much of that work grows naturally out of his professional negligence practice, which has long involved lawyers, accountants, auditors, IFAs, valuers and construction professionals involved in complex projects, accounts audits and litigation arising from transactional M&A and SPAs, property structures, failed investments, tax planning, and litigation gone wrong. He gives clear and straightforward advice even in the most complex and nuanced situations.

He acts for national, City and international firms, institutional clients and HNW individuals, and is regularly instructed as sole counsel against KCs. He is ranked in the legal directories for both professional negligence and costs, was nominated by Chambers and Partners and Legal 500 as Professional Negligence Junior of the Year for 2024, and featured in The Lawyer's Top 20 cases in 2024 and again in 2025.

He is happy to work on a CFA/DBA basis in the right case. He also accepts direct public access instructions from sophisticated non-lawyers. Directories describe Imran as "bright, very commercially minded in his approach, user friendly and a pleasure to work with", "gives clear advice and is extremely good on his feet. He's a joy to work with", "fabulous with clients and in court. He is very responsive in his advice and goes above and beyond to deliver results"

Recent work includes:

- Success for liquidators of an insolvent insurance company bringing a £10m breach of directors duties claim against the former CEO and FD

(Gable v Dewsall [2025] EWHC 3399, [2025] EWCA Civ 884). It involved multiple interim injunctions (WFOs, search orders, non-party disclosure orders) domestically and overseas.
- Successful defence at trial of valuers who valued a PBSA in Aberdeen at £16.5m which sold 10 years later for £4m (Skykomish v Gerald Eve [2025] EWHC 1031). The Judge commented on Imran's "skilful, highly detailed, forensic cross examination"
- An important appeal in the EAT about whether indemnity costs can be ordered by the ET and, also, the reasoning required for the summary amount of £20,000 to be allowed by the ET (Dowding v The Character Group [2024] EAT 153)
- Ongoing instruction by Mercedes/Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer in the NOx Emissions Litigation
- Numerous coverage arbitrations arising from professional indemnity schemes

---

Professional Liability

A substantial part of Imran's practice involves professional liability work focusing on lawyers, construction & property and financial professionals.

Lawyers

Imran's lawyer's liability practice is extensive. It typically includes: all kinds of property related disputes, fraud, litigation gone wrong and failed non-contentious transactions such as business sales, SPAs, tax avoidance, art purchases and wills claims. He spent several years acting in £multi-million group claims arising out of failed fractional ownership schemes (care homes, hotel rooms etc).. He has sued well-known KCs and sued and defended large City firms.

Construction & Property

Imran has considerable construction professional expertise, acting for and against architects, engineers, clerks of works, cladding specialists, QS and more. For example he was instructed in a 3 month c.£100m TCC trial commencing in October 2024 (which featured in The Lawyer's Top 20) on behalf of the excess insurer of an insolvent architects practice about a vast mixed use development. He often deals with cases where there is an overlap of construction negligence, insurance issues and sometimes fraud.

Imran has a deep knowledge of the property professional sector. He spent 3 years as a member of the RICS Conduct and Appeals Committee, which disciplines RICS members and has first-hand experience of supervising the management of a substantial central London commercial estate.

He has acted in cases involving all the leading London based international real estate firms. This typically involves alleged negligent valuations of development

sites with large GDVs (£1m – £120m) or valuations of industrial, retail, residential, office and alternative properties such as casinos, hotels, utilities, student housing and data centres. He deals in related claims involving LPA Receivers and distressed sales. In April 2025 he successfully defended a large valuer's firm in connection with purpose built student accommodation valued at £16.5m.

His practice also includes complaints about advisory services and property management work. Post crash he was instructed in a range of high value and complex claims (£20m – £60m) concerning the valuation of City of London office blocks and the effectiveness of associated debt securitisation.

Finance

Imran's work relating to financial professionals covers auditors, accountants, actuaries, business sales brokers, IFAs, insolvency practitioners, tax advisors (including investment scheme promoters), pension professionals and insurance brokers and corporate advisors.

Recent cases have involved defending an accountancy firm in a £5m claim connected with an MBO and acting for a business brokerage in a £6m deferred consideration dispute. He has considerable experience in claims involving inappropriate advice and investments, pensions professionals, claims involving private equity, inadequate accounts reporting, failed tax avoidance schemes, He acts both for and against such professionals and is adept at reading financial statements. Many of these claims involve cross claims against other professionals – in respect of which he has broad and deep experience. He has been involved in litigation arising out of numerous failed tax schemes (film finance, landlords, R&D, EIS). He has dealt with many audit negligence cases – failure to spot fraud, failure to question substantial balance sheet items, failure to interrogate transactions with connected parties, failure to give warnings about going concern.

Costs

Imran has a busy contentious and non-contentious costs practice typically involving City firms. Recent instructions have come from firms such as Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer, Weightmans, Macfarlanes, Howard Kennedy, Crowell & Moring, Seladore. He is often instructed to help negotiate and formalise complex fee arrangements at an early stage of a claim where there is a delicate dance between clients/lawyers/funders or when a major problem has surfaced. He attacks or defends such arrangements where necessary.

In particular he has a deep expertise in costs issues associated with group litigation/competition claims. For instance he acts for Mercedes/Herbert Smith Freehills in the NOx litigation, where costs of more than £500m were claimed.

He has appeared in a number of significant costs cases including the leading case at the Court of Appeal on non-party costs orders in the context of small family businesses and a large number of appeals arising from the endless reforms to the

costs parts of the CPR.

He has acted and continues to act for High Net Worth individuals, assisting them and their staff with resolving litigation gone wrong situations. He brings a practical and highly responsive attitude to such cases – happy to deal with WhatsApp calls on a moments notice.

Imran also regularly deals with detailed assessments/preliminary points/item-by-item challenges both inter-partes and solicitor/client in the SCCO or elsewhere. He occasionally sits at the SCCO as a Deputy Costs Judge and has vast familiarity with all these issues.

He accepts appointments as an assessor or delegate to deal with costs issues in heavy commercial arbitrations. His commercial and costs practice as a practitioner as well as his judicial experience, means he is focused on delivering fair and quick resolutions. This is normally on a fixed fee basis. He has written the chapter on Arbitration in the Butterworths Costs Encyclopedia.

Commercial Law

Imran has a broad, busy and substantial company and commercial disputes practice and regularly acts in insured D&O claims as well as in FSMA and securities litigation.

Typically this arises out of fraud, SPA disputes, failed domestic and international investments or general contractual or quasi-contractual disputes. He has acted for and against banks and financial institutions both large and small for many years.

By way of example:

- In 2024 he successfully acted for a group of Nigerian businesses alleged to be involved in money laundering. There were novel and untested issues under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and a Voluntary Requirement (VREQ) under the Electronic Money Regulations 2011. Imran’s strategy enabled dozens of businesses to each obtain the release of hundreds of thousands of pounds of their money which had been frozen for years.
- Between 2023 and 2026 he acted for successful liquidators of an insolvent insurance company bringing a £10m breach of directors duties claim against the former CEO and FD (Gable v Dewsall [2025] EWHC 3399, [2025] EWCA Civ 884). It involved multiple interim injunctions (WFOs, search orders, non-party disclosure orders) domestically and overseas.
- Van Zuylen v Whiston-Dew [2021] EWHC 2219 – 9 he was instructed in a commercial fraud claim involving offshore trusts, FSMA 2000, breach of trust, breach of fiduciary duty and deceit which was widely reported in the Times and Daily Mail.
- Successful application under the Cross Border Insolvency Regulations 2006 for recognition of a foreign representative of main proceeding.
- Cool Seas v Interfish [2018] EWHC 2038 – 17 day trial before Rose J (as she then was) concerning a s.994 petition and cross-petition with cross allegations

of fraud relating to a £multi-million business. Sole counsel against KC and Junior.
- Many actions and applications for liquidators making recoveries from directors/shareholders and for D&O insurers looking to defend such claims.
- Many intra-partnership and shareholder disputes.
- Advising on FSMA securities claims where there is an overlap between auditor claims, D&O insurance issues and board dishonesty or silence.

Imran regularly obtains and resists a wide range of injunctions: domestic and international freezers, search orders and employee anti-poaching injunctions.

He has a deep interest in the art market and has worked on matters concerning auctioneers, art ownership, theft and damage claims.

Insurance

Imran regularly acts in insurance disputes concerning coverage and brokerage.

Recent work has included advising on aggregation rights arising out of innocent misselling of a fraudulent investment scheme. He regularly advises on and arbitrates over professional indemnity terms (most frequently SRA, CLC, ICAEW and RICS) and whether a claim is covered. He is pleased to do this for the whole market - for claimants, insureds, insurers and where there is dual cover or a dispute within a tower.

He regularly advises on coverage and carries out coverage interviews. He successfully defended QBE on a declinature decision in an accountant’s case both at arbitration and on subsequent appeal to the Commercial Court. He has overturned arbitration coverage decisions on the basis of breach of natural justice. He successfully acted as sole counsel in a dishonesty coverage arbitration worth in excess of £20m where opponents were represented by 3 KCs and 4 juniors over the course of the case.

However, his insurance expertise is much broader. He has been involved in a number of fire/property damage claims, recovery claims and a full range of D&O disputes – especially involving fraud. He knows the importance of meticulous attention to detail and the need to take swift and robust action.

He has acted on disputes between broker and underwriter about commission, premium, validation and IPR. He has knowledge of (and indeed written a chapter on) Takaful (Islamic insurance). He acts in broker’s negligence claims and is very familiar with the difficult tactical decisions to be made in such cases.

Arbitration and International

Imran has an arbitration practice involving both ad hoc and the commonly used

rules. He has been to, amongst other places, Mauritius, the Middle-East and Channel Islands for professional reasons and is happy to travel where appropriate.

He accepts appointments as an assessor or delegate to deal with costs issues in heavy commercial arbitrations. His commercial and costs practice as a practitioner as well as his judicial experience, means he is focused on delivering fair and quick resolutions. This is normally on a fixed fee basis. He has written the chapter on Arbitration in the Butterworths Costs Encyclopedia.

Cyber and information technology

Imran often acts in claims involving crypto, cyber and technology matters. This relates to cyber fraud and hacking, failed IT upgrade and modernisations programmes. He is familiar with many of the technical and legal concepts which apply in this developing area. He has advised indemnity insurers about the consequences of data hacks at well-known legal services providers. He acts in crypto fraud cases and is very familiar with the technical concepts.

Group Litigation

Imran has acted in a large number of collective actions, for both claimants and defendants, sometimes in the context of a formal GLO and sometimes under other procedural regimes. He is an expert in navigating the complex dynamics which can arise, and the specialist issues to do with funding, pleading and proving the case. Recent instructions include both generations of the NOx litigation and mass investor claims in property schemes.

What others say

"Imran Benson is really good, really quite robust, and if we needed someone to deal with examination and cross-examination of preliminary issues, I would back him against most people." *Chambers UK, 2027*

"Imran is one of the best costs juniors at the Bar. He is an effective advocate." *Chambers UK, 2027*

"Imran is a very good costs barrister. He is creative, commercial and a pleasure to work with." *Chambers UK, 2027*

"Imran has a wide range of experience and expertise, which allows him to provide well-rounded advice and guidance. His advocacy style is approachable and consistently clear and easy to follow. He knows what issues to focus on and how to guide the court to those." *Chambers UK, 2027*

"He had an excellent eye for the bigger picture. His advocacy is coherent and tenacious." *Chambers UK, 2027*

"He is great with clients and provides great, clear advice. He is really able to get his head around technical legal disputes." *Chambers UK, 2027*

"He is fantastic, and his advocacy strategy is great!" *Chambers UK, 2027*

"Working with Imran feels like a real team endeavour: nothing is ever too much trouble for him, and his analytical skills are excellent." *Legal 500, 2027*

"Imran is very approachable and a pleasure to work with. He makes the effort to establish and develop that "solicitor-barrister" relationship which creates a real team feel. It is a skill that Imran excels at. He has the ability to address complex professional negligence issues and explain them in a way that is easy to understand." *Legal 500, 2027*

"Imran Benson has been excellent." *Chambers UK, 2026*

"Imran Benson is fabulous with clients and in court. He is very responsive in his advice and goes above and beyond to deliver results." *Chambers UK, 2026*

“Imran provided a clear and straightforward structure to our client. His clear and amiable advocacy really shone through. His drafting was clear and his advice to our client commercial." *Chambers UK, 2026*

