

Road Accidents: An introduction to claiming compensation

**“... a driver suddenly
pulled out... forcing me to
swerve hard to the right to
avoid him and we crashed
into some railings with
considerable impact”**

Tracy Russell
Ambulance Technician



THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS

THE MOST EXPERIENCED
PERSONAL INJURY FIRM IN THE UK

Accidents affect every type of road user – from drivers and their passengers to cyclists, bikers and pedestrians.



What price careless driving?



The range and severity of injuries caused by road traffic accidents is enormous.

Some injuries can have a short term impact on day to day life and then heal permanently.

Others can last for life.

Whiplash injuries, for example, can heal relatively quickly.

Or if they're still present after 2 years, are likely to be permanent.

Some injuries take time to develop – and the expenses involved can escalate.

Road traffic accidents sometimes affect victim's families, too.

It can be a very real struggle for family members to provide the care and support needed.

Here is a brief guide to how Thompsons can help you pursue a claim.

GREAT SERVICE, GREAT SETTLEMENTS!

If you have suffered injuries in a road accident that wasn't your fault, or was only partly your fault, you may be entitled to compensation.

Which can help with providing financial security and with redressing the sense of injustice involved.

Thompsons Solicitors have been advising claimants for more than 85 years and always work to maximise all settlements on behalf of their clients.

And provide outstanding service while doing so.

We have thousands of clients more than satisfied with the service and the settlement they received.

Being Thompsons clients they got the full 100% of the award achieved, and didn't pay a penny in legal fees - we get paid by the other side.

And the vast majority of personal injury claims we handle are settled without ever going to court.

“Thompsons ... kept me informed every step of the way. And the firm gave me good advice, as was shown in the result”

“Three years ago I had an accident on a bus going home from work.

The driver took a corner very fast and I was thrown across the aisle to the other side of the bus and wrapped around the bell bar.

There had been nothing by, or in front of, the raised seat I had been in to hold on to.

I was in a lot of pain and had damaged my jaw, teeth, neck, shoulder and legs, and was in shock.

Despite all that, the driver was unhelpful and denied there was any process or system for reporting the accident. Shortly afterwards, a bus company inspector did the same - and they offered no help in getting me to casualty.

I had to find my own way there.

Some months later I was still suffering recurring pain and I remained upset about the unhelpful way I was treated... I was also upset that the bus company refused to put a safety bar on that seat to help other passengers in the future.

Eventually, my union suggested that I claim for personal injury and recommended Thompsons Solicitors.

I have never made a personal injury claim before so the process was new to me. Right from the start, Thompsons was excellent and very professional... and explained the whole process.

My solicitor kept in touch and kept me informed every step of the way.

And she gave me good advice, as was shown in the result – I was very happy to receive a settlement.

It will never make up for the effects of the injuries, some of which I still have, but at least it made the bus company face up to its responsibility.”

Sue Hagues



Here are 4 important points for you to consider

1. Get the best evidence you can to help your claim

To make a successful claim for compensation it has to be proved that someone else was to blame for your accident and the injuries you are suffering from.

Obviously, the stronger your evidence the stronger your claim.

You should try to get the names, addresses and phone numbers of anyone who was involved in your accident or witnessed it.

However, people involved in accidents are often in shock and unable to do this.

But you should report your accident to your local police station within 24 hours.

You should also seek medical attention and treatment either at a Hospital or from your local GP as soon as possible following your accident.

Trauma can mask the pain of some injuries, such as whiplash – so make sure you are properly examined even if you feel ok.

It may also be helpful if you have photographs of the location of the accident, or any photographs relevant to the accident or your injuries.



“Thompsons were absolutely terrific! all the way through. I knew what was

“...I was driving... a driver suddenly pulled out ... forcing me to swerve hard to the right to avoid him and we crashed into some railings with considerable impact.

I briefly passed out.

But I quickly regained consciousness

The engine had caught fire, there was a lot of smoke...and I even had trouble getting free of my seat belt.

I was taken to casualty.... Initially it was thought I had whiplash injuries – pain in my neck, ribs and all down one side.

But with time the pain got worse, not better and I had a miserable and painful year .

I couldn't drive any more, which I missed.

Eventually, after scans, it was decided I needed an operation on my right shoulder and that was done 3 years ago.

As a result I have been able to drive again..

But considerable pain remained and still does to this day.

My union representative suggested I make a personal injury claim and put me in touch with Thompsons, who are solicitors who act for my union in such claims.

Thompsons were absolutely terrific! They explained exactly what would happen, all of which was completely new to me, and kept me informed all the way through. I knew what was happening at all times!

My claim was handled by Thompsons' Keely Goldup - she knew I did shift work and was always really helpful about that, too, moving meeting times around to fit my shifts.

My claim should have come to court in March of this year – but it was settled before that.

I was glad not to have to appear in court and very happy with the settlement.”



Tracy Russell

**They... kept me informed
happening at all times!"**



2. How much compensation might be awarded?

The circumstances of road traffic accidents are often similar.

But the effect on the individual is unique and this makes every compensation claim different.

