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James Rankin

Practice Profile



Year of call 1983

Preeminent licensing barrister James Rankin with thirty years' experience in licensing and regulatory work is ranked by Chambers and Partners Directory as a starred licensing junior. He is also named in the Chambers 100 UK Bar list of the top juniors. These are his recent entries in Chambers Guide to the Legal profession:

Chambers and Partners has rated him the only starred junior in the country for the last seven years. He appears up and down the country on behalf of applicants, and objectors and appellants from local authority decisions. A true "independent", he also represents the police and local authorities on reviews of licences and on appeals. He has extensive Betting and Gaming experience. He appeared on behalf of The Hippodrome in their successful appeal to license their London casino premises. He advises on internet gaming, together with lotteries and competitions and firearms and taxi regulation. He advises The Marine Management Organisation on licensing matters. He has been involved in many of the leading licensing cases involving judicial review of decisions by local authorities and magistrates. His clients are high profile and varied. They include the major operators such as Wetherspoons, together with the smaller operators such as The Mean Fiddler Group. He has represented many of the leading firms of bookmakers both large and small including Ladbrokes, Corals, William Hill, and Pridmore Bookmakers. His other long standing clients include Peter Stringfellow, The Windmill, The Mayor of London, The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, and The Chief Constables of several counties including Northamptonshire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. He represented Kenwood House, and Garsington House on their opposed renewals of their

licences. He has obtained licences for large music festivals including the 18,000 capacity WOW festival in The Isle of Wight and the Witcombe Cider Festival, against heavy opposition.

Testimonials

"He's like James Bond; he's very smooth and charming. He has impeccable presentation, and he's definitely one of the most experienced licensing juniors in the country."
Chambers and Partners

"Breathtakingly charming, devastatingly deadly on his feet and ferociously knowledgeable." Legal 500

"At the top of his game." Chambers and Partners

"Immensely likeable, he's very clever and able to get the court on his side by force of personality as well as by legal argument." Chambers and Partners

"The best junior in the field by some distance." Chambers and Partners

"He is without question the most respected licensing junior in the country." Chambers and Partners

"A diligent and robust advocate, he is great on his feet and very good at fighting his corner." Chambers and Partners

"He is a polished professional who is certainly no pushover in a courtroom...he is very quick-witted and capable of wrong-footing his opponents at every turn." Chambers and Partners

"He is a real tiger; he's charming, tenacious and energetic." Chambers and Partners

"Solicitors favour him as he doesn't take over a case, but makes you feel like you're part of the team working together to get the best for the client." Chambers and Partners

"A tenacious yet charming advocate; part of the crème de la crème of the licensing world"
Chambers and Partners

"He has an excellent legal mind and is heavily endorsed for his liquor licensing work. His style is complemented by a meticulous, commercial approach to the law" Chambers and Partners

"He is always a fighter for our cause" Chambers and Partners

"He is almost universally regarded as the pre-eminent licensing junior at the Bar."
Chambers and Partners

"A fine courtroom performer, he is noted for his "flamboyant" advocacy." Chambers and Partners

"Very highly regarded by local authority lawyers." Chambers and Partners, 2015

"On his feet he is "supremely able, and a lawyer with a persuasive style that determines the outcome of cases." Chambers and Partners

"One source said that he is "brilliant and in all honesty as good as any silk." Chambers and Partners

"He is an outstanding advocate with a very good manner who helps persuade judges of his causes." Chambers and Partners

"He is a standout and will get a silk. Bright and hard-working, he's a fantastic advocate with a fantastic sense of humour" Chambers and Partners

"?Gives realistic and sound advice on cases." Legal 500

Cases of Note

- Represented the Southbeats Festival 2019 in Sevenoaks, obtaining a licence for a three day event, with a capacity of 15,000 and a terminal hour of 2am against heavy opposition
 - Successfully appeared for The Metropolitan Police on the revocation of two high profile nightclubs in Kingston, **Barcadia** and **Essence**
 - **Extreme Oyster**: Appeared for Extreme Oyster in the landmark case on whether shadow licences can be granted to a landlord in order to protect himself against review of his tenant's licence. R (OTA) Extreme Oyster v Guildford Borough Council Admin Court 2013.
 - Appeared for the Metropolitan Police successfully resisting a judicial review challenging whether the interim step of suspension imposed on summary review continues pending determination of the appeal. **R (OTA) 93 Feet East v London Borough of Tower Hamlets Admin Ct 2013.**
 - **Quintessentially**: appeared for the concierge company on an appeal against a Westminster City Council decision to refuse a licence for the group's headquarters in Portland Place
 - **Fire and Area** nightclubs in Vauxhall Cross: successfully resisted an attempt by the Metropolitan Police to revoke their licences
 - **Oceana Nightclub**: appeared on behalf of The Metropolitan Police in their successful application to revoke the licence for Luminar Leisure's "flagship" premises in Kingston.
 - **Altitude 360**: successfully appeared on behalf of Hellman and Friedman who applied for a review of the nightclub's licence. The proceedings ended in revocation of the licence for a high profile premises.
 - **The Windmill Theatre**; successfully applied to extend nude table dancing until 3am on Sundays under the new Sex Encounter Venue ("SEV") legislation.
 - Represented **Home House** on its successful appeal against Westminster City Council's restrictive policy on hours.
 - **KVC Cars**: a successful appeal against TfL's new policy in relation to operators of private hire vehicles ("PHVs") requiring controllers to stand inside nightclub premises. Costs (£12,400) awarded against TfL.
 - **Diamond Chauffeurs**: a successful appeal under similar circumstances. Costs of £13,600 awarded against TfL.
 - Obtained the first fully-nude table dancing licence within Westminster for **Peter Stringfellow**
 - Appeared on behalf of The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police on his application to revoke James Hewitt's shotgun and firearms certificate
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Judicial Review

He has had more than twenty cases heard by the High Court. These include

- *R (Townlink Ltd) v Thames Magistrates' Court* [2011] EWHC 898 Admin; powers of the magistrates' court on appeal; adequacy of reasons.
 - *R (Tower Hamlets LBC) v Lovebox Festivals* [2012] EWHC 961: costs on appeal; lawfulness of award; quantum of award
 - *R (South Northamptonshire Council) v Towcester Magistrates' Court*; Lawfulness of DCMS Guidance in relation to refusal of personal licence.
 - *R (Bushell and others) v Newcastle City Justices (House of Lords)* Licensing Law and Human Rights; special removal of an old on licence; the relevance of planning to licensing applications; abuse of process; collateral actions; the circumstances in which an appeal to the House of Lords may be permitted to continue, even though a statute has been repealed
 - *Westminster City Council v Fleury*: can the Court of Appeal entertain an appeal against a decision of the Administrative Court on a case stated?
 - *R (Brogan) v Metropolitan Police*: were the procedures for granting extensions to licences Human Rights compliant?
 - *R OTA Thompsett v Croydon Crown Court*: justices' policy held to be Wednesbury unreasonable
 - *R v Derby Justices ex parte Black*: which should be heard first: revocation proceedings or criminal offences?
 - *R v Inner London Crown Court ex parte Sitki*: the leading case on legality of conditions on a licence
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Publications

He lectures for Paterson's, IBC and CLT on a wide range of topics relating to licensing and regulation. He is also a regular at FTB's licensing updates and seminars.

Qualifications & Appointments

Buckingham University LLB (hons)
