Harini Iyengar



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Harini Iyengar practises as a veteran senior junior barrister, called in 1999, who has spent her entire career at 11KBW. Harini has amassed formidable knowledge, experience and expertise across Data Protection, Employment, Commercial and Public law. She is often selected for difficult matters at the intersections of her specialisms and is well-known for Equality law. As an experienced and established barrister, Harini is equally happy to lead or be led, to work alone or within a team of barristers.

Harini was the winner of the Professional Discipline and Regulatory Junior of the Year at the Legal 500 UK Bar Awards 2026. The *Chambers and Partners* and *Legal 500* directories recommend Harini as a leading practitioner in Data Protection, Education, Employment, and Professional Discipline and Regulation, and also recommend her as an outstanding Independent Investigator. They say, "*Harini has one of the most incredible legal minds of her generation. Her ability to digest complex facts, disseminate legal advice in a client-friendly way, and advocate with strength and fortitude are her best qualities,*" and, "*Harini is a joy to work with. Her careful case preparation and warm good humour make it a pleasure to work on even the most challenging of cases with her.*"

> ***Harini is enormously experienced, very responsive and thorough.***
>
> LEGAL 500 2026

Harini is often instructed as an advocate in the Court of Appeal, High Court, Employment Appeal Tribunal, and Upper Tribunal Administrative Appeals Chamber. She also continues to appear regularly and deal with witnesses in the First-tier Tribunal Information Rights, the Employment Tribunal, the First-tier Tribunal Special Educational Needs and Disability, and specialist disciplinary or regulatory tribunals.

Her advisory work encompasses governance, regulation and compliance, legal disputes, and complex and sensitive independent investigations.

Harini often represents financial institutions, universities, independent schools and diverse public bodies. Harini has represented individuals from all walks of life during her career. She undertakes direct access work in select cases, typically giving her expert legal opinion in conference or in writing on a difficult point of law.

Harini Iyengar's portrait is displayed at Brasenose College, University of Oxford, as one of 12 "Amazing BNC Women" chosen to represent the successes of 40 years of co-education. A portrait of Harini with her parents also features in the professional photographic exhibition "Where I Come From" by Bill Knight, which depicts high-achieving children of a generation of immigrants who came to Britain in search of a better life for themselves and their families.

Expertise

Information, Media and Privacy

Harini has wide-ranging experience in Information, Media and Privacy, both court work and advisory work. She is recommended by Chambers & Partners directory for her expertise in Data Protection law. Recent examples of her work include the following:

> ***Harini is a joy to work with. Her careful case preparation and warm good humour make it a pleasure to work on even the most challenging of cases with her.***
>
> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS 2026

Data Subject Access Policy of Professional Regulator

Harini advised a professional regulator in writing about the lawfulness of its policy on data subject access requests from registrants. She also advised on a specific data subject access request which arose out of very unusual facts.

Individual v Charity

Harini is currently defending a charity facing a claim by a former employee in the Business and Property Court of the Chancery Division in connection with a dispute about the employer obtaining and using the content of a social media chat in disciplinary proceedings.

Advice on Data Protection and Discrimination Dispute at Sports Club

Instructed on a direct access basis, Harini gave comprehensive written advice to an individual who had been expelled from a sports club, at which a protracted dispute was ongoing between members, including over data protection matters and allegations of unlawful discrimination.

Quick Tax Claims v Information Commissioner

[2025] UKFTT 444 (GRC)

Harini successfully represented the Information Commissioner in an appeal against an enforcement notice imposed for breach of PECR 2003 by way of unsolicited direct marketing SMS, which turned on the quality of the consent which data subjects were claimed to have given online.

Pearson v Information Commissioner

[2025] UKFTT 53 (GRC)

Harini successfully represented the Information Commissioner in an appeal against a monetary penalty notice which the regulator had imposed on a business for spam marketing SMS under PECR 2003 and the DPA.

O'Shea v Information Commissioner and HMRC

[2023] UKFTT 01005 (GRC)

Through her written submissions, Harini successfully represented the Information Commissioner in an appeal under FOIA 2000 concerning a request for information about the value of the largest Individual Savings Account and the exemption concerning prohibitions on disclosure.

