

Landmark Chambers

Barrister CV


Harriet Wakeman



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Harriet Wakeman

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Harriet's practice spans public law and human rights, inquests, public inquiries, costs, and planning and environmental law.

Expertise

Public and Administrative, Planning, Environment



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Practice Summary

Harriet is recognised as a leading junior (Chambers and Partners, 2024) and a 'Tier 1 Rising Star' (Legal 500, 2024). She has been appointed to the Attorney General's Panel of Counsel (C panel).

Harriet is described in the leading legal directories as a "talented advocate" and an "extremely strong practitioner" who is "exceptional in mastering large volumes of material (including complex technical evidence)" and whose work is "of the highest quality". Her submissions are "superb – detailed and compelling" and "watertight". She has an "immense work ethic, and is confident and conscientious" and "her attention to detail and recall of facts is incredible". In 2020, Harriet was nominated for Advocate's Young Pro Bono Barrister of the Year.

Harriet has experience acting for an array of clients, including individuals, charities, large corporations, district councils, and government. Harriet acts for both claimants and government in her public law work. In her inquest work, Harriet acts for bereaved families, government departments and other interested persons, as well as acting as counsel to the inquest.

Harriet is regularly instructed in high-profile and sensitive matters, as well as cases involving a national security element. She has been instructed in cases in the High Court, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court.

Notable recent and current instructions include:

- ***R (Imam) v London Borough of Croydon***: Counsel for Crisis (led by Justin Bates) in an intervention before the Supreme Court which concerns the nature of the duty owed by local authorities to homeless people, and specifically, the relief that should be granted after a local authority has breached its “full” homelessness duty.
- ***R (AT) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions***: Counsel for the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (led by Jason Coppel KC) before the Court of Appeal in this case which concerns the entitlement of an EU citizen residing in the UK post-Brexit to social security benefits, and the applicability of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights post-Brexit.
- Counsel to the **Inquest into the death of Mr Thomas Orchard** (led by Nicholas Moss KC). Press coverage [here](#).
- Counsel for the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the **Dawn Sturges Inquiry** (led by Cathy McGahey KC). Dawn Sturges died in 2018 having been poisoned by Novichok after the attack on Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury. Press coverage [here](#).
- Counsel for the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (led by Samantha Broadfoot KC) in a judicial review challenge concerning errors in Covid-19 PCR testing at the Immensa laboratory in Wolverhampton.
- Counsel to the Inquests (led by Jonathan Hough KC) in the ‘**Bugaled Breizh**’ Inquests, concerning the sinking of a French fishing trawler in 2004. Press coverage [here](#).
- Counsel for the Defendant (led by David Blundell KC) in the linked challenges to the Secretary of State’s policy of intercepting migrant boats in UK waters, stopping them and redirecting them to France.
- Counsel to the **Brook House Inquiry** (led by Brian Altman KC). Press coverage [here](#).
- Counsel for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in the **Grenfell Tower Inquiry** (led by Jason Beer KC). Press coverage [here](#).

Prior to coming to the Bar, Harriet worked as the stagiaire to Judge Christopher Vajda at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

Public and Administrative

Harriet is an experienced and highly sought after public law practitioner. She is frequently instructed in high profile judicial review claims in the Administrative Court, both led and unled, and she acts in appeals before the Upper Tribunal, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court. She acts for claimants, defendants and intervening parties, and represents detained clients through Bail for Immigration Detainees. Harriet developed her strong interest in public law whilst working as the stagiaire to Judge Christopher Vajda at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg before coming to the Bar. Harriet accepts instructions in a broad range of public law cases including cases concerning: national security law, human rights law, welfare and social security law, immigration law (including unlawful detention), European Union law, healthcare law, education law and disciplinary law.

Notable recent and current instructions include:

- ***R (Imam) v London Borough of Croydon***: Counsel for Crisis (led by Justin Bates) in an intervention before the Supreme Court which concerns the nature of the duty owed by local authorities to homeless people, and specifically, the relief that should be granted after a local authority has breached its “full” homelessness duty.

- ***R (AT) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions***: Counsel for the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (led by Jason Coppel KC) before the Court of Appeal in this case which concerns the entitlement of an EU citizen residing in the UK post-Brexit to social security benefits, and the applicability of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights post-Brexit.
- Counsel for the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (led by Samantha Broadfoot KC) in a judicial review challenge concerning errors in Covid-19 PCR testing at the Immensa laboratory in Wolverhampton.
- Counsel for the Defendant (led by David Blundell KC) in the linked challenges to the Secretary of State's policy of intercepting migrant boats in UK waters, stopping them and redirecting them to France.
- Counsel for the Secretary of State for the Home Department (skeleton argument stage) (led by Julia Smyth) in two appeals before the Court of Appeal which concern decisions to deprive individuals of their British citizenship and, specifically, the application of the Supreme Court's decision in ***R (Begum) v SIAC and SSHD*** [2021] AC 765 (which concerned the decision to deprive Shamima Begum of her British citizenship) to other contexts.
- ***R (Redrow Plc & Ors) v Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities***: A judicial review claim concerning the decisions to grant funding under the Building Safety Fund to two particular developments. Harriet is acting for the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (led by Tom Richards KC).

Public Inquiries and Inquests

Harriet is an experienced and highly sought after public inquiry and inquest practitioner.

She is recognised for her inquest and public inquiry work as a 'Tier 1 Rising Star' (Legal 500, 2023 & 2024) and a leading junior (Band 4) in Chambers and Partners (2024), having previously been an 'Up and Coming' junior in Chambers and Partners (2023). She is a member of the Attorney-General's C-panel of counsel.

Harriet is described in the leading legal directories as being an "extremely strong practitioner" with "significant experience in major inquests" who is "steeped in the law" of inquests and inquiries. She is "exceptional in mastering large volumes of material (including complex technical evidence), and her research skills are second to none". In addition, "her written submissions are superb – detailed and compelling" and "watertight". Her work is "of the highest quality" and "her attention to detail and recall of facts is incredible. She has an immense work ethic, and is confident and conscientious". She is also a "talented advocate, having great attention to detail and providing great submissions".

Harriet has extensive experience as counsel to inquiries and counsel to inquests, as well as experience acting for core participants and interested persons. She has appeared in many of the major public inquiries and inquests over the past five years. Harriet acts for bereaved families, government departments and other interested persons, as well as acting as counsel to the inquest and inquiry.

Notable recent and current instructions include:

- Counsel for the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the ***Dawn Sturgess Inquiry*** (led by Cathy McGahey KC). Dawn Sturgess died in 2018 having been poisoned by Novichok after the attack on Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury. Press coverage [here](#).
- Counsel to the ***Brook House Inquiry*** (led by Brian Altman KC). Press coverage [here](#).

- Counsel for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in the ***Grenfell Tower Inquiry*** (led by Jason Beer KC). Press coverage [here](#).
- Counsel to the ***Inquest into the death of Mr Thomas Orchard*** (led by Nicholas Moss KC). Press coverage [here](#).
- Counsel to the Inquests (led by Jonathan Hough KC) in the '***Bugaled Breizh***' ***Inquests***, concerning the sinking of a French fishing trawler in 2004. Press coverage [here](#).

In addition, Harriet has been instructed in a number of inquests concerning deaths in prisons. This work has involved a consideration of issues such as the management of prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm, drug control measures, healthcare within prisons and internal prison communication systems. Harriet appears in Article 2 and jury inquests.

Given her public law and inquest experience, Harriet is ideally placed to advise and act in judicial review and statutory review (Section 13 of the Coroners Act 1988) challenges to coronial decisions. Harriet recently acted for a successful Claimant in a judicial review claim challenging the conclusion of an inquest (press coverage [here](#)).