"A flamboyant advocate." *Chambers UK, 2026*

"Imran is accommodating, very knowledgeable and hugely effective." *Chambers UK, 2026*

"He's a man of great enthusiasm, who brings sunshine into the courtroom with him." *Chambers UK, 2026*

"Imran's individual strengths and qualities include practical, commercial advice which is delivered in a user-friendly manner. He has a wealth of experience in matters concerning professional negligence and approaches matters diligently with a keen eye to detail." *Legal 500, 2026*

"Imran has deep knowledge of his subject and has great skill as an advocate in making the arcane seem beguilingly obvious." *Legal 500, 2026*

"Imran is an excellent costs practitioner at the top of his game. He's very, very good." *Chambers UK, 2025*

"He's very experienced and very easy to work with when you're on the other side." *Chambers UK, 2025*

"Imran is client-friendly, good on paper and on his feet." *Chambers UK, 2025*

"An excellent senior junior with all-round ability." *Chambers UK, 2025*

"He gives clear advice and is extremely good on his feet. He’s a joy to work with." *Legal 500, 2025*

"Imran is an intelligent, eloquent and perceptive barrister who is good at getting the ear of the court. He focuses on his client's best arguments and expresses them with economy and strength. He is also a creative thinker, good at finding new perspectives to recurring and seemingly intractable problems." *Legal 500, 2025*

"Imran has an understated but effective advocacy style." *Chambers UK, 2024*

"Imran's written advocacy is a masterclass and his style of writing is like Lord Denning’s unique prose style." *Legal 500, 2024*

"Imran put a barrister's polish on the pleadings and was instrumental in pursuing a novel point which resulted in huge costs savings. He's very professional, gives a clear view and is ace with clients." *Chambers UK, 2025*

"Sound, cool and calm. Very astute." *Chambers UK, 2023*

"Imran is a calm and reassuring presence whose strategic advice and grasp of matters relating to Solicitors Act assessments is exceptional." *Chambers UK, 2023*

"He has a relaxed and approachable style that made him easy to work with, and his submissions feel well considered and persuasive." *Chambers UK, 2023*

"Imran is bright, very commercially minded in his approach, user friendly and a pleasure to work with." *Legal 500*

"Imran has exceptional knowledge of costs law and is an adept advocate who has a natural demeanour in the court room." *Legal 500, 2023*

“Excellent, a first-class senior junior. A superb barrister.” *Chambers UK, 2022*

“He’s got a very relaxed style, he doesn’t panic and he has good advocacy skills.” “Imran is very easy to use and has a good sense of humour.” *Chambers UK. 2022*

“Approachable and has a laid-back style which is easy to work with.” *Legal 500, 2022*

“He is an outstanding player in the professional negligence field. An extremely responsive barrister who knows the law inside out and deftly navigates the nuances of the case. He has real tenacity and is very good with clients.” *Legal 500, 2022*

“An engaging litigator, good client-focus, quick thinking, and erudite.” *Legal 500, 2021*

“Imran is exceptionally bright, attentive and very commercial; ensuring the legal position and the client’s commercial objectives are considered in tandem. A very strong junior who provides forthright and clear advice.” *Legal 500, 2021*

“He is very talented and produces strong pleadings but is also very good to deal

with, and is happy to explore alternatives to trial." *Chambers UK, 2021*

"A good advocate with a nice calm style, who's highly persuasive." *Chambers UK, 2021*

"He's technically very, very good and he offers clear advice." *Chambers UK, 2021*

"Imran is approachable and provides succinct advice which, whilst offering different options, doesn't sit on the fence." *Chambers UK, 2020*

"He is a super barrister, who is articulate, bright and very sociable." *Chambers UK, 2020*

"He is a skilled advocate who is very good at handling the judge and his opponent." *Chambers UK, 2020*

Recent cases

Gable v Dewsall & Ors [2025] EWHC 2880 - 2 week trial successfully acting for liquidators against former CEO and FD where allegations of fraud and breach of directors' duties were made in connection with an AIM listed insolvent insurance company.

Skykomish v Gerald Eve LLP [2025] EWHC 1031 – two-week trial successfully defended a £16.5m valuation of purpose built student accommodation, which subsequently sold for £4m. Won on breach and legal causation. Imran's cross examination was described by the Judge as a *"skilful, highly detailed, forensic cross examination*".

