Howse Williams Bowers is an independent Hong Kong law firm which combines the in-depth experience of its lawyers with a creative, forward-thinking approach.

About Us

Our key practice areas are clinical negligence and healthcare; corporate/commercial and corporate finance; commercial and maritime dispute resolution; insurance and professional indemnity insurance; employment; family and matrimonial; property and building management; intellectual property and financial services/corporate regulatory and compliance.

As an independent law firm we are able to minimise legal and commercial conflicts of interest and act for clients in every industry sector. The partners have spent the majority of their careers in Hong Kong and have a detailed understanding of international business and business in Asia.

In 2014 HWB was awarded "Hong Kong Law Firm of the Year" by Chambers and Partners.

The HWB partners and their teams have an excellent reputation for delivering high quality legal advice with a practical and commercial approach to solving legal issues in line with clients’ commercial objectives.
Our Clinical Negligence and Healthcare Practice

The medico-legal team advises doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, pharmacists, chiropractors, osteopaths and other healthcare professionals. The partners also advise private hospitals, medical group practices, corporate healthcare providers and pharmaceutical companies on issues relating to the import and distribution of drugs and pharmaceutical products, drug liability claims and other regulatory matters.

Our team of over ten lawyers, four of whom are partners, is led by the firm’s senior partner, Chris Howse. Chris has over 25 years of experience assisting healthcare professionals in Hong Kong. Our team has unrivalled expertise and is widely respected as being a leader in medico-legal and pharmaceutical markets in Hong Kong. Two of our partners are dual-qualified as lawyers and medical practitioners.

Our Approach

At HWB we defend healthcare professionals and institutions on a broad range of clinical negligence and healthcare related matters. We provide timely advice, as soon as clinical incidents occur, often outside office hours.

We are mindful that the cases we handle are often very sensitive and professional reputations are at stake. We provide practical solutions to resolve problems and protect our clients’ interests. We diligently investigate and obtain early expert assistance where required.

We also have expertise to advise on the professional and legal obligations when setting up a medical practice (whether as a sole practitioner, limited company, or a partnership or group practice). These issues concerning the business aspects of medical practice include compliance with Medical Council provisions including those governing practice promotion and the announcement of commencement of practice; potential liability issues of the doctor/owner, or the partners or the company; obtaining professional indemnity insurance cover for the medical and nursing staff; fulfilling the requirements for making contributions to the Mandatory Provident Fund; and also obtaining insurance cover for potential liabilities under the Employee Compensation Ordinance and for public liability.
Healthcare Expertise

We advise on a broad range of medico-legal matters including:-

- Clinical negligence claims against doctors, dentists and private hospitals including high value obstetric cases, brain damage cases and fatality claims. We secure early discontinuance of frivolous claims. We represent clients in the District Court, High Court, Court of Appeal and Court of Final Appeal.
- Department of Health investigations, particularly sentinel event investigations arising from adverse incidents. We assist the doctor and sometimes the hospital prior to any interview. This includes the preparation of medical reports and meeting with various staff members.
- Medical Council and Dental Council matters. We have an impressive track record of disposing of cases at the Preliminary Investigation Committee. If a case is referred to the inquiry stage we represent the doctor ourselves at the inquiry (as opposed to routinely instructing barristers).
- Education and Accreditation Committee issues such as restriction or withdrawal of the specialist registration for doctors.
- Coroner's inquests arising from patient deaths. We usually undertake our own advocacy at the inquests and we are well known to the coroners.
- Criminal investigations and proceedings such as manslaughter, indecent assault and fraud – we attend police interviews, ICAC interviews and assist with cautioned statements.
- Dangerous drug prosecutions and Magistrate Court hearings.
- Mental Health Tribunal work. Dr David Kan has served as a member of the Guardianship Board and has expertise in handling Guardianship Board matters and applications under the Mental Health Ordinance.
- Judicial Reviews.
- Mediation – two of our team’s lawyers are accredited mediators and are called on to mediate clinical disputes. Where appropriate, our team use mediation to resolve claims for negligence.
- General legal and ethical advisory work on a wide range of matters such as confidentiality, informed consent, data protection legislation, practice promotion and advertising.
- Legal ramifications of reproductive technology treatment, particularly sex selection and surrogacy.
- Drafting risk assessment policies within clinics and hospitals on high risk areas of clinical management.
- Defamation and libel proceedings in the medical field.
Pharmaceutical Expertise

