Hannah Slarks



Call: 2011

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Hannah Slarks was shortlisted as Legal 500 Junior Barrister of the Year 2026. She practises across public, regulatory, education and employment law. She has a particular specialism in complex discrimination and human rights matters, and is recognised as the *"leading junior at the intersection of discrimination claims and public law"* (Chambers and Partners, 2026).

In the past year, Hannah has been instructed in many of the leading cases exploring the impact of *For Women Scotland* on trans rights and single sex spaces. She appeared in the first case considering the use of isolation rooms in state schools. She acted in one of the first judicial reviews under the Online Safety Act.

Before coming to the Bar, Hannah worked with a number of charities and regulators, including the Public Law Project, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, INQUEST and the Care Quality Commission.

> ***Super impressive. Terrific mastery of large amounts of detail. Very good bedside manner with clients.***
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> **CHAMBERS & PARTNERS**

Expertise

Health & Community Care

Hannah has wide-ranging experience in claims concerning healthcare provision, funding and governance. She has appeared in a number of high-level challenges to the closure and reconfiguration of health services. She was instructed in the challenge to the compensation scheme for those who contracted Hepatitis C from contaminated blood products in the 1980s. She has particular expertise in high-value funding disputes between ICBs and local authorities. She also appears in commercial disputes arising in a health context, including in arbitration. She acts both for and against NHS bodies, and was instructed for NHS England in the public inquiry concerning how neonatal nurse Lucy Letby was able to serially kill babies in her care. She is currently instructed as leading counsel in a claim challenging Regulations that empower the Government to set the cost-effectiveness thresholds applied by NICE when assessing drugs and treatments for the NHS.

In community care, Hannah acts both for and against local authorities. She defended the Government before the Supreme Court on the placement of vulnerable children in unregulated homes. She also defended the Government's alleged failure to protect residents of care homes during the first wave of the pandemic. She acted for the claimants in the challenge to Central Government's funding of the deprivation of liberty regime. She has appeared in important litigation about the duties owed to families with no recourse to public funds. She has acted in major challenges to the closure and privatisation of services. She also regularly acts as sole counsel in claims concerning the duties owed to children and vulnerable adults.

> ***A stellar individual***
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> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

R (Just Treatment) v Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

AC-2026-LON-002473

Instructed for two NGOs challenging secondary legislation that gives the Government powers to change the way that NICE decides whether a drug or treatment is good value for money for the NHS. Instructed by Leigh Day. Leading Oliver Jackson.

Thirlwall Inquiry regarding Lucy Letby

Instructed for NHS England in the preparatory stages of the public inquiry into how NHS systems and governance could have prevented harm caused by Lucy Letby, or could prevent a future incident of this kind. Led by Jason Beer KC.

R (West Sussex CC) v H & IoW ICB

AC-2023-LON-000119

Acted successfully as sole counsel for the local authority in a case about whether an ICB is obliged to assess for CHC when the service user is not yet receiving "optimal care".

R (ML) v East London Foundation Trust, North East London Integrated Care Board and London Borough of Haringey

CO/4050/2022

Acted successfully as sole counsel for the ICB in a case in which the claimant alleged systematic exclusion of people with bipolar disorder from access to services.

R (Gardner) v the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

[2022] H.R.L.R. 11 (2022) 185 B.M.L.R. 30 [2022] C.C.L.R. 205 [2022] A.C.D. 93

Defended the Government in this judicial review concerning the handling of the discharge of hospital patients into care homes early in the pandemic. Led by James Eadie KC and Jonathan Auburn KC, with Heather Emmerson, Yaaser Vanderman and Charles Bishop.

Somerset CC v NHS Somerset CCG and others

[2022] EWFC 31 [2022] 4 W.L.R. 51

After a series of administrative errors were identified in adoption processes, the courts were asked to decide whether public law errors in adoption applications rendered subsequent placement and adoption orders void. It was argued that local authorities would have to bring a very large number of historic cases back to court, requiring the notification of adopted families and birth families, sometimes many years after a successful adoption. Hannah acted successfully as sole counsel for the Government, arguing that this was wrong and unnecessary as a matter of constitutional law.

In re T (a child)

[2021] UKSC 35, SC JULY 30 2021, [2021] 3 WLR 643; (2021) 24 CCLR 339

Acted for the Secretary of State for Education in this landmark Supreme Court case concerning the circumstances in which the High Court can use its inherent jurisdiction to deprive children of their liberty. Led by Joanne Clement KC.

R (EG) v Parole Board and Secretary of State for Justice

[2020] A.C.D. 93

Defended the Parole Board in a judicial review challenging the system in place to enable the effective participation of prisoners lacking capacity. Led by Jonathan Auburn.

R (Hinsull) v Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group

CO/5867/2017

Acted for the Claimant before the Court of Appeal in this challenge to the reconfiguration of emergency healthcare in Dorset. Led by Jason Coppel KC.

