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*Sian Reeves

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Practice Overview

Sian Reeves practices in public law, and specialises in human rights law, immigration, inquests and inquiries, judicial review, national security cases and prison law.

In September 2018, Sian was appointed to the Attorney General's Civil Panel of Counsel, B Panel (London), having previously been appointed to the C Panel from March 2015 to September 2018.

Alongside her public law practice, Sian maintains a civil law practice, with a particular focus on costs and personal injury law. Sian has considerable experience of civil claims with a public law element, including private law damages claim arising from criminal prosecutions, prisons, immigration detention, and deaths in custody.

In December 2018, Sian was admitted to the State Bar of California, and is licensed to practice law in California as an attorney.

Notable and Reported cases

- Public Law cases
 - **R (on the application of AAA & Others) v The Secretary of State for the Home Department (UNHCR intervening) [2022] EWHC 3230 (Admin)** On 19 December 2022, the Divisional Court handed down an important judgment in claims for judicial review challenging the government's proposal to relocate asylum seekers to Rwanda to have their asylum claims determined there. Sian Reeves, instructed by the Government Legal Department.
 - Acting for the Crown Prosecution Service in damages claims (brought under Articles 3, 4, 8 and 14 ECHR) involving criminal prosecutions.
 - Acting for the Parole Board in damages claims brought under Article 5(4) ECHR relating to alleged delays in convening a hearing and decisions not to direct release.
 - Acting for the Ministry of Justice in claims relating to recall to prison from licence.
 - A proposed judicial review claim by a high profile convicted TACT prisoner in respect of his proposed licence conditions.
 - Cases involving allegations of human rights breaches and discrimination (particularly disability discrimination) within prison.
 - Judicial review claims challenging the legality of immigration detention, and the delay in providing



suitable accommodation upon release.

- Inquests & Inquiries

- **Inquest into the death of EH** - Acted for the Ministry of Justice in this 3 day inquest into the death of EH, who had hanged himself at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. The inquest considered a wide range of issues, including EH's location on the first night centre (rather than the detox unit), the timing of his medication, his previous mental health history disclosed at a previous prison, and the emergency response. The jury (sitting at West London Coroner's Court) found no failings on the part of the Ministry of Justice.
- A three week Article 2 jury inquest into the death of an off-bailer who swallowed acid at court shortly after receiving a sentence of imprisonment. Sian acted for HMPPS and HMCTS. The inquest received widespread media coverage.
- Representing a university at an inquest into the death of a student. The Coroner reached a conclusion of suicide. Whilst the family were concerned that the death was caused by the university's release of exam results, the Coroner did not find that this caused or contributed to the death.
- Representing National Highways at inquests into deaths on the strategic road networks, including two deaths involving aquaplaning in wet weather conditions.
- An Article 2 inquest concerning the death of a 5 year old boy in hospital in 1978 following elective muscle transfer surgery. The original inquest was quashed by the High Court in 2018. Sian acted for the Department for Health and Social Care.
- Representing Transport for London in an ongoing inquest into the death of a passenger who fell into a gap between the tube and platform at a London Underground station.
- Multiple Article 2 jury inquests arising out of deaths in custody.
- An inquest into the death of man who went into cardiac arrest whilst being monitored by an ambulance crew. When they tried to defibrillate him, the defibrillator did not work. Sian acted for the family.
- Sian is currently instructed by the Department of Health and Social Care in the UK Covid- 19 Inquiry.

- Costs Litigation & Funding

- **Nwankwo & Anor v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2018] EWCA Civ 5** -The Court of Appeal considered the correct test that should be applied by the Upper Tribunal when considering an application for permission to appeal to the Court of Appeal against a costs order made in an application for judicial review. Sian acted for the SSHD.
- **Douglas v Ministry of Justice & Anor [2018] EWHC B2 (Costs)** - Which concerned the extent of recovery of inquest costs in a civil claim where liability was admitted before the inquest. Sian acted for the MOJ.
- **Technetix Limited v HMRC [2015] UKFTT 0369 (TC)** -Which considered whether the appellant should be permitted to make an application for costs out of time, and the correct principles to be applied to such an application. Sian acted for HMRC.
- **Finglands Coachways Ltd v O'Hare [2014] EWHC 1513 (QB)** - Cranston J held that under the pre-2013 CPR a costs judge was entitled to consider if individual items of costs claimed were proportionate and necessary for the conduct of litigation, even if the costs of the litigation overall appeared proportionate. Sian acted for the successful respondent.
- **Finglands Coachways Ltd v O'Hare [2014] EWHC 1513 (QB)** - Cranston J held that under the pre-



2013 CPR a costs judge was entitled to consider if individual items of costs claimed were proportionate and necessary for the conduct of litigation, even if the costs of the litigation overall appeared proportionate. Sian acted for the successful respondent.

- Personal Injury

- Acting for a defendant (led by Dominic Adamson QC) in a multi-million pound personal injury claim arising out of a gas explosion.
- Acting for a claimant (led by Rodney Dixon QC) in a claim for damages for sexual assault and false imprisonment that were committed overseas. The claim involves issues of jurisdiction and applicable law.
- Acting for the Ministry of Justice, at trial and in an advisory/drafting capacity, in multiple cases involving prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, and alleged assaults arising out of control and restraint incidents. Sian's recent experience includes alleged assaults on children within Young Offender Institutes and Secure Training Centres.
- Acting for a government department in a claim for damages for sexual assault allegedly committed by a temporary employee employed by a third party. The case involves difficult issues of vicarious liability.
- Multiple cases brought under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976 and/or the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1934, particularly arising out of deaths in custody and fatal road traffic accidents.
- **Shittu v The Home Office [2017] EWCA Civ 1748** - Sian acted for the Home Office, led by Cathy McGahey QC.

- International Law

- Drafting legal submissions to the Crown Prosecution Service on universal jurisdiction under s. 134 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 in respect of sexual offences that took place abroad.
- Drafting requests to the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office to designate individuals for sanctions under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020.
- Drafting applications for permission to serve out of the jurisdiction in civil claims with an international law element.
- Advising on issues of jurisdiction and applicable law.

Administrative & Public Law

Sian has a diverse public law practice which encompasses a broad range of public law issues and cases. Sian acts for a wide range of Government departments and executive agencies.

Sian represented the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the lead claims for judicial review challenging removal of asylum seekers to Rwanda under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership. Sian was instructed from the pre-action stage, and appeared at multiple hearings, including various hearings of applications for interim relief in relation to the first flight on 14 June 2022, in the Court of Appeal, case management hearings and at the 5-day rolled-up hearing in September 2022. Judgment is awaited.

Sian is frequently instructed in cases involving human rights law. This includes claims for judicial review, and also damages claims brought under the Human Rights Act 1998.

Sian regularly advises on and acts in domestic cases involving the interpretation of international law, including the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Sian specialises in cases involving human trafficking, and has acted and advised in a wide range of judicial review and private law damages claims



within this area.

Since her appointment to the Attorney General's Civil Panel of Counsel in March 2015, Sian has developed a busy and diverse immigration practice. Sian regularly appears in the High Court and Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) in both oral permission hearings and substantive judicial review hearings. Sian has increasing experience of appeals before the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber). Sian has also appeared in the Court of Appeal.

Sian has represented both claimants and defendants in a wide range of cases involving data protection and privacy issues, including misuse of private information, data protection and breach of confidence claims, and applications for anonymity.

Sian acts in a range of national security cases. She has been involved in case before the High Court, the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC), and the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (IPT). Sian has Developed Vetting Clearance.

Inquests & Inquiries

Sian has significant experience of representing a wide range of interested persons at Pre-Inquest Reviews and Inquests (both with and without a jury), including those where Article 2 ECHR is engaged. Sian's inquest experience includes deaths in prison custody, military deaths, deaths on the London Underground, and deaths arising out of road traffic accidents and at work.

Sian was instructed as junior counsel (led by Keith Morton QC and Fiona Canby) on behalf of Transport for London in the Inquest into the London Bombings of 7 July 2005.

Sian has experience of acting for core participants in public inquiries. During 2019 and 2020 Sian represented two core participants before the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). Sian represented the Home Office in IICSA's investigation into Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks. Sian also represented the Cabinet Office in IICSA's investigation into institutional responses to allegations of child sexual abuse involving the late Lord Janner of Braunstone QC.

Sian is currently instructed by the Department of Health and Social Care in the UK Covid- 19 Inquiry.

Costs Litigation & Funding

Sian's costs practice covers a wide range of both public and private law cases.

She has experience of acting for both paying and receiving parties at first instance and on appeal in the High Court, the SCCO, the County Court, the First Tier-Tribunal (Tax Chamber), the Upper Tribunal (IAC) and the Court of Appeal. Sian also regularly acts in an advisory capacity across a broad spectrum of areas of costs law. Sian's clients range from individuals on a direct access basis to Government Departments and executive agencies.

Sian's recent experience includes: detailed assessments (including those involving E-Bills); challenges to provisional assessments; misconduct issues; assessments of solicitor and client costs under the Solicitors Act 1974; assessments of costs payable by legally aided parties; recoverability of costs in cases involving allegations of professional misconduct by lawyers; costs budgets and costs case management hearings; wasted costs orders; and non-party costs orders against directors.

International Law

Sian has a developing public international law practice, which complements her domestic public law practice.

Personal Injury



Sian has practised in personal injury since her pupillage. Her personal injury practice now predominantly focuses on multi-track claims. Sian has particular experience in cases involving assaults and sexual abuse. Sian acts for both claimants and defendants.

Appointments

- Equality & Human Rights Commission's panel of counsel: England & Wales B list (2019)
- Admitted to the State Bar of California (2018) and licensed to practice law in California as an attorney
- Attorney General's Civil Panel of Counsel, B Panel (London) (2018-)
- Attorney General's Civil Panel of Counsel, C Panel (London) (2015-2018)
- Assistant Coroner for South London.

Awards

- Pegasus Scholarship to New Zealand (2012)
- Wilfred Watson BVC Scholarship, Gray's Inn (2005-2006)
- Postgraduate Award Holder, Arts and Humanities Research Board (2004-2005)
- Senior Seton Scholar, Downing College (2004)
- Rebecca Flower Squire Scholarship, University of Cambridge Law Faculty (2002)
- Lovells Law Prize, Downing College (2002)

Education

- BVC (Very Competent), BPP Law School (2006)
- BCL, Brasenose College, University of Oxford (2005)
- MA (Hons) Law (First Class), Downing College, University of Cambridge (2004)

Memberships

- Administrative Law Bar Association (ALBA)
- Personal Injuries Bar Association (PIBA)