We advise biotech and pharmaceutical companies, and other organisations, on a variety of matters including:

- Product liability claims for defective medical and pharmaceutical products including consequential economic loss.
- Advising pharmaceutical companies on clinical trials (particularly with adverse events/patient harm)
- Assisting with the complex regulatory framework for registering, importing and selling drugs
- Drafting distribution agreements with various parties such as importers and distributors.
- Contractual claims for breach of warranty and civil claims for compensation
- Representing pharmaceutical companies in the Courts for breach of strict liability offences concerning the supply of pharmaceutical products.
- Intellectual Property matters are advised on by our specialist IP team.

Medico-legal Employment Matters

Our healthcare team works closely with HWB’s specialist employment team to advise on sensitive areas such as:

- Staff grievance investigations and hearings within the clinical environment.
- Appeals of healthcare workers facing disciplinary sanctions such as warnings, suspension, stoppage of increment and removals.
- Other employment related matters such as unfavourable and prejudicial references and revocation of admission privileges.
- Media guidance including press releases, following high profile staff disputes/incidents where patients have been harmed.
- Advice upon staff recruitment, contract terms, transfers, remuneration, terminations, redundancies, minimum wage, discrimination and other general employment issues applicable to the healthcare industry.
Chris Howse

Partner

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Chris leads the medico-legal team with fellow partner David Kan. They advise doctors, dentists and their indemnity provider – the Medical Protection Society and Dental Protection Ltd – as well as private hospitals and other healthcare professionals. Chris also advises private hospitals, corporate healthcare providers and pharmaceutical companies on issues relating to the import and distribution of drugs and pharmaceutical products, drug liability claims and other regulatory matters.

Chris provides professional indemnity advice and assistance to a full spectrum of professionals in Hong Kong, including solicitors, accountants, brokers, architects, doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals.

Chris also specialises in maritime and commercial dispute resolution, handling a wide range of disputes in the Hong Kong courts and international arbitrations throughout Asia. He has considerable experience in all types of dry shipping litigation on behalf of owners, charterers and their P&I Clubs. He also has particular expertise handling problems arising from the shipment of coal, iron ore, nickel ore and fluorspar.

Chris has more than 35 years of legal experience. He built the Hong Kong office of Richards Butler and he was senior partner and managing partner of that office from 1983 to 2011. He has considerable experience in arbitration and is qualified as an arbitrator in Hong Kong, China (CMAC), Korea, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian jurisdictions. He has represented parties in arbitrations in China (both CIETAC and CMAC), Hong Kong, London, Singapore and Malaysia. In addition, Chris is an accredited mediator.

**Experience**

2012 Howse Williams Bowers
2011 Reed Smith Richards Butler
2008 Richards Butler in Association with Reed Smith LLP
1983 Richards Butler, Hong Kong
1975 Richards Butler, London

**Education**

1975 College of Law
1973 University of Bristol, BA (Hons)
1970 University of Geneva
**Professional Qualifications**

1978  England and Wales
1981  Hong Kong
1988  Australia

**Professional Affiliations**

Arbitration:
Fellow, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (Hong Kong)
Fellow, Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators Ltd
Supporting Member, London Maritime Arbitrators Association
Arbitrator, Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre
Arbitrator, China Maritime Arbitration Commission
Arbitrator, Hong Kong Maritime Arbitration Group
Arbitrator, Korean Commercial Arbitration Board
Member, Hong Kong Arbitrations Law Review Committee (1996-2000)

Professional Indemnity Insurance:
Chairman, Hong Kong Law Society Professional Indemnity Claims Committee (2004-2007)
Deputy Chairman, Hong Kong Law Society Professional Indemnity Claims Committee (1999-2004)
Member, Hong Kong Law Society Professional Indemnity Insurance Claims Committee (1989-1999)
Member, Hong Kong Law Society Professional Indemnity Advisory Committee (1999-2006)
Member, Hong Kong Law Society Working Party on Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme (1996-2004)
Chairman, Hong Kong Professional Indemnity Review Committee (2002)
David Kan
Partner

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A medical doctor as well as a solicitor, David specialises in clinical negligence claims, advising healthcare professionals, including doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, midwives and nurses. His clients also include insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology companies, medical device manufacturers, hospitals, specialist group practices and other corporate healthcare providers. David's legal career began with Bevan Ashford in the UK followed by Richards Butler Hong Kong.

He has experience in handling coroner’s inquests, disciplinary and medical criminal proceedings, investigations commenced by the ICAC and Privacy Commissioners, product liability claims and other healthcare regulatory matters. David also has a special interest in providing advice on mental health laws and ethical issues such as consent and euthanasia.

An advocate of alternative dispute resolution, David is an accredited mediator of the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre. Before qualifying as a lawyer, David practised medicine for five years in the UK. He remains a CME-certified medical practitioner and in 2008 was appointed an Honorary Associate Professor of the University of Hong Kong Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine.

Between 1991 and 1996, David practised general medicine as a house physician and then as a general surgeon. He subsequently worked in private medical practice in the UK as a part-time resident medical officer in various hospitals. He has been registered as a medical practitioner in the UK since 1991 and in Hong Kong since 1994.

Experience

2012 Howse Williams Bowers
2011 Reed Smith Richards Butler
2008 Richards Butler in Association with Reed Smith LLP
1999 Richards Butler, Hong Kong
1998 Bevan Ashford Solicitors, UK
1996 Lees and Partner Solicitors, UK
Education

2007 University of Hong Kong, Postgraduate Diploma in Child and Adolescent Health
1996 Keele University, Master Degree in Medical Law
1996 Birmingham University, LPC (with commendation)
1995 Birmingham University, CPE
1991 Nottingham University, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
1990 Nottingham University Exhibition Prize for Medicine
1989 Nottingham University, Bachelor of Medical Sciences (Hons)

Professional Qualifications

1999  Hong Kong
1986  England and Wales
MA (Med Law), MBBS, MFFLM, BMed Sci (Hons), PDipCAH

Professional Affiliations

Founding Member, Faculty of Legal and Forensic Medicine, Royal College of Physicians UK
Member, Fitness-to-Practice Committee, University of Hong Kong Medical School
Legal Advisor, Hong Kong Medical Association
Legal Advisor, British Medical Association of Hong Kong
Member, Ethics Committee for the Hong Kong College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
Panel Member, Guardianship Board of Hong Kong (2005-2008)
Vice-chairman, New Medico-Legal Society of Hong Kong (2005-2007)
Member, Personal Injury Medical Negligence Law Association of Hong Kong
Member, Hong Kong Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry
Member, Law Society of England and Wales
Member, Law Society of Hong Kong
Both a medical doctor and a solicitor, Bernard specialises in medico-legal issues, acting for a wide range of healthcare professionals including doctors, dentists, nurses and physiotherapists in proceedings before the Coroner’s Court, the Medical Council, clinical negligence claims and Department of Health investigations. He was admitted as a solicitor in Hong Kong in 2004 and in England and Wales in 2005. Bernard also acts for hospitals and other institutional and corporate healthcare providers in a comprehensive array of healthcare legal matters. His legal career began with Richards Butler Hong Kong.

Before qualifying as a lawyer, Bernard practised medicine for more than ten years, the majority of that time in Hong Kong and China. During and following his medical training, Bernard worked as a doctor in NHS hospitals in the UK as a house physician and house surgeon. He was commissioned into the British Army in 1989 and worked as an army doctor until 1994. After leaving the army, Bernard worked in the field of emergency medical evacuation in China and Hong Kong between 1995 and 1999. He has also worked in private medical practice in Hong Kong.

An Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Accident and Emergency Medicine, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Bernard lectures on healthcare legal issues for the Chinese University Department of Accident and Emergency Medicine. He has also presented lectures/workshops for doctors’ medical practices, public and private hospitals the Chinese University School of Public Health, and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University Department of Physiotherapy.

▶ Experience

2012 Howse Williams Bowers
2011 Reed Smith Richards Butler
2008 Richards Butler in Association with Reed Smith LLP
2002 Richards Butler, Hong Kong

▶ Education

2002 University of Hong Kong, Postgraduate Certificate in Law
2001 Manchester Metropolitan University, Postgraduate Diploma in Law
1988 University of Aberdeen, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery

▶ Professional Qualifications

2005 England and Wales
2004 Hong Kong
MB ChB (Aberd) MFFLM
Professional Affiliations

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Accident and Emergency Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Foundation Member, Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine, Royal College of Physicians
Fellow, Royal Society of Medicine
Member, New Medico-Legal Society of Hong Kong
Member, British Medical Association of Hong Kong
Member, Law Society of England and Wales
Member, Law Society of Hong Kong
Oonagh specialises in dispute resolution and commercial and professional negligence litigation. She also handles clinical negligence claims advising healthcare professionals on a range of contractual, regulatory and criminal matters. Prior to qualifying as a Solicitor, Oonagh was an industrial designer and worked in design and advertising in London, Dublin and Hong Kong.