Education

Harriet accepts instructions in all aspects of education law, including:

- Cases concerning schools, including: admissions, exclusions, discrimination, academy conversion and OFSTED issues;
- Cases concerning higher education institutions, including: discrimination claims;
- SEN appeals before both the First-tier Tribunal and before the Upper Tribunal;
- Disputes on responsibility for SEND provision;
- Judicial reviews arising from special educational needs issues.

Planning

Harriet is building a broad practice across planning and environmental law, spanning a full range of court, inquiry and advisory work. She is particularly interested in the intersection between planning and environmental law and public law.

Harriet accepts instructions, both led and unled, in all areas of planning law, advising individuals, local authorities, planning consultants and land agents across a wide range of matters. She is a member of the Attorney-General's C-panel of counsel.

Harriet accepts instructions from clients at all stages of the planning process, from pre-application through to court challenge. Harriet has acted as sole counsel in planning and enforcement appeals, including appeals involving traveller sites and human rights issues. In addition, Harriet has significant experience in drafting skeleton arguments and pleadings in High Court judicial review proceedings.

Harriet is currently instructed in a number of judicial review claims concerning the funding of cladding remediation work under the Building Safety Fund. In addition, from 2018 – 2022, Harriet acted for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in the ***Grenfell Tower Inquiry*** which enabled her to develop a detailed understanding of the construction industry

and the relevant regulatory and testing regimes.

Harriet is a member of the Planning & Environmental Bar Association, as well as the United Kingdom Environmental Law Association. She recently delivered a talk on topical issues in planning reform which concerned the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Environment

Harriet is building a broad practice across planning and environmental law, spanning a full range of court, inquiry and advisory work. She is particularly interested in the intersection between planning and environmental law and public law.

Harriet is a member of the Planning & Environmental Bar Association, as well as the United Kingdom Environmental Law Association.

Costs Litigation

Harriet has a busy and varied costs practice. She acts in all aspects of cost litigation and litigation funding, both as sole counsel and led.

Harriet has experience in costs law cases in both the High Court and Senior Courts Costs Office, as well as the County Court. Harriet has acted in claims concerning significant sums of costs: recently, she acted for the Lord Chancellor before a Divisional Court in a challenge to an order made by a Crown Court judge concerning the recovery of private prosecution costs out of public funds which totalled just under £6 million.

Harriet acts in detailed assessment hearings and has experience dealing with a wide range of costs issues including the cost consequences of Part 36 offers, qualified one-way costs shifting, and wasted costs. Harriet has particular experience in costs budgeting, fixed costs and RTA portal cases as a result of her early years of practice, when she undertook personal injury law work.

Harriet has written a number of articles on costs litigation and her articles on ***JLE (A Child) v Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust*** [2019] EWHC 1582 (QB) and ***X v Hull & East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust*** (Unreported, She?eld County Court, 25/02/19) were published in the Personal Injury Law Journal.

Qualifications

- University of Cambridge (Downing College): BA (Hons) Law: 1st Class
- BPTC, BPP Law School: Outstanding

Recommendations

"Harriet is a talented advocate, having great attention to detail and providing great submissions."

Inquests and Public Inquiries, Chambers and Partners, 2024

"Her submissions are watertight."

Inquests and Public Inquiries, Chambers and Partners, 2024

"Her attention to detail and recall of facts is incredible. She has an immense work ethic, and is confident and conscientious."

Inquests and Inquiries, Legal 500, 2024

"I would recommend her as an extremely strong practitioner who is great at getting into submissions; her work was of the highest quality."

Inquests and Public Inquiries, Chambers and Partners, 2023

"Harriet has significant experience in major inquests and is steeped in the law in this area. She is exceptional in mastering large volumes of material (including complex technical evidence), and her research skills are second to none and her written submissions are superb – detailed and compelling."

Inquests and Inquiries, Legal 500, 2023

Cases and inquiries

06 02 24	The Dawn Sturgess Inquiry
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28 11 23	Supreme Court hands down judgment on homelessness and enforcement of public law duties
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08 11 23	Court of Appeal applies Article 1 of EU Charter of Fundamental Rights on right to dignity to destitute EU citizens post-Brexit
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