Dowding v The Character Group PLC [2024] EAT 153 – *Employment Appeal Tribunal decision about whistleblowing protections and indemnity costs orders, partially successful appeal.*

Crypto Open Patent Alliance v Wright [2024] EWHC 1809 –*acted in litigation about the alleged founder of BitCoin*

AO v GC [2023] KB – successfully acted for Gunnercooke in a claim alleging negligent drafting of a floating charge which was said to have caused the loss of £millions. Claim dismissed by consent on the 4th day of trial after Imran's cross examination of the claimant's key witnesses. Judge described counsel as *"silks in all but name".*

Van Zuylen v Whiston-Dew [2021] EWHC 2219 – *commercial fraud case involving offshore trusts, FSMA 2000, breach of trust, breach of fiduciary duty and deceit. Widely reported in the Times and Daily Mail.*

Goknur v Organic Village [2021] EWCA Civ 1037 – leading case on non-party costs orders in small company scenario

De Sena v Notaro [2020] EWHC 1031 – *defence at month long trial of a firm of*

solicitors facing a £5m+ fiduciary duty claim connected with a corporate demerger transaction. Claim dismissed with indemnity costs.

Malmsten v Bohinc [2019] EWHC (1386) (Ch) – first proportionality decision at High Court level. Successfully reduced the opponent's bill from £47,500 to £15,000.

Confidential v X – LEI coverage arbitration for insurer relying on, amongst other things, provocation clause.

Hislop v Perde [2018] EWCA Civ 1726, [2019] 1 WLR 201 – leading CA case on how Part 36 applies to fixed costs cases.

Cool Seas v Interfish [2018] EWHC 2038 – 17 day trial before Rose J concerning a s.994 petition and cross-petition with cross allegations of fraud relating to a £multi-million business. Sole counsel against KC and Junior.

Oldham v QBE [2017] EWHC 3045 (Comm) – successful defence on appeal from an arbitration about reimbursement of defence costs paid by an indemnity insurer pending a coverage dispute in which QBE ultimately succeeded.

DB v Jacobs [2016] EWHC 1614 – *effect of Part 36 offers on Calderbank offers.*

Healey v Shoosmiths LLP [2016] EWHC 1723 – 6 day trial, €2m claim concerning purchase of a super-yacht.

Confidential (Jan 2016) – acted for insolvent bank in claim against leading valuation firm re GDV of new-build Surrey mansion. Settled for £2.85m plus costs.

Heatherville v Knight Frank (2015, HHJ Bird, Manchester Mercantile) – acted for defendant in casino valuation claim. Claim discontinued with costs shortly before opening.

Southern Rock v Brightside (2014-2015) – bitter £multi-million litigation with leaders on both sides in many actions in different Courts concerning insurer/broker dispute about claims handling, brokerage fees, misuse of intellectual property rights etc. *Settled on satisfactory terms.*

Santander v RA Legal [2014] EWCA Civ 183 – breach of trust and s.61 relief – Imran successfully appeared at first instance unled, then came second at the Court of Appeal (led).

Hallam v Baker Estates [2014] EWCA Civ 661 – Imran successfully established that CPR3.9 does not apply to in-time applications for more time – this was a significant development in light of the topical litigation around Mitchell.

Nicholson v Knox Ukiwa [2008] EWHC 1222 – successful defence of 4th generation loss of chance claim, alleged under-settlement at mediation, arising out of wrongfully dishonoured cheques.

Further information

Appointments

- Deputy Costs Judge of SCCO
- Former Member of RICS Conduct and Appeals Committee
- Bristol University Distinguished Alumni Lecturer
- Trustee of Inns of Court Bar Education Trust Charity
- Former Member of the Professional Indemnity Insurance Committee at the ICAEW

Education

- LLB Bristol University
- Queen Mother Scholar
- Lady Templeman-Indo Goodwill award
- Chancery Bar Lodge Essay Prize

Memberships

- LCLCBA
- PNBA
- SEC
- TECBAR
- Commercial Fraud Lawyers Association
- Financial Services Lawyers Association

ICO Data protection registration number: **Z9409766**.

Imran Benson is a barrister regulated by the Bar Standards Board. Click to view Imran Benson’s Privacy Notice