Killock v Information Commissioner

[2021] UKUT 299 (AAC) [2022] 1 WLR 2241

Harini successfully represented the Information Commissioner, as junior counsel in a significant Upper Tribunal appeal involving three cases, concerning the proper interpretation of section 165 of the DPA 2018 and the nature of the ICO's duty to conduct its regulatory work.

Professional Discipline and Regulation

Harini was the winner of the Professional Discipline and Regulatory Junior of the Year at the Legal 500 UK Bar Awards 2026. Harini is recommended by both Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500 directory as a leading practitioner in Professional Discipline and Regulation. Recent examples of her work include the following:

> ***Harini has one of the most incredible legal minds of her generation. Her ability to digest complex facts, disseminate legal advice in a client-friendly way, and advocate with strength and fortitude are her best qualities.***
>
> LEGAL 500 2026

Navjot Sidhu KC v Bar Standards Board

[2026] EWHC 25 (ADMIN)

Harini successfully represented the regulator, as junior counsel, in the widely-reported High Court appeal against sanction by a prominent barrister against the decision of the Bar disciplinary tribunal to disbar him for sexual misconduct towards a mini-pupil. Disbarment was held justified given the seriousness of the misconduct. Harini had previously successfully represented the regulator, as junior counsel, in the ten-day widely-reported disciplinary tribunal hearing.

Dispute between Barristers' Chambers and Pupil Barrister

Harini advised a large barristers' chambers on a difficult dispute which had arisen with a former pupil barrister. Her written opinion ran to nearly 60 pages and included analysis of the relevant facts and law in regard to various heads of discrimination, the pupillage contract and regulatory aspects of the relationship between the chambers and the pupil barrister. The matter was resolved out of court.

Data Subject Access Policy of Professional Regulator

Harini advised a professional regulator in writing about the lawfulness of its policy on data subject access requests from registrants. She also advised on a specific data subject access request which arose out of very unusual facts.

Professional v Professional Regulator

Harini currently represents a professional regulator which is defending a novel claim in the employment tribunal that it has exercised its regulatory function in a discriminatory way.

Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care v Social Work England and JS

[2023] EWHC 926 (ADMIN)

As sole counsel, Harini represented the regulator in a complex High Court appeal concerning the border and relationship between professional impairment caused by mental ill-health, professional impairment caused by statutory barring, and professional impairment caused by misconduct, concerning a registrant with bipolar affective disorder, involving alcohol and drugs misuse.

Kearney v Bar Standards Board.

[2025] EWHC 2048 (ADMIN)

Harini successfully represented the regulator, as sole counsel, in the High Court appeal by a barrister who had been disbarred for sexual misconduct towards five mini-pupil and pupil barristers. The High Court held that the disciplinary tribunal had had proper regard to mitigation, totality and the sanctions guidance, and that disbarment was not wrong, manifestly excessive or clearly inappropriate. Harini had previously successfully prosecuted the barrister, at three different disciplinary hearings.

Kearney v Bar Standards Board

[2024] EWHC 924 (ADMIN) [2024] ICR 853

Harini represented the regulator, as sole counsel, in a High Court appeal which turned on whether there had been apparent bias on the part of the Bar disciplinary tribunal.

Education

Harini has over 20 years' expertise and experience in a wide range of Education law. She is recommended as a leading practitioner by both Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500 directories. Recent examples of her work include the following:

> ***Harini is enormously experienced, very responsive and thorough.***
>
> LEGAL 500 2026

Successful Challenge to Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

Through advice, drafting a series of formal responses, and a letter before claim for judicial review, Harini helped a higher education institution, which had expelled a student for sexual misconduct towards a peer, to persuade the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education that its proposed complaint outcome was wrong.

Direct Access Advice to University Disciplinary Panel

Harini was instructed on a direct access basis by a university disciplinary panel which had been convened to hear allegations of sexual misconduct by a male professor towards junior female colleagues. Harini's independent advice was required on difficult legal issues including a previous investigation, regulatory matters, procedural issues, points of substantive fairness, and witness evidence. Harini advised both in writing and in conference.

Suicide Prevention and Well-Being Policies in Higher Education

Harini, as senior counsel, is currently advising a higher education institution in regard to its well-being and suicide prevention policies.

Disability Discrimination Claim against Independent School

Harini successfully defended an independent school in the First-tier Tribunal Special Educational Needs and Disability against allegations that it had discriminated against a pupil who was disabled with autism and mental health difficulties, who had brought a weapon into school shortly before their public examinations, on whom the school had imposed restrictions.

Direct Access Advice on Allegations of Antisemitic Bullying at Independent School

Harini advised a teenaged pupil at an independent school and their parents, on a direct access basis, in regard to disciplinary allegations made against them of antisemitic bullying.

Allegations of Sexual Misconduct by Headteacher at Independent Special School

Harini advised an independent special school on a complex matter. The school was facing employment tribunal claims and Local Authority Designated Officer safeguarding procedures arising out of allegations that the Headteacher had sexually misconducted himself towards female staff and that staff grievances had not been correctly handled.

Advice to Educational Charity on Public Sector Equality Duty, Human Rights Act and Freedom of Information Act

Harini provided her comprehensive written opinion to an educational charity on difficult legal questions concerning the applicability of the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to its unique activities and functions, and its governance.

Independent Investigations

Chambers & Partners 2026 place Harini Iyengar in Band 1 which is the top rank for Independent Investigations. Harini Iyengar has a decade's experience of conducting independent investigations, both as sole investigator and as a member of an investigation panel. Recent examples of her work include the following:

> ***Harini Iyengar is an established barrister who is well versed in handling complex and sensitive investigations, particularly those relating to bullying and harassment. Her experience in this area covers a variety of settings including local authorities, schools and businesses.***
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> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

Financial Services Business

Harini conducted an independent investigation, as sole investigator, into 14 allegations of serious misconduct by the Chief Executive of a financial services business. Her investigation involved interviewing and analysing the evidence of 13 witnesses, considerable documentary evidence, and complex legal issues including the requirements of procedural fairness, reasonable adjustments for disability, and allegations including bullying, race discrimination, disability discrimination, sex discrimination, absenteeism, use of illegal drugs, drunkenness at work, misuse of company property, and financial impropriety. Harini's report ran to nearly 200 pages.

Urgent Investigation into Racist Remarks

Harini undertook an urgent investigation for a public body into allegations of racist remarks and conduct by the Head of Equalities towards one Black and one White colleague, who had each raised concerns over the organisation's anti-racism training plans.

Major Investigation for University

Harini investigated a vulnerable male student's complaint of harassment and bullying through a vulnerable female student spreading allegedly false rumours about him, after a prior investigation by a different investigator into her complaints of alleged sexual assault by him had been found not proven. Harini interviewed ten witnesses and produced a 76-page report.

Independent Review Panel on Race Equality at Cardiff University

Harini was instructed as a member of the Independent Review Panel set up by Cardiff University in 2016 to examine race equality following the disciplining of 31 medical students after their performance in a student revue which included "blackface" and other offensive aspects. The Panel considered extensive documentary evidence and spent two days hearing witness evidence. All thirteen recommendations were publicly accepted by Cardiff University.

Major Investigation for Public Body

Harini conducted a major double grievance investigation for a public body into allegations of racist bullying by a senior officer, interviewing over 20 witnesses, considering thousands of pages of documentary evidence and writing a report of nearly 300 pages.

Employment

Harini Iyengar has over 20 years' experience in Employment law and has undertaken cases in every area. She is recommended as a leading practitioner by both Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500. Recent examples of her work include the following:

> ***Harini is clear-sighted and forensic in defending claims and her employment knowledge is formidable***
>
> LEGAL 500 2026

Gender Reassignment Discrimination in the Arts

Harini successfully defended a high-profile individual working in the Arts, who had a private disability, and their company, against a claim of gender reassignment discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation, unfair dismissal, and whistleblowing. Harini advised in conference, drafted the response and appeared at a private preliminary hearing, before the matter was resolved.

