Howse Williams

Clinical Negligence & Healthcare Practice

May 2026

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Howse Williams is a leading, full service, Hong Kong law firm. We combine the in-depth experience of our lawyers with a forward thinking approach.

About Us

Our key practice areas are corporate/commercial and corporate finance; commercial and maritime dispute resolution; clinical negligence and healthcare; insurance, personal injury and professional indemnity insurance; employment; family and matrimonial; trusts and wealth preservation; wills, probate and estate administration; property and building management; banking; fraud; distressed debt; investment funds; virtual assets; 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.

The HW 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 their indemnity providers 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 15 lawyers, eight of whom are partners, is led by the firm's senior partner, Chris Howse. Chris has over 40 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 HW 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

Our healthcare team works closely with HW'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.

Regulatory Advice

We have provided medicolegal regulatory advice to a wide range of individuals and entities on issues including:

- The categorisation of medical devices and drafting of distribution agreements for medical device manufacturers.
- Advising how the Hong Kong statutory pharmaceuticals regime affects veterinary surgeons and veterinary product importers / distributors.
- Drafting end-user and physician-user agreements for healthcare apps.
- Advising medical start-ups on regulatory, employment, property and corporate structuring issues.
- Packaging requirements for pharmaceutical / cosmeceutical products.
- Advising healthcare companies on relationships with medical and dental professionals.
- Guiding medical device companies and healthcare companies on legal issues affecting proposed marketing initiatives.

Chris Howse

Partner

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Chris Howse was admitted as a solicitor in Hong Kong in 1981 after being seconded by the London office of a city law firm, Richards Butler, to build up its Hong Kong office. He was the Senior Partner and Managing Partner of the Hong Kong office of Richards Butler until December 2011. Following the takeover of Richards Butler Hong Kong by an American law firm he set up Howse Williams on 1 January 2012 with a large number of partners and solicitors from the Hong Kong office of Richards Butler. The firm is now one of the largest independent law firms in Hong Kong.

Chris Howse is the head of the medico-legal team. He started to undertake medico-legal work in 1985. He has been providing professional advice and assistance to doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals and to the private hospitals of Hong Kong on a wide range of medico-legal issues for over 30 years. His firm have been panel lawyers for the Medical Protection Society and Dental Protection Ltd. since the mid-1980s.

The medico-legal areas on which Chris Howse provides advice and assistance include:

(1) Civil claims being pursued against doctors and dentists in the Hong Kong courts.

(2) Defending doctors and dentists before the Medical Council and Dental Council.

(3) Representing doctors and dentists at inquests.

(4) General advice and assistance on a wide range of medico-legal topics arising from the everyday practice of doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals.

(5) Department of Health investigations.

(6) Advice concerning pharmaceutical companies, clinical trials and the import and export of medicines and other medical products into and out of Hong Kong.

Experience

2012 Howse Williams
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 Admissions / 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, Solicitor Advocate

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David is a dual qualified medical doctor/solicitor and is a Founding Member of the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians (UK). He "changed horses" to law almost 30 years ago and has specialised in healthcare law since.

Nowadays David and Chris Howse lead a team of healthcare lawyers, which is the largest team of its kind in HK, with extensive experience in defending clinical negligence claims on behalf of healthcare professionals and institutions.

As an experienced litigator, David has gained accreditation as a Solicitor Advocate with Higher Rights of Audience in Hong Kong's Court of First Instance, Court of Appeal and CFA. David has substantial advocacy experience before the Civil Courts, Coroner's Court, Medical and Dental Council and other professional tribunals. He appreciates the importance of getting involved in a case and managing the evidence and strategies from day 1.

David has a Master's Degree in Medical Law and Ethics which puts him on good stead in providing regulatory advice to healthcare institutions including hospitals, biotechnology companies, medical device manufacturers and specialist group practices. He has a special interest in advising on mental health law, medical criminal proceedings, clinical trials, and due diligence in corporate transactions.

In 2008, David was appointed as an Honorary Associate Professor by the Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong. He regularly lectures at the University as well as to the Specialist Colleges. He provides clients with training in clinical risk management.

David keeps up to date with clinical medicine, especially in general surgery. He has served on various governing boards including those of government hospitals and a major international school. He is a qualified coach with the Squash Rackets Association (UK) and he trains almost daily. He is also a watch enthusiast accredited by the Fondation Haute Horlogerie.