Compensation is awarded for pain, suffering and the inability to do things now that you could do before the accident.

For example the inability to work, to drive, to shop, to play sport, to care for yourself.

You are also entitled to recover any losses or expenditure you pay out as a result of your injuries.

These include loss of income and the need to pay others to do things you could previously do yourself, and travel costs to and from your doctors and hospitals, and prescription charges.

Such consequences can last days, weeks or months.

In some cases, people may never again be able to resume their previously normal activities.

If Thompsons are pursuing your settlement we will claim compensation for all past and future losses.

Put simply, our aim is to maximise your compensation.

3. Timing can be vital

Seek legal advice promptly.

There is a time limit on making a claim for injuries following an accident.

You have 3 years in which to make a claim from the date of your accident.

If you were under 18 at the time of the accident you have 3 years from the date of your 18th birthday in which to make a claim.

If you have been injured by someone who was uninsured, or who left the scene of the accident without stopping and giving their details, there are still ways we can help you.

The Motor Insurance Bureau (MIB) is an organisation that helps members of the public who have been affected by uninsured or untraced drivers.

We can contact the MIB on your behalf but, again, such accidents need to be reported within time limits.

You should contact us as soon as possible to ensure your claim is processed within the time limits.

4. What about state benefit claims ?

You may be entitled to disablement benefit and/or other State Benefits.

Thompsons can advise you on this as, of course, can your local Department of Work and Pensions office.

Any such claims are made separately to your claim for compensation.

“My mother was... very, very happy with the settlement, too. She says she’s ‘Over the moon!’. And all the more so because she gets to keep 100% of it!” Michael Perry, Son

Michael Perry helped his mother Elsie with her recent accident claim.

She was standing on the pavement when a car mounted the pavement and reversed into her, ripping skin from the back of her leg and trapping her foot. Comments Michael

“Thompsons service was really exceptional - they kept us in the picture and explained everything to do with my mother's claim every step of the way.

They were also very considerate and courteous during what was a traumatic time for my mother, myself and the rest of the family.

My mother was dreading the idea of having to go to court but the claim was settled without having to go to court.

She was very, very happy with the settlement, too. She says she’s ‘Over the moon!’.

And all the more so because she gets to keep 100% of it!”



“This amount was far more than I was expecting. I would like to pass on my grateful thanks to you and the team for their efforts in securing me such a good settlement. ”

Erika Lucas

Erika Lucas, above, suffered a whiplash injury in a car accident and pursued her claim for personal injury through Thompsons.

How Thompsons can help you

Thompsons is recognised by The Legal 500 as a leading personal injury law firm.

We've earned a formidable reputation for fighting hard for our clients to ensure the maximum compensation in the minimum time.

We secured one of the highest personal injury awards ever in the UK for a client injured in a road traffic accident - £3.4m.

And in 2006 alone we took on 3,235 claims for road traffic accident injuries.

We have files bulging with testimonials from clients more than satisfied with the service and settlements that they received, a few of whom have appeared in this leaflet.

Not one of them had to pay us anything.

And being Thompsons clients, they all got 100% of the award achieved.

If they were members of a Union their claims were usually supported by their union's legal scheme.

Useful contacts

The Motor Insurance Bureau

01908 830 001

www.mib.org.uk

Department for Work and Pensions benefit enquiry line:

Freephone **0800 88 22 00**

Textphone **0800 24 33 55**

www.dwp.gov.uk

ROSPA, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

0121 248 2000

www.rospace.com

SCARD - Support and Care After Road Death and Injury -

offers support to people affected by road death and injury.

0845 123 5542

www.scard.org.uk

For more information about making a claim, simply call
Thompsons on **08000 224 224**

Thompsons Solicitors Offices

North East

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

0191 269 0400

Middlesbrough

01642 554 162

South Shields

0191 4974 440

Yorkshire

Leeds

0113 205 6300

Sheffield

0114 270 3300

Midlands

Birmingham

0121 262 1200

Derby

01332 224 680

Nottingham

0115 989 7200

Stoke-on-Trent

01782 406 200

Wolverhampton

01902 771 551

North West

Liverpool

0151 224 1600

Manchester

0161 819 3500

Wales & South West

Cardiff

029 2044 5300

Bristol

0117 304 2400

Plymouth

01752 675 810

Swansea

01792 484 920

South East

London

020 7290 0000

Southampton

02380 212 040

Chelmsford

01245 228800

Dagenham

020 8596 7700

Oxford

01865 332150

Wimbledon

020 8947 4163

Further Information

Call us, without obligation, for free compensation
claim advice on **08000 224 224**.

Or if you are in a union, ask your representative for advice.

You can also find out more information on our website at

www.thompsons.law.co.uk



THE MOST EXPERIENCED
PERSONAL INJURY FIRM IN THE UK

The information contained in this brochure is not a substitute for legal advice, and only applies in England and Wales. You should talk to a lawyer or adviser before making a decision about what to do.

Thompsons Solicitors is a trading name of Thompsons Solicitors LLP and is regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

May 2011