Al-Hassany v General Medical Council

Harini currently represents the General Medical Council which is defending an appeal in the Employment Appeal Tribunal concerning its role as a qualifications body.

Overseas Employment

Harini advised two British employees who had been employed overseas in a remote location, where one had complained of sexual harassment, and where both believed that they had been unfairly dismissed in retaliation.

Professional v Professional Regulator

Harini currently represents a professional regulator which is defending a novel claim in the employment tribunal that it has exercised its regulatory function in a discriminatory way.

Allegations of Sexual Misconduct by Headteacher at Independent Special School

Harini advised an independent special school on a complex matter. The school was facing employment tribunal claims and Local Authority Designated Officer safeguarding procedures arising out of allegations that the Headteacher had sexually misconducted himself towards female staff and that staff grievances had not been correctly handled.

Solicitors facing claim of Discrimination in the Provision of Legal Services

Harini advised and represented a firm of solicitors which was defending a claim that it had unlawfully discriminated in the provision of legal services.

Cook v Gentoo Group Ltd.

[2023] EAT 12

Harini successfully challenged the tribunal's reasoning on direct age discrimination, proportionality and costs, in an appeal to the Employment Appeal Tribunal. She represented an employee whose public sector employer had curtailed a redundancy process in order to prevent the employee from obtaining an enhanced pension.

Croydon Health Services NHS Trust v Beatt.

[2017] EWCA CIV 401 [2017] ICR 1240

For many years, Harini represented the NHS heart surgeon, Dr Kevin Beatt, who was a whistleblower on matters concerning patient safety. Harini was victorious in the Employment Tribunal as sole counsel, lost as sole counsel in the Employment Appeal Tribunal, and won in the Court of Appeal as junior counsel. With Harini's assistance as sole counsel at the remedies stage, Dr Beatt was eventually awarded £870,740 in compensation.

A Practical Guide to the Law of Gender Pay Gap Reporting

Harini is the sole author of "*A Practical Guide to the Law of Gender Pay Gap Reporting*", Law Brief Publishers, 2019. If and when the new laws on race and ethnicity pay gap reporting are enacted, Harini will be writing a second edition.

Equalities, Human Rights and Public Law

Harini has over 20 years' experience in public law and human rights law. She typically advises and represents smaller public bodies, including "hybrid" public authorities, on governance and judicial review matters. She has never represented central government. Harini is often selected for difficult matters at the intersections of her specialisms and is well-known for her expertise in Equality law.

Funerary Arrangements

Harini advised a public body in writing concerning current and future provision for funerary arrangements. This included giving her written opinion on a range of legal issues, including the scope of consultation and the applicability of various legal rules on public health and burial provisions, the public sector equality duty, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Successful Challenge to Office of the Independent Adjudicator of Higher Education

Through advice, drafting a series of formal responses, and a letter before claim for judicial review, Harini helped a higher education institution, which had expelled a student for sexual misconduct towards a peer, to persuade the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education that its proposed complaint outcome was wrong.

Advice to Educational Charity on Public Sector Equality Duty, Human Rights Act and Freedom of Information Act

Harini provided her comprehensive written opinion to an educational charity on difficult legal questions concerning the applicability of the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to its unique activities and functions, and its governance.

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Direct Access Advice to School Governor on Gender-Fluid Toilets Policy

Instructed on a direct access basis, Harini provided comprehensive written advice to an individual school governor at a state school, who wanted to have his own expert advice on the law on school toilet provision and the governing body's legal duties, because of a proposed policy on gender-fluid toilets which was causing heated disagreements on the governing body.

Achievements

Publications

A Practical Guide to the Law of Gender Pay Gap Reporting

Harini is the sole author of "*A Practical Guide to the Law of Gender Pay Gap Reporting*", Law Brief Publishers, 2019. If and when the new laws on race and ethnicity pay gap reporting are enacted, Harini will be writing a second edition.

Women's Legal Landmarks

Harini wrote a chapter on Equal Pay for "*Women's Legal Landmarks*", Hart Publishing, 2018.

Tolley's Employment Law Handbook

Harini has been a contributor writing various chapters of "*Tolley's Employment Law Handbook*" for over 20 years.

