



Stefano Ruis

Partner

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Stefano Ruis is one of the country's leading experts in civil law as it relates to state bodies such as the police.

He specialises in bringing public law challenges in relation to cautions, search warrants, DBS disclosure decisions and notices under Section 2 of the Criminal Justice Act 1987. His pioneering work in this area has supported the development of a number of significant additional protections for the individual.

Stefano's clients are often professionals working in regulated industries for whom the inappropriate application of police powers can have devastating consequences.

A client-orientated lawyer with intense focus on detail, Stefano has developed a particular specialism in the law around DBS disclosure. He has had repeated success using public law remedies to challenge disclosures made on enhanced DBS certificates.

He also advises on civil claims against the police, complaints and challenges to IOPC decisions, often on behalf of those engaged in peaceful protest.

Stefano is currently instructed by two core participants in the Undercover Policing Inquiry, each of whom is an ex-family member of an undercover officer.

Stefano also uses his extensive litigation experience to act for both individuals and businesses in civil fraud claims. He acts for both claimants and defendants and has achieved significant success in a number of high value matters.

Stefano qualified as a solicitor in 1997 following a degree in philosophy and a background in the public sector. Prior to joining Hickman & Rose, he was a partner at Fisher Meredith where he headed their police and prison law department.

Areas of Expertise

Actions Against Police

Stefano specialises in police law. He is a leading expert on challenging arrests, cautions and the inappropriate disclosure of information by police forces.

Stefano uses his extensive civil litigation experience to bring public law challenges against the police, most usually in relation criminal investigations. He has had repeated success in challenging cautions, search warrants and notices under Section 2 of the Criminal Justice Act 1987.

His work in this area has supported the development of a number of significant additional protections for the individual, including the principle that acceptance of a formal caution does not prevent bringing a civil claim (*Abraham v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis* [2001] 1 WLR 1257) and the imposition of a significant evidential burden upon the state to demonstrate that the responsibility for an injury did not lie at its door (*Sheppard v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2002] EWCA Civ 1921).

Stefano has also become the first port of call for individuals seeking to prevent the police from disclosing disproportionate, irrelevant and sometimes untrue information on an enhanced DBS certificate. By persuading decision-makers that the police have failed to conduct the correct balancing exercise in relation to an individual's privacy and the public interest, Stefano has made a lasting and significant difference to his clients' professional lives and futures.

Usually, these concerns relate to information the police have or intend to disclose to the DBS for revelation as part of an enhanced criminal record check. When such information is disclosed or retained unlawfully, Stefano has an excellent track record of achieving successful outcomes on behalf of his clients. Most of Stefano's cases in this fast-developing area of law are settled before trial.

Stefano has brought various claims against the police false imprisonment, assault, malicious prosecution, misfeasance and in negligence and he also represents three core participants in the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

Stefano advises on police complaints as well as challenges to IOPC decisions, often acting on behalf of people involved in peaceful political protest.

State Abuses Of Power

Defending individuals' civil liberties and human rights from state abuses of power is the core work of Hickman & Rose's civil team. Stefano's cases in this area arise mainly out of the criminal justice system and involve the police and prison authorities.

He has acted for numerous clients in witness protection, in which he has successfully litigated in novel claims raising issues under articles 2, 3 and 8 ECHR.

Public Inquiries

Stefano undertakes public inquiry work and currently acts for three core participants in the Undercover Policing Inquiry, each of whom is an ex-family member of an undercover officer.

Civil Fraud

With over 20 years' civil litigation experience, Stefano is able to draw on his expertise to act for both individuals and businesses in civil fraud claims. He acts for claimants and defendants and has achieved significant success in a number of high value matters.

Often working in close collaboration with lawyers in the firm's criminal department, the fraud team leverages its litigation expertise to work in close collaboration with the firm's criminal lawyers to maximise clients' ability to achieve the desired outcome.

Private Client

Stefano has also acted for a number of HNW and high profile clients in relation to the way state bodies and other institutions retain and disclose potentially damaging and sometimes untrue personal information.

He uses public law to ensure these organisations – such as the police, local authorities, universities and schools – adhere strictly to the law. By doing so, Stefano has been able to prevent the unnecessary disclosure of information which, if revealed, could have a devastating impact on his clients' lives.

Stefano works alongside lawyers in the firm's criminal law department to represent individuals caught up in internal investigations, such as disciplinary enquiries conducted by universities and regulated bodies. Stefano's pioneering work in this rapidly developing area of civil law has protected his clients' personal and professional reputations.

What Others Say

- “Star Individual” in Police Law: Mainly Claimant – *Chambers UK, 2024*
- “Recommended Lawyer” in Admin & Public Law: Traditional Claimant – *Chambers UK, 2024*
- “Key Lawyer” in Civil Liberties & Human Rights – *Legal 500, 2024*
- “Key Lawyer” in Administrative & Public Law – *Legal 500, 2024*