

Raoul Downey

Year of Call: 1988

Practice Summary

Raoul Downey is a highly experienced employment law barrister, called to the Bar in 1988, with a broad and distinguished practice encompassing employment, discrimination, contractual disputes, and related areas. He is a member of 4-5 Gray's Inn Square, where he contributes deep expertise and a pragmatic, strategic approach to complex employment matters.

Raoul's experience combines traditional barrister advocacy with significant practical insight gained from in-house legal work, giving him a nuanced appreciation of both legal and commercial aspects of workplace disputes.

Areas of Practice

Raoul's core employment law practice includes:

- Unfair and wrongful dismissal
- Contractual issues and breach of contract
- Discrimination, harassment, and victimisation claims
- Whistleblowing and protected disclosures
- Redundancy and TUPE (transfer of undertakings) matters
- Restrictive covenants and confidential information
- Employment status and worker classification
- Costs, procedural and appellate issues in employment cases

Sports Law

Raoul has advised and represented a number of professional football clubs, including Premiership and Championship clubs, on a wide range of employment, contractual, and regulatory matters involving players, coaches, and other staff. He has appeared before FA Disciplinary Tribunals and has represented sporting governing bodies and federations in Employment Tribunal proceedings.

As a former elite swimmer who represented Hong Kong internationally, Raoul has a strong understanding of the sporting landscape and the issues faced by athletes and sporting organisations. He is experienced in anti-doping matters and is familiar with proceedings before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), including disciplinary, eligibility, and regulatory disputes. His practice spans sports law, employment law, and dispute resolution, advising clubs, governing bodies, and athletes across a range of sports.

Advocacy & Advisory Work

Raoul regularly appears before Employment Tribunals and the Employment Appeal Tribunal. He has acted both as sole counsel and as part of multi-counsel teams in complex litigation. Notably, he has been instructed in appeal work before the EAT in cases such as *CJ v PC* [2024] EAT 182 and *James Linton v The Athelstan Trust* [2024] EAT 14.

Beyond advocacy, Raoul's advisory work includes drafting and reviewing employment contracts and workplace policies, advising on disciplinary and grievance procedures, and guiding clients through risk management and litigation strategy.

Approach

Raoul is respected for his:

- Strategic, practical advice grounded in deep legal knowledge
- Clear and persuasive advocacy in tribunal and appellate settings
- Attention to detail and thorough preparation
- Commercial awareness and sensible risk assessment

He collaborates closely with solicitors, HR teams, and in-house counsel to achieve robust, client-focused solutions.

Clients

Raoul acts for a wide range of clients, including:

- Private and public sector employers
- Senior executives and professionals
- Individuals pursuing claims such as discrimination or whistleblowing
- Organisations navigating complex employment disputes

Notable Cases

> Appeared for the appellant in CJ v PC [2024] EAT 182 before the Employment Appeal Tribunal.
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> Instructed in James Linton v The Athelstan Trust [2024] EAT 14 before the EAT.
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> Acted for employers and employees in a broad range of tribunal and appellate matters involving unfair dismissal, discrimination, breach of contract, and employment status disputes.

Directories & Rankings

Raoul is acknowledged in legal directories for his employment law expertise. He joined 4-5 Gray’s Inn Square as part of a strategic expansion of its employment law team, bringing extensive experience from private practice and tribunal advocacy.

Publications & Speaking Engagements

Raoul has delivered lectures and seminars on employment law, pension issues, company law, and costs. He has participated in professional forums, including EAT advocacy under schemes such as ELAAS and for pro bono causes.

Areas of Expertise

- Employment
- Sport Media And Entertainment