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.

> ***She has a confident, clear and unfussy advocacy style***
>
> LEGAL 500

Expertise

Education

Hannah is one of the leading education juniors at the Bar. She is instructed in some of the most important judicial reviews and appellate cases regarding how educational institutions should be run. In recent years, this has involved the first case on the use of isolation rooms in schools, a landmark judicial review on the use of top-up fees in nurseries, an important decision on the functioning of independent review panels, ongoing litigation regarding Palestinian flags in a primary school, and multiple ongoing challenges to the rules surrounding Disabled Students' Allowance.

She appears in the High Court and County Court on disputes between students and universities. She regularly acts in the Administrative Court and First-tier Tribunals on matters arising from EHC plans and exclusions.

She frequently conducts independent investigations concerning complaints made by parents and by teachers. She also chairs and advises disciplinary and appeals panels.

Hannah has particular expertise in the handling of allegations of sexual misconduct against students and teachers. She conducts sensitive investigations on behalf of institutions, and acts for institutions and families in internal and court proceedings arising from these allegations. She has also appeared in litigation on this issue at an appellate level.

Hannah also regularly acts in cases concerning freedom of speech and single sex spaces in educational settings.

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

R (Ortega) v Secretary of State for Education

AC-2026-LDS-000032

Acting as sole counsel in this challenge to the Student Loans Company's policy of paying Disabled Students' Allowance only on a reimbursement basis.

R (EBB) v The Gorse Academies Trust

[2025] EWHC 1983 (ADMIN)

Acted in the first challenge to use of isolation rooms in schools, also dealing with the statutory duties on schools to consider the proportionality of a sanction falling short of exclusion. Led by Jason Coppel KC, with Oliver Jackson.

R (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council) v Local Government Ombudsman

[2025] EWHC 224 (ADMIN)

Acted as sole counsel in this important judicial review regarding how childcare providers work around the early years free entitlement funding rules.

R (XYZ) v City University

CA - 2023 - 000634

In the Court of Appeal, acted as sole counsel for the University in this sensitive case in which a male student was found guilty by the University of having nonconsensual sex with a drunk female student.

R (LM) v An Academy Trust

[2024] EWHC 2267 (ADMIN)

Acted as sole counsel in this case about the procedural requirements for governing bodies reviewing permanent exclusions, in a case about serious sexual misconduct in a secondary school.

Employment

Hannah practices in both the Employment Tribunal and the High Court, as well as the appellate courts. She has a particular expertise in complex discrimination and human rights law. Her clients range from investment banks, tech firms and elite private schools to individuals and charities.

> ***Completely brilliant. She is careful and thoughtful, knows the law very well, and is very good on her feet; she is a very skillful cross-examiner.***
>
> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

Peggie v NHS Fife

Acting for NHS Fife in the Scottish EAT in this appeal concerning the lawfulness of a trans-inclusive changing room in the workplace. Led by Jane Russell KC.

R (GLP) v EHRC

[2026] EWHC 279 (ADMIN)

Acting for the Claimants in this challenge to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance following *For Women Scotland*, which is now before the Court of Appeal. This case may determine the proper approach to single sex toilets in the workplace. With a team including Dan Stilitz KC and Crash Wigley.

Sandhu v Enterprise

[2023] EAT 169

Acted successfully for the Respondent before the EAT in this case concerning the proper analysis of multiple cumulative acts of harassment. Hannah will appear as sole counsel before the Court of Appeal in the same matter. Instructed by Taylor Wessing.

Shaima Dallali v NUS

Acted for the former President of the NUS, who was dismissed for alleged anti-Semitism. This case concerned anti-Zionism as a protected belief.

Zhang v Heliocor

[2022] EAT 152

Acted for the Respondent fintech company before the EAT in this case concerning the proper analysis of an application to add an individual respondent to a claim. Instructed by CMS.

Morais and others v Ryanair

CA-2022-000134

Acted for the Government in this important appeal regarding the scope of the Blacklisting Regulations, in light of the right to strike. Led by Dan Stilitz KC.

Mercer v SoS for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

[2024] UKSC 12; [2024] IRLR 599; [2024] ICR 814

Acted for the Government in this landmark Supreme Court case on the right to strike. Led by Dan Stilitz KC.