R (Juttla) v Hertfordshire Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group

[2018] EWHC 267, (2018) 21 CCL REP 325, QBD (ADMIN CT), FEBRUARY 21 2018

A respite care service for children with complex medical needs was a 'health service' and the local authority should have been consulted before funding was withdrawn from it. Led by Clive Sheldon KC.

R (Smith) v SS for Health

[2016] CO/5208/2016

Defended the Secretary of State for Health in response to this public law discrimination claim. The claimants challenge the compensation scheme for those who contracted Hepatitis C from contaminated blood products in the 1980s. Led by Charles Bourne KC.

R (Liverpool and others) v SS for Health

[2017] EWHC 986 (ADMIN), (2017) 20 CCL REP 391; [2017] COPLR 295; [2017] ACD 80, [2016] CO/2780/2017

Acted for a group of local authorities challenging the Government's failure to fund adequately the implementation of the deprivation of liberty regime, led by James Goudie KC.

R (Keep Wythenshawe Special) v NHS Central Manchester CCG

[2016] EWHC 17 (ADMIN), (2016) 19 CCL REP 19

Represented Stockport NHS Foundation Trust in complex judicial review proceedings challenging the reconfiguration of general surgical services across Manchester, led by Jason Coppel KC, instructed by Bevan Brittan.

R (Project Seventeen) v Lewisham LBC

[2015] CO/3536/201

Acted for LB Lewisham in a landmark case concerning how local authorities assess families' eligibility for support when they have no recourse to public funds, led by Clive Sheldon KC.

R (D) v Brent LBC

[2015] EWHC 3224 (ADMIN).

Successfully defended a local authority as sole counsel in a judicial review concerning delays during the transition of a vulnerable adult between young person's and adult's services.

R (Taylor and Wilson) v Sutton LBC

CO/1817/2015.

Acted as sole counsel for a local authority defending a challenge to a change of the opening hours of respite services.

R (Jackson) v Devon

CC CO/4296/2014.

Successfully defended a local authority in a judicial review challenging a decision to close all the Council-run care homes for older people, led by Karen Steyn KC.

Achievements

Appointments

Attorney General's A panel

News, Articles & Publications

The Claimant's Pre-permission Checklist, co-authored with Clive Sheldon KC (Judicial Review, Vol. 21, 2016 – issue 2).

Tolley's Employment Handbook (2013-16 editions, Tolley).

Public Law and Judicial Review and Representing yourself in court: on the day in A guide to representing yourself in Court, co-authored (2013, guidance published by the Bar Council).

Positive obligations to provide access to information under the European Convention on Human Rights, co-authored with Karen Steyn (2012, journal article published in Judicial Review).

The Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody: UK experiences with cross-sector cooperation in Police involved deaths – the Need for Reform (MacAlister Ed.) (2011, book published by the British Canadian Civil Liberties Association).

Service User Experience of the First Tier Tribunal (Mental Health) (2011, report published jointly by the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council and the Care Quality Commission).

Where Human Rights and Development Meet (or fail to do so): The Constitutional Right to Housing in South Africa (2010, journal article published in the UCL Human Rights Review).

Analytical Overview of the 4th Session the Human Rights Council (2007, report published in the Council Monitor by the International Service for Human Rights).

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – India 70th Session (2007, report published in the Treaty Body Monitor, by the International Service for Human Rights).

Education

Hannah has two Double First Class degrees. She was rated 'outstanding' on the Bar Professional Training Course.

Other

Conversational French.

While studying, Hannah won a number of high profile advocacy competitions, including the National Debating Championships and the Times Advocacy Competition.

Lord Megarry Scholarship – Lincolns Inn 2011

Lord Mansfield Scholarship – Lincolns Inn 2010

Advocacy Scholarship – Kaplan Law School 2010

Burnett Award – Hughes Hall, Cambridge 2009 and 2010

Lord Bowen Scholarship – Lincolns Inn 2008

Hardwicke Entrance Scholarship – Lincolns Inn 2008

Mary Morrison Prize – Bristol University French Department 2008

Convocation Award – Bristol University 2007

> ***Hannah punches above her weight; it is difficult for a judge to disagree with her. Polished submissions. Strategic advice She thinks about the bigger picture at all times.***
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> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

> ***A highly talented junior. Her star shines brightly.***
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> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

> ***She is a first-class barrister. Clear, pragmatic and commercial. She inspires confidence in both clients and solicitors.***
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> CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS

Hannah is very clear to define the issues and see a path through to success. Approachable and great client care too.

LEGAL 500

Hannah is excellent. She is very experienced in discrimination matters, with excellent technical skills. She is incredibly responsive and brilliant with clients – she is clearly operating beyond her year of call.

LEGAL 500

Brilliant in her advocacy.

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

Hannah's advice is very thorough and to the point. Her performance in court is exceptional; she is a very astute advocate and tactically very aware.

LEGAL 500

Her advocacy is sharply focused and compelling, and she is excellent at addressing difficult points raised by the judge.

LEGAL 500

Great at advocacy and she has emotional intelligence –all-round brilliant.

CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS