

Matthew Lee



Call: 2011

Email: cop@doughtystreet.co.uk

Profile

Matthew is a leading civil and public law barrister, specialising in emerging AI issues, human rights, equality law, housing, and property. He has extensive expertise under the Equality Act 2010, particularly in cases involving the Public Sector Equality Duty and housing discrimination. He frequently handles complex housing condition claims, including disrepair, environmental protection, and housing-related personal injury matters.

Alongside his established practice, Matthew is at the forefront of developing legal frameworks addressing the emergence and rights of Artificial Intelligence. He actively advises and publishes on issues concerning AI autonomy, civil liberties implications, and the intersection of AI and human rights. Through his influential blog, "Natural & Artificial Law," he promotes discourse on AI rights, ethical governance, and future-oriented legal strategies.

Matthew remains committed to advising solicitors and clients on challenging cases, novel legal issues, and strategic litigation. He welcomes direct engagement from professionals exploring innovative approaches to AI within law and society.

WHAT THE DIRECTORIES SAY

Matthew is ranked in Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2026:

"Matthew Lee is a highly skilled and knowledgeable barrister with a strong reputation in social housing and public law."

"Matthew is the leading barrister in the field of disrepair and housing conditions. He thinks outside the box and really knows his stuff."

"I really enjoy working with Matt; he has a can-do approach to the law and is not afraid to think outside the box."

The Legal 500 2026 rankings list Matthew as a Leading Junior:

"Matthew is very knowledgeable in the area of housing, and he is committed and compassionate in his work."

Matthew was ranked in Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025:

"He is innovative, personable and understands the struggles solicitors have with the clients."

"Matthew is a fearless advocate and is particularly good on cases where there are Equality Act 2010 issues."

"I know I can always trust Matthew to deal with complex matters in an impeccable way and pick out issues and bring about innovative arguments."

"Strong junior with significant market recognition for his recent appearances in significant reported cases. He acts in possession cases and anti-social behaviour claims, among other disputes, including those relating to the Equality Act 2010."

"He is an excellent advocate and his style is direct and persuasive."

"Matthew is extremely hard-working and very dedicated to housing."

"He is a tenacious advocate and fights hard for his clients."

"Very personable, knowledgeable and not afraid to think outside the box. He is a fearless advocate."

"He is already above and beyond what you would expect for his year of call."

The Legal 500 2025 rankings list Matthew as a Leading Junior:

"His work is excellent, he is enthusiastic and not afraid to think outside the box. His wide-ranging experience includes cases involving homelessness, possession, antisocial behaviour and disrepair."

Education

BVC

LLB (Hons.) First Class

Languages

Greek

Related practice areas

Administrative & Public Law

Housing, Social Welfare and Property

Discrimination

Artificial Intelligence

Administrative and Public Law

Matthew regularly receives instructions on judicial review claims and homelessness appeals. He acted for both homelessness applicants in the case of *Watford BC v. McMahon and Kiefer v. Hertsmere BC [2020] PTSR 1217* where the Court of Appeal considered the relationship between vulnerability and the public sector equality duty in priority need cases in homelessness law.

He also acted for the successful applicant in the case of *Smith v Haringey which was heard with Panayiotou v London Borough of Waltham Forest (2017) EWCA Civ 1624*, This case concerned (1) the meaning of “significantly” in *Hotak v London Borough of Southwark [2015] UKSC 30* in relation to priority need in homeless applications and (2) whether a local authority was entitled to contract out/delegate its Public Sector Equality Duty pursuant to s149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Housing, Social Welfare and Property

Matthew excels in a comprehensive range of housing matters, including possession proceedings, housing condition claims, anti-social behaviour injunctions, homelessness and unlawful evictions.

Matthew's particular expertise lies in addressing discrimination in housing, with a successful track record in claims involving discrimination arising from disability, reasonable adjustments and the public sector equality duty. He is deeply committed to representing vulnerable individuals, focusing on building strong relationships with clients and fostering an environment

of collaborative and informed decision-making. Matthew acted in the following cases:

- *Khan v Mehmood* [2022] EWCA Civ 791, the Court of Appeal considered whether the 10% uplift in general damages in all civil claims was to apply to cases of disrepair in accordance with the principles set out in *Simmons v Castle* [2012] EWCA Civ 1039. The court determined that those principles did apply to disrepair claims. I was instructed by Duncan Lewis Solicitors.
- *Ibrahim v Haringey LBC* [2021] EWHC 731 (QB), the Claimant was a rough sleeper in London in May 2020 and had approached Defendant about accommodation during the 'Everyone In' period. He was housed in self-contained accommodation but, shortly after he moved into the accommodation, the Defendant sought to evict him. It was asserted he was housed there by mistake and should have been housed in a room of a Travelodge. The Claimant asserted he was a secure tenant or licensee. The County Court Judge dismissed the claim for an injunction.

On appeal, Mr Justice Lane considered the course adopted by the judge had been procedurally unfair. The parties had attended the return date expecting to deal only with whether the injunction should continue; the judge had been wrong to deal with the underlying claim as well. Moreover, the judge had gone too far in making the findings that he had made. There was a dispute between the parties as to the power which had been used to provide the accommodation and whether what had been granted was a secure tenancy/licence of some lesser right. That was a dispute of fact and law which was not suitable for determination at an interim injunction hearing. Whilst, at first sight, it might be said that CN supported the argument that this emergency accommodation was not let as a "dwelling", the point was not so clear that it should have been decided summarily at the return date and should go to trial. The trial is due to be heard in October 2021.

- *Mohamed v Barnet LBC* [2019] EWHC 1012 (QB), the High Court gave guidance on when the exception to secure tenancies under paragraph 6 of Schedule 1 to the Housing Act 1985 applied. On 5 July 2019, Lord Justice Flaux granted permission to appeal to the Court of Appeal. The case was settled shortly thereafter.
- *Akita and another v Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland* [2019] EWHC 1712 (QB). In that case, Spencer J allowed an appeal of a decision by a recorder who struck out a claim too soon on the basis of the claimants' non-attendance at the trial. The claimant was delayed and did not arrive at the start time. Spencer J stated: "*It seems to me that it cannot mean simply failure to attend on time otherwise the party who attended the trial listed for 10 o'clock would at 10.05 be a party who had failed to attend trial, and that cannot be right... A failure to attend trial is in the context of a failure to*

attend by the time the Judge who is due to try the case effectively decides not to wait any further". In all the circumstances, he found that it was inappropriate and premature for the recorder to have triggered his power under CPR 39.3.

Discrimination and Equality Law

Matthew remains consistently vigilant about the potential implications of the Equality Act 2010 in housing cases. He is particularly committed to advancing this area of law to further expand access to justice for those in need. He has argued issues under the Equality Act 2010 in the senior courts:

- *Watford BC v. McMahon, Kiefer v. Hertsmere BC [2020] PTSR 1217*, the Court of Appeal considered the relationship between vulnerability and the public sector equality duty in priority need cases in homelessness law.
- *London and Quadrant Housing Trust v Patrick [2019] EWHC 1263 (QB)*, acted at permission stage only. Case concerned principles on which the PSED may be considered summarily.
- *Powell v Dacorum BC (2019) EWCA Civ 29*, the Court of Appeal considered the Public Sector Equality Duty in the context of applications to suspend a warrant seeking possession.
- *Panayiotou v London Borough of Waltham Forest & Smith v Haringey (2017) EWCA Civ 1624*, Co-counsel for the successful Appellant, Mr Smith. This case concerned (1) the meaning of "significantly" in *Hotak v London Borough of Southwark [2015] UKSC 30* in relation to priority need in homeless applications and (2) whether a local authority was entitled to contract out/delegate its Public Sector Equality Duty pursuant to s149 of the Equality Act 2010.