Sigismund v Financial Conduct Authority, Bank of England and others

2020

Acted for the Bank of England at each stage of the litigation, from the Employment Tribunal through to the ongoing proceedings in the Court of Appeal. In this whistleblowing claim, a former adviser to the FCA brought a case on the basis that he had predicted the financial crisis and no one had listened to him. Instructed by Travers Smith.

HJ v Investment Firm (anonymised)

2020

Acted for this financial services firm, in a sensitive case concerning alleged serious sexual harassment of a personal assistant. With Hannah's assistance, it was settled out of Tribunal on favourable terms. Instructed by Weil Gotshal.

Harrison v Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust QB

[2020] IRLR 62

Acted for the NHS Trust resisting this urgent injunction in the High Court. The case concerned when the Court may intervene when employers restrict an employee's duties during an ongoing disciplinary investigation. Instructed by Bevan Brittan.

AC v CR (anonymised)

2020

Acted for an office services firm in this potential claim for injunctive relief. The case concerned an exiting employee's misuse of client information. Litigation was avoided at the pre-action stage, with the assistance of Hannah's advice and draft particulars of claim. Instructed by Allen and Overy.

Drake International Systems Ltd v Blue Arrow Ltd

UKEAT/282/15, [2016] ICR 445, EAT, JANUARY 27 2016.

Acted for the appellant company in the EAT in this leading case on the interaction between early conciliation obligations and applications to add new respondents to a claim. Instructed by Charles Russell Speechlys.

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.

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

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.

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.

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 (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.

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 (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.

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.

Investigations

Clients come to Hannah for her rigorous and sensitively-handled investigations. She conducts investigations across her practice areas, but particularly in complex matters involving discrimination and human rights issues, and in schools and universities.

> ***She has a brilliant agility and ability to apply legal acumen and expertise to investigations.***
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> CHAMBERS & PARTNERS

Public, Human Rights and Regulatory

Hannah is consistently instructed in high profile public law matters. In the past year, she has been instructed in many of the leading cases concerning the fallout of *For Women Scotland*, as well as acting in Strasbourg litigation concerning Russian online interference in UK elections. In recent years, she has appeared in cases on issues ranging from the Rwanda Removal Policy to the NHS response to Lucy Letby's actions; from care homes during the pandemic to antisemitism in the Labour Party.

As well as acting in high level policy matters, Hannah is sought after for sensitive matters concerning the rights of individuals.

Hannah acts for a wide range of private entities and sector representative bodies in judicial reviews protecting commercial interests. Her recent clients have included tech companies, regulated financial entities, health and pharmaceutical businesses, agribusinesses, and companies associated with markets and street trading.

Hannah's broad public law practice encompasses areas such as: constitutional law; unlawful detention; human rights; electoral law; regulation of financial entities; emergency services and environmental law. She acts for claimants and defendants. She has particular experience with the conduct and decision-making of political parties.

Hannah also has expertise in the public law regulation of technology. She is a co-author of a forthcoming book on Online Safety and contributes to the Panopticon blog on cases involving tech and public law issues.

Hannah has strong public law specialisms in education, healthcare and community care. These are dealt with in separate sections.

> ***Hannah is brilliant. She is very practical and very sharp, with a great strategic eye, which is a killer combo.***
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> CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PUBLIC LAW

R (Meta, TikTok and X) v Ofcom

Hannah is acting in one of the first judicial reviews under the new Online Safety Act regime. This judicial review challenges a series of information notices by Ofcom. Hannah acts for Meta, instructed by White and Case.

Led by Christopher Knight KC

R (GLP) v EHRC

[2026] EWHC 279 (ADMIN)

Acting for the Claimants in this challenge to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance following For Women Scotland, now before the Court of Appeal. This case may determine the proper approach to single sex toilets in both public spaces and the workplace. Led by Dan Stilitz KC, Alex Goodman KC and Jane Russell KC, with Crash Wigley.

R (CIT) v FCA (No. 1)

[2025] EWHC 2614 (ADMIN)

Appeared for the Claimant in the first challenge to an application of the provisions of the FCA's new Enforcement Guide on when an entity subject to investigation will be publicly named. Led by Oliver Assersohn KC.

Bradshaw v the United Kingdom

2023, APPLICATION NOS 15653/22

Acting for the Government in this claim about the extent to which the State is under an obligation to investigate and take further action in respect of Russian interference in UK elections. Led by James Eadie KC, with Chris Knight.

NSK v United Kingdom

Part of the team of counsel acting for one of the Claimants challenging the Rwanda Removal Policy in Strasbourg, alongside colleagues Christopher Knight and Aliya Al-Yassin, along with others out of Chambers, and led by Raza Husain KC and Philippa Kaufmann KC.

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.

R (Good Law Project & Runnymede Trust) v Prime Minister & Secretary of State for Health

Represented claimant NGOs in discrimination and Public Sector Equality Duty challenge to the appointment of friends and contacts of Ministers to top pandemic-related jobs without open competition. Acted successfully for the Claimants in this challenge to the appointment of Dido Harding and others to key pandemic roles, without open recruitment processes. Led by Jason Coppel KC.

R (Doctors Association UK and others) v Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

CO/2074/2020

Successfully defended the Government in this judicial review (and other parallel judicial reviews) seeking to force the Government to call a public inquiry into handling of the pandemic, and particularly provision of PPE. Led by Clive Sheldon KC and James Eadie KC.

R (Mitchell) v Secretary of State for Justice

[2021] A.C.D. 112

Acted successfully as sole counsel challenging the Government's failure to consult on changes to the criminal injuries compensation scheme, which would prevent the disproportionate exclusion of victims of child sexual abuse. Instructed by the Centre for Women's Justice.

Equality and Human Rights Commission investigation into antisemitism in the Labour Party

Acted successfully as sole counsel on behalf of the Jewish Labour Movement, the lead complainants to the Commission's statutory investigation into antisemitism in the Labour Party. Instructed by Mishcon de Reya.

R (Inclusion Housing) v the Regulator for Social Housing

[2020] EWHC 346 (ADMIN)

Acted for a leading provider of specialist social housing in a judicial review of a regulatory judgment based on the provider's novel economic model. Led by Daniel Stilitz KC.

Sally Gimson's challenge to selection decision of the Labour Party's NEC

Acted as sole counsel on behalf of Sally Gimson, whom members of the Constituency Labour Party of Bassetlaw selected as their candidate for the 2019 election, after the NEC refused to endorse her candidacy. Instructed by Mishcon de Reya.

Vote Leave v Electoral Commission and Grassroots Out/Murphy v Electoral Commission

[2019] EWHC 2762 (QB)

Acted on behalf of the Electoral Commission, resisting parallel claims brought by Brexiteer participants in the 2016 referendum. The groups sought to prevent the Commission from continuing to retain and publish their financial information. The Vote Leave claim was withdrawn. The Grassroots Out claim was defeated in the High Court. Led by Tim Pitt-Payne 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.

DSD & NBV v Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis

[2018] UKSC 11

Intervened on behalf of Liberty in this Supreme Court appeal, arising from the case of the Black Cab Rapist. The case redefined the scope of an Article 3 obligation on the police when investigating crimes involving torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.

R (Gulf Centre for Human Rights) v Prime Minister

[2016] EWHC 1323 (ADMIN)

Represented the claimant challenging amendments to the Ministerial Code, which removed the obligation upon ministers to comply with international law and uphold the administration of justice. Led by Jason Coppel KC.

R (Moore) v Secretary of State for Local Government

[2015] ACD 44

Successfully represented the Save Farm Terrace Association in a judicial review challenging the Secretary of State's grant of permission for the sale of allotments, instructed by Deighton Pierce Glynn. Led by Jason Coppel KC.

R (Mohammadi) v Secretary of State for the Home Department

CO/10119/2013.

Successfully represented an unlawfully detained Iranian prisoner, instructed by Leigh Day.

R (Islington LBC) v Mayor of London

[2013] EWHC 4142 (ADMIN)

Acted for a group of London Boroughs in a complex judicial review challenging a decision to close 10 Inner London fire stations, led by Dan Stilitz KC.

Professional Discipline

Hannah appears in a range of professional discipline contexts, particularly in the context of higher education, health and social care and political party misconduct. She successfully defended the Leader of a Labour Council, who faced expulsion from the Party following false allegations of sexual assault.

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.

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