Experience

2012 Howse Williams
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

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

Professional Admissions / Qualifications

1999 Hong Kong
1998 England and Wales
MA (Med Law), MBBS, MFFLM, BMed Sci (Hons), PDipCAH

Professional Affiliations

Honorary Legal Advisor of organisations including Hong Kong Medical Association, Hong Kong Dental Association, British Medical Association (HK), Hong Kong Ophthalmological Society, Association of Private Eye Surgeons, Federation of Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Association of Private Medical Specialists (HK), The College of Ophthalmologists of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Community Psychological Medicine Association (HKCPMA), Hong Kong Doctors Union and Eye Care Charitable Foundation Limited.

Honorary Associate Professor in the Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong
Founding Member, Faculty of Legal and Forensic Medicine, Royal College of Physicians UK
Member, Medico-legal Society of London
Member, International Powerlifting Federation Ethics Commission
Member, Law Society of England and Wales
Member, Law Society of Hong Kong

Previous appointments:
Member, Hospital Governing Committee of the Shatin Hospital and Bradbury Hospice
Member, Ethics Committee for the Hong Kong College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
Panel Member, Guardianship Board of Hong Kong
Vice-chairman, New Medico-Legal Society of Hong Kong
Member, Hong Kong Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry

Bernard Murphy

Partner

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A medically qualified solicitor, Bernard represents healthcare organisations, doctors. dentists, veterinary surgeons and other healthcare professionals across a range of practice areas. Bernard supports clients in Medical Council, Dental Council and Veterinary Surgeons Board disciplinary proceedings and coroners investigations, from the commencement of investigations through to appearing on behalf of clients at disciplinary inquiries and coroners inquests.

An Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Accident and Emergency Medicine Academic Unit, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Bernard teaches on the university's Master of Science Programme in Prehospital and Emergency Care and on the Postgraduate Diploma in Prehospital and Emergency Care. Bernard also provides expert witness training to doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals involved/interested in expert witness work.

A graduate of Aberdeen University Medical School, 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. 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.

Since 2008, Bernard has been a Member of the Faculty of Forensic Legal Medicine, Royal College of Physicians UK. In 2021 he received a Foundation Fellowship (Dento-legal Adviser) of the Faculty of Forensic Legal Medicine, Royal College of Physicians UK.

Experience

2012 Howse Williams
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 (PCLL)
2001 Manchester Metropolitan University, Postgraduate Diploma in Law (PGDL)
1988 University of Aberdeen, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MB ChB)

Professional Admissions / Qualifications

2021 Ireland
2005 England and Wales
2004 Hong Kong

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 UK
Foundation Fellow (Dento-legal adviser) Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine, Royal College of Physicians UK
Member, British Medical Association of Hong Kong
Member, Law Society of England and Wales
Member, Law Society of Hong Kong
Member, Law Society of Ireland

Oonagh Toner

Partner

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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
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

2007 England and Wales
2006 Hong Kong
2005 Ireland

Professional Affiliations

Member, Law Society of Hong Kong

Alison Scott

Partner

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Alison previously worked as a partner with HW's senior partner Chris Howse at Richards Butler in Hong Kong. She has extensive experience in dispute resolution and commercial and professional negligence litigation. Alison moved to England in 1998 but returned to join HW in 2014.

Alison continues to advise in respect of commercial litigation matters including regulatory investigations by governmental bodies and corporate litigation including shareholder disputes. She also provides professional indemnity advice and assistance to doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals in HW's medico legal practice.

Experience

2014 Howse Williams
1991 Richards Butler

Professional Admissions / Qualifications

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

Professional Affiliations

Member, Law Society of Hong Kong

Maureen Liu

Partner

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Maureen specialises in dispute resolution and medico-legal matters. She has extensive experience in advising healthcare professionals, clinics and hospitals on clinical negligence claims and complaints, Coroner's inquests, disciplinary proceedings and Department of Health investigations. She also advises on non-contentious matters such as general compliance with the professional code of conduct and personal data legislation in a healthcare professional's day to day practice. Maureen is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

Experience

2012 Howse Williams
2011 Reed Smith Richards Butler
2008 Richards Butler in Association with Reed Smith LLP

Education

2008 Bachelor of Civil Law (BCL), The University of Oxford
2007 Postgraduate Certificate in Laws (PCLL), The University of Hong Kong
2006 Bachelor of Laws (LLB), The University of Hong Kong

Professional Admissions / Qualifications

2010 Hong Kong

Professional Affiliations

Member, Law Society of Hong Kong

Carmen Fung

Partner

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Carmen specialises in medicolegal work. Carmen provides advice and assistance to doctors, dentists, other healthcare professionals and hospitals concerning clinical negligence claims and complaints, and disciplinary proceedings. Carmen is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

Experience

2014 Howse Williams
2008 Winnie Mak, Chan & Yeung, Solicitors
2005 Liu, Chan and Lam, Solicitors

Education

2005 Postgraduate Certificate in Laws, The University of Hong Kong
2004 Bachelor of Laws, The University of Hong Kong

Professional Admissions / Qualifications

2007 Hong Kong

Professional Affiliations

Member, Law Society of Hong Kong

Hiu Yee Chung

Partner

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Hiu Yee specialises in medicolegal matters, providing advice to doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, nurses and other clinical professionals regarding clinical negligence claims and regulatory proceedings. Hiu Yee was admitted in Hong Kong in 2012.

Hiu Yee is an accredited mediator on the Panel of General Mediators of the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre and the Hong Kong Mediation Accreditation Association Limited. She is also a Civil Celebrant of Marriages.

Hiu Yee is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

Experience

2013 Howse Williams
2010 DLA Piper Hong Kong

Education

2010 PCLL, City University of Hong Kong
2009 Bachelor of Laws, City University of Hong Kong

Professional Admissions / Qualifications

2021 Civil Celebrant of Marriages
2012 Accredited General Mediator
2012 Hong Kong

Professional Affiliations

Member, Law Society of Hong Kong

Katy Yeung

Partner

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Katy qualified as a Solicitor in England and Wales in 2011 and was admitted as a Hong Kong Solicitor in 2015. Katy has broad experience in clinical negligence and healthcare law, advising clients across both contentious and non-contentious matters. Katy's practice focuses on advising healthcare professionals, clinics, private hospitals and medical indemnity providers on a wide range of medico-legal issues. These include high value clinical negligence claims, complaints to regulatory bodies, Coroner's inquests, disciplinary proceedings before the Medical Council and Education and Accreditation Committee, Department of Health investigations, investigations by the Committee on Complaints against Private Healthcare Facilities, Judicial Reviews and criminal investigations.

In addition to contentious matters, Katy provides legal advice on a wide range of non-contentious issues including confidentiality, informed consent compliance with healthcare specific legislation such as the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, the Human Reproductive Technology Ordinance, Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance and Prevention of Bribery Ordinance. She also advises on compliance with professional codes of conduct on issues such as practice promotion and financial arrangements in the medical setting.

Katy is fluent in English and Cantonese.

Experience

2014 Howse Williams
2010 Glassbrooks Solicitors (Lancashire, England)

Education

2007 Legal Practice Course, University of Central Lancashire (Lancashire, England)
2003 LLB (Hons), University of Manchester, (Manchester, England)

Professional Admissions / Qualifications

2015 Hong Kong
2011 England and Wales

Professional Affiliations

Member, Law Society of Hong Kong

Our Team

Bianca Wu
Senior Associate

Bianca joined the medico-legal team in Howse Williams upon completing her training contract in 2013. She has experience in dispute resolution and medico-legal matters (including non-contentious matters). She advises healthcare professionals and hospitals on clinical negligence claims and complaints, Coroner's inquests, disciplinary proceedings, debt-recovery by hospitals, Mental Health Ordinance matters and criminal matters. Bianca is fluent in English and Cantonese.

Alex Yau
Senior Associate

Alex has experience in a wide range of medico-legal and healthcare matters such as disciplinary inquiries before the Medical Council, criminal proceedings, clinical negligence, civil claims, alternative dispute resolution and regulatory and advisory work. Alex is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

Simon Fung
Senior Associate

Simon joined HW as a paralegal in 2017 before starting his training contract at HW in 2018. Before studying law, Simon was a registered pharmacist in New Zealand and Hong Kong. Simon works on matter relating to Clinical Negligence and Healthcare. Simon is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

Iris Chang
Associate

Iris was admitted as a Solicitor in 2025. Iris was a trainee at Howse Williams where she gained experience in clinical negligence and healthcare; corporate, regulatory and compliance and commercial litigation. Iris is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

The team also includes paralegals and additional trainee solicitors as required.

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