**Experience**

2012 Howse Williams Bowers  
2011 Reed Smith Richards Butler  
2008 Richards Butler in Association with Reed Smith LLP  
2005 Richards Butler, Hong Kong  
Previously with Hayes Solicitors, Dublin, Ireland

**Education**

Griffith College Law School, Dublin  
Bachelor of Design in Industrial Design, National College of Art and Design, Dublin, Ireland  
Master of Design in Design Management, Royal College of Art, London

**Professional Admissions / Qualifications**

England and Wales  
Hong Kong  
Ireland

**Professional Affiliations**

Member, Law Society of Hong Kong
Alison previously worked as a partner with HWB’s senior partner Chris Howse at Richards Butler in Hong Kong, specializing in professional negligence and commercial litigation. Alison returned to England in 1998 where she has been working both as a Tribunal Judge with her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service and as a legally qualified chairperson for the Residential Property Tribunal.

**Experience**

2014 Howse Williams Bowers  
2008 Judicial appointment, legally qualified chairperson, Residential Property Tribunal (Wales).  
2001 Judicial appointment, tribunal chairperson then tribunal judge, HMCTS (social entitlement chamber)  
1991 Richards Butler

**Professional Qualifications**

1986 Admission as a solicitor, Hong Kong  
1985 Admission as a solicitor, England and Wales
Our Team

**Ying Ying Ho**  
*Senior Associate*

Ying Ying qualified as a solicitor in New South Wales, Australia in 2004, Hong Kong in 2007 and England & Wales in 2008. She specialises in medico-legal, commercial and professional negligence litigation. Ying Ying’s experience also includes advising on a full range of contentious and non-contentious employment matters. Ying Ying is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

**Sharen Lau**  
*Associate*

Sharen specialises in medico-legal issues advising healthcare professionals and hospitals in clinical negligence claims and disciplinary proceedings. Sharen was admitted in Hong Kong in 2009. Sharen is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

**Maureen Liu**  
*Associate*

Maureen specialises in dispute resolution and medico-legal issues advising healthcare professionals and hospitals on clinical negligence claims and complaints, Coroner’s inquests and disciplinary proceedings. Maureen is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

**Bianca Wu**  
*Associate*

Bianca has experience in dispute resolution and medico-legal matters. She advises healthcare professionals and hospitals on clinical negligence claims and complaints, Coroner’s inquests and disciplinary proceedings. Bianca is fluent in English and Cantonese.

**Hiu Yee Chung**  
*Associate*

Hiu Yee has experience in insurance litigation including professional indemnity, regulatory and medico-legal matters. Hiu Yee was admitted in Hong Kong in 2012. She is an accredited mediator with the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre and the Hong Kong Mediation Accreditation Association Limited. Hiu Yee is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.
Betty Lee
Associate

Betty specialises in providing Hong Kong employment law advice and advises healthcare professionals, corporate healthcare providers, international corporations, small companies and individuals upon contentious and non-contentious employment-related matters.

Carmen Fung
Associate

Carmen specialises in insurance litigation. She has extensive experience in handling personal injury and insurance litigation claims on behalf of insurance companies. Carmen also advises insurers on policy-related issues and defence of claims. Carmen is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

Natasha Tin
Associate

Natasha specialises in insurance litigation and commercial litigation. She also has experience in handling personal injury and employee compensation claims. Natasha is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

Johime Lee
Paralegal

Johime was admitted in New York in 2011. He joined HWB as a paralegal in 2012. Johime is actively involved in all aspects of litigation support, including drafting pleadings and correspondence, attending document reviews, investigation, legal research, taxation matters, and dealing with clients, solicitors, experts, court personnel and administrative agencies. He also regularly attends hearings, trials, and appellate oral arguments. He has assisted on a wide range of matters, from commercial, medical, shipping, property, employment and dispute resolution. Johime is fluent in English and proficient in Cantonese and Mandarin.