Legal Expert, Public Speaker and Trainer

Harini has extensive experience of appearing as a legal expert in live and pre-recorded broadcasts, including appearances on Newsnight, BBC News, Sky News and Victoria Derbyshire's show.

It was the honour of Harini's life to hand out the prizes and give a speech for her former school at a ceremony held in Manchester's Bridgewater Hall in 2024. Harini gave an Annual Lecture to the Employment Lawyers' Association in 2019, and participated as a guest debater in a formal debate at the Oxford Union Society in 2018.

Harini regularly trains solicitors and other professionals by giving talks and writing articles on specialist legal topics. She has written and presented webinars for MBL Seminars for a decade.

Harini's Education

Bar Vocational Course: Inns of Court School of Law

Two-Year BCL (Masters degree including thesis and examined courses): Brasenose College University of Oxford

MA in Jurisprudence (Law degree): Brasenose College, University of Oxford

Non-accredited course "Artificial Intelligence Law and Legal Training": the Open University

Examined Award in "Finance for Non-Financial Directors": Institute of Directors

Professional Committee Work

Bencher Member of Inner Temple's Communications, Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence Committee 2026-

Assistant Master of Pictures at Inner Temple 2026-

Member of Bar Council Race Panel 2020-

Member of Bar Council Retention Panel 2017-

Member of Commercial Law Bar Association's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee 2022-2025

Member of several Employment Lawyers' Association Working Groups 2004-2025

Member of Inner Temple Bencher Nomination Committee 2022-2024

Inner Temple Representation on Steering Group of Temple Women's Forum 2012-2022

Governing Bencher at the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple 2017-

Professional Memberships

Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers

Commercial Law Bar Association

Employment Lawyers' Association

Employment Law Bar Association

Inns of Court Alliance for Women

Educational Lawyers' Association

More about Harini

Harini Iyengar's portrait is displayed at Brasenose College, University of Oxford, as one of 12 "Amazing BNC Women" chosen to represent the successes of 40 years of co-education. A portrait of Harini with her parents also features in the professional photographic exhibition "Where I Come From" by Bill Knight, which depicts high-achieving children of a generation of immigrants who came to Britain in search of a better life for themselves and their families.

Harini is an experienced Director. She was an Independent Governor of London Metropolitan University from 2016 to 2022, a trustee of Oxford University Student Union, and a trustee of Spitalfields City Farm. She holds the examined Award in "Finance for Non-Financial Directors" from the Institute of Directors.

From 2015 to 2022, Harini was formerly politically active as a founder member, elected officer and national spokesperson for the Women's Equality Party. She stood for election to public office seven times. In 2019, Harini attended a week-long course in anti-racist leadership and public policy at the Blavatnik School of Government, through a scholarship in conjunction with Operation Black Vote, Magdalen College Oxford, UK Parliament and Lloyds Banking Group; she presented a paper on Equal Pay as part of the Women's Budget Group delegation to the International Association for Feminist Economics annual conference; and she attended the European Women's Lobby conference in Brussels as a representative of the UK branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Harini worked full-time at the Bar while raising three children as a solo parent and the older two are now grown up and independent. In her free time, Harini now enjoys a few hobbies, as well as London's rich cultural life. She is a PADI Master Scuba Diver and Ice Diver, currently training as a BSAC Dive Leader. Harini studies Hindi and Tamil at SOAS and City Lit. Harini owns and cooks almost every day from over 70 cookbooks.

She provides high-quality advice, and is genuinely interested in her clients

LEGAL 500

She brings confidence to both instructing solicitor and client

LEGAL 500

She is very good at getting to the issues that matter quickly, and presents her cases to best advantage

LEGAL 500

She is very accessible and focused on achieving the best outcome.

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

She's well prepared, robust and committed to her clients.

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

She is extremely responsive and has great attention to detail.

LEGAL 500

She is very quick to grasp both the legal issues and commercial realities.

LEGAL 500

She is knowledgeable about the subject and provides clear, comprehensive and helpful advice.

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

She is excellent. Extremely cool under pressure and not fazed by anything.

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS