hailshamchambers

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Sarah Christie-Brown

Call: 1994



Overview

Sarah specialises in medical law, clinical negligence and inquests. She acts for both claimants and defendants in a wide range of clinical specialisms and at inquests on behalf of families and other interested parties, including Trusts. She has particular interest in professional negligence cases against solicitors arising out of clinical negligence litigation. She also undertakes general personal injury work.

Sarah's experience in disciplinary work has included the General Medical Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council, General Dental Council and the Health and Care Professions Council. In particular, she has been instructed regularly by the Royal College of Nursing, appearing frequently before all committees of the NMC.

Sarah is ranked as a leading junior in the field of clinical negligence in the Legal 500.

Medical law

Sarah has dealt with a wide range of clinical negligence cases, acting for both claimants and defendants in relation to a variety of clinical specialisms.

Her cases have included claims arising out of:

- obstetric errors
- wrongful birth
- lack of informed consent/failure to advise
- missed diagnosis
- failure to treat properly
- negligent surgery
- fatal cases
- orthopaedic treatment
- orthodontic treatment
- ophthalmic errors

- treatment by an optician
- refusal to fund treatment (varicose vein)

Sarah's most recent reported case is that of *Aderounmu v Colvin* [2021] EWHC 2293 (QB). This was a trial of the preliminary issue in which the Claimant argued that, due to his lack of capacity, time had not started to run for limitation purposes. Sarah represented the Defendant who successfully argued that the Claimant had not discharged the presumption of capacity.

Sarah was led by Jean Ritchie KC in two-high value claims involving brain-injury at birth and by David Pittaway KC in the case of Nicholson v Health and Social Services Committee of the States of Jersey (an appeal to the Privy Council), another case involving brain injury at birth.

Sarah acted as junior counsel to Martin Spencer KC (now Spencer MJ) in two high-value cases involving brain-injured adults and to Andrew Post KC in a high value case involving a child brain-injury at birth.

Most recently, Sarah has acted in two separate cases in relation to the failure to diagnose and repair injury sustained by mothers during childbirth. In both cases the claimants were high-earning professionals whose significant physical injuries affected their ability to return to work and in turn led to large claims for loss of earnings.

Other cases have involved negligent LASIK eye surgery, negligent urgent heart surgery causing brain damage, negligent treatment of haemochromatosis and a wrongful birth case involving a brain damaged baby.

Inquests

Sarah has appeared regularly at inquests:

Most recently, in May 2023, Sarah represented an NHS Trust in the Inquest into the death of Aisha Cleary who was born and died overnight in a prison cell at HMP Bronzefield.

Led by Michael Powers KC, acting pro bono for the family of the deceased where the family successfully sought to establish that the deceased had suffered mesothelioma as a result of industrial rather than environmental exposure.

Led by David Pittaway KC in relation to the Kingsway Hospital Derby Inquest, an inquiry into the deaths of 11 elderly patients.

Acting for the daughter of the deceased in a jury inquest arising out of a powerboat accident. Sarah was subsequently instructed in relation to the consequent fatal accident claim, which was settled before trial.

Recent high-profile cases include:

The inquest into the death of Aisha Chitira. Sarah represented one of the nurses involved in the care of the deceased who died having been discharged following an abortion at the Marie Stopes Clinic in Ealing.

The inquest into the death of Amy El Keria who died at the Priory Hospital, Ticehurst, from complications following the tying of a ligature around her neck. Sarah represented Ms El Keria's treating psychiatrist.

She has also acted for:

- The family of a 14-year-old girl who died unexpectedly from sepsis. This led to a clinical negligence case which was successfully settled on behalf of the family.
- The family of a prisoner who died following a delay in treatment both in prison and in hospital.
- The family of a man who died of a post-operative complication following lung surgery.
- The family of a worker who was killed by a reversing truck on a large building site.

Regulatory and disciplinary

Sarah has appeared at the GMC, GDC and HCPC but most frequently before all committees of the Nursing and Midwifery Council. She has been instructed regularly by the Royal College of Nursing and has advised and acted for the respondents in over 50 NMC cases involving nurses, independent midwives and health visitors.

Over the last few years she has acted for nurses accused of, inter alia:

- misconduct in relation to the birth of a baby in her absence (independent midwife)
- conviction for possession of criminal property
- errors in administration of medication within a neonatal unit
- conviction for downloading child pornography from the internet, in which the Committee agreed that the hearing should be held in private
- sexual relationships with patients
- misconduct in relation to the management of her caseload by a health visitor
- racism and bullying in the workplace
- dishonest record-keeping

In 2008, she fought a successful appeal in the High Court against a decision of the Conduct and Competence Committee of the NMC (Uma James v the Nursing and Midwifery Council [2008] EWHC 365 (Admin)) on grounds of lack of/inadequacy of reasons.

In 2014, she appealed successfully to the High Court against findings of dishonesty by a Conduct and Competence Committee of the NMC (Penny Ann Lavis v Nursing and Midwifery Council (2014) EWHC 4083 (Admin)), which were quashed. The case

was remitted back to the NMC for the allegations of dishonesty to be heard by a fresh panel. The panel found the allegations not proved.

Sarah appeared most recently at the GDC where her client, having partially admitted the charges against him, was found to have no impairment to his fitness to practice.

Personal injury

Sarah has wide experience of acting in personal injury cases, for both claimants and defendants. Cases have involved accidents in supermarkets, on public highways and in the course of employment (including, in particular, back injuries sustained by nurses).

Professional liability

Sarah's practice has covered the liability of a variety of professionals including solicitors, surveyors, architects and a Health and Safety adviser. She is particularly interested in cases arising out of negligently managed clinical negligence or personal injury litigation.

Previous such cases included:

- acting for solicitors in a case of alleged under settlement of a claim on behalf of a boy who had sustained brain damage in a road traffic accident
- acting for solicitors in a case arising out of a complex clinical negligence claim in respect of allegedly negligent radiotherapy treatment
- acting for solicitors in a case of alleged negligent mismanagement of a fatal accident claim where the family of the deceased needed to establish that he had contracted mesothelioma in the workplace

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Notable cases

Aderounmu v Colvin [2021] EWHC 2293 (QB)

Aderounmu v Colvin (costs) [2022] EWHC 637 (QB)

Inquest into the death of Aisha Chitira, 1st May 2018, West London Coroner's Court.

Inquest into the death of Amy El-Keria, 1st June 2016, East Sussex Coroner's Court.

Penny Ann Lavis v Nursing and Midwifery Council [2014] EWHC 4083 (Admin)

Uma James v the Nursing and Midwifery Council [2008] EWHC 365 (Admin)
Successful appeal on grounds of lack of/inadequacy of reasons

Nicholson v Health and Social Services Committee of the States of Jersey (an appeal to the Privy Council in 2006 which settled pre- hearing) led by David Pittaway KC

R v The Common Professional Examination Board Ex Parte Sally Mealing-Mcleod (Court of Appeal) The Times, May 2nd 2000.

Further information

Education: BA Hons (Oxon) English Lang and Literature; Diploma in art history; Diploma in Law; 1994 Harmsworth Scholar, Middle Temple

ADR: Accredited mediator

Committees: Member of the Professional negligence Bar Association.

Personal: Sarah is interested in a wide range of music, particularly classical, and has sung with a number of choirs including the Holst Singers, conducted by Stephen Layton. She also has a particular interest in Art History which gave her the excuse to live in Venice for a year. She enjoys languages and speaks some French and Italian.

ICO Data protection registration number: **Z7008199**.

Sarah Christie-Brown is a barrister regulated by the Bar Standards Board. Click to view Sarah Christie-Browns' Privacy Notice.

What others say

"Sarah is an incredibly thorough barrister. Her drafting is second to none, with a forensic attention to detail." *Legal 500, 2026*

"An impressive and shrewd tactician, Sarah is an excellent senior; she is always meticulously prepared, skilled on her feet and deeply empathetic with clients." *Legal 500, 2024*