

Leanne Woods

Call: 2005



Leanne specialises in clinical negligence, inquests and public inquiries, professional discipline and regulation, and public law and human rights. She also has significant experience of military issues and disputes in the world of sport, and has worked in a commercial litigation department in private practice. Leanne is a member of the Attorney-General's A panel of counsel. She is ranked as a leading junior in the directories in clinical negligence and inquests and inquiries.

"Leanne is a really helpful, responsive and intelligent barrister."

Chambers & Partners 2024

"Leanne is a standout performer in inquests and inquiries. Solicitors admire her work ethic and attention to detail – very good manner with witnesses."

Legal 500 2023

"She's very thorough, handles everything in a logical way and is very good with clients."

Chambers & Partners 2024

Clinical Negligence

Leanne has a wealth of experience in clinical negligence claims and undertakes a full range of work for both claimants and defendants. She conducts trials in the High Court and County Courts, and can also rely on her experience of questioning expert witnesses in inquests.

Recent examples of Leanne's clinical negligence instructions are:

- Failures in privately funded fertility treatment
- Complex birth injuries
- Advising a private healthcare institution on vicarious liability and non delegable duties.
- Failures in A&E treatment leading to tetraplegia
- Brachial plexus injury arising from birth
- Failures in mental health care leading to self-inflicted death of a high earner

Selected Cases

- **L v Optimax Clinics and V:** Represented an ophthalmic surgeon in claim concerning corneal decompensation.
- **S v NHS Trust:** Acted for child who suffered a brachial plexus injury at birth.
- **T v an NHS Trust:** Represented claimant in high value catastrophic spinal cord injury which led to paraplegia.
- **FS v a fertility clinic:** Acted for claimant in an unusual claim arising from private IVF treatment.
- **JW v an NHS Trust:** Acted for claimant who suffered incomplete tetraplegia caused by the defendant's admitted negligence (led by Henry Witcomb QC). The primary dispute was quantum and the matter settled for a very significant sum.
- **WG v an NHS Trust:** Represented claimant in a claim arising from failures in consent and performing spinal surgery. After a mediation the defendant accepted the claimant's six figure settlement offer.
- **Chadwick v Royal Liverpool & Broadgreen University Hospitals Trust:** Successfully defended NHS Trust in a trial relating to wound dehiscence.
- **DS v Ministry of Defence:** JSM settlement for more than £500,000 in a claim arising out of an alleged failure to diagnose colon cancer.
- **JC v an NHS Trust:** Acted for claimant who suffered significant injury after the defendant's failure to properly investigate and diagnose a sports injury. The claimant was a barrister and the damages included a tricky claim for loss of earnings. The matter was successfully settled at mediation.
- **BG v Dr A:** Acted for defendant in JSM settlement of high value claim for long term psychiatric injury arising out of over-prescription of benzodiazepines and failure to diagnose PTSD.
- **Manzi v Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust [2016] EWHC 1101 (QB):** Acted for claimant in claim arising out of retained products of conception.

Inquests

Leanne is a very experienced inquests barrister, who also sits as an Assistant Coroner. She is instructed in challenging and high profile inquests, often involving death in state detention and sensitive mental health issues. Leanne mainly acts for families, healthcare bodies and professionals, care homes, the MOJ, the MOD and police forces. She has acted as junior counsel in the inquest into the sudden death of Russian businessman Alexander Perepilichnyy (including related High Court proceedings involving public interest immunity).

Selected Cases

- **Inquest into death of CB:** represented employer in inquest concerning self-inflicted death of an employee.
- **Inquest into death of Wayne Hurren:** acted for MOJ in inquest into death of high profile prisoner.
- **Inquest into the death of Peter Dray:** acted for a CCG in complex 4 week jury inquest into the death of man who from sepsis and advanced infection in a care home, while under NHS Continuing Care.
- **Inquest into death of SDF:** appeared for Metropolitan Police Service at inquest into death of woman in police custody.
- **Inquest into death of HN:** self-inflicted death of young man with learning disabilities in young offenders' institution.
- **Inquest into death of Baby F:** represented family of stillborn baby at inquest in which Coroner identified 11 recommendations in Preventing Future Deaths report.
- **Inquest into death of Alexander Perepilichnyy:** junior counsel to the inquest in sudden death of Russian businessman on UK soil, in which Russian state involvement was alleged.
- **HM Coroner for Surrey v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2016] EWHC 3001:** junior counsel for the Surrey Coroner in the Home Secretary's application to withhold documents on public interest immunity grounds.
- **Inquest into death of Amy El-Keria:** acting for psychiatrist in 4 week inquest into death of a 14 year old who died while in the Priory Hospital.
- **Inquests into the 52 deaths arising from the 7 July 2005 London bombings:** instructed as sole junior counsel for the British Transport Police.

Public Inquiries

Leanne has been involved in a number of long-running, high profile inquests and public inquiries. From 2020 – 2023 she has acted for DHSC (and former Ministers and civil servants) in the Infected Blood Inquiry. She appeared for 3 different healthcare professionals in the public inquiry into hyponatraemia-related paediatric deaths in Northern Ireland.

Selected Cases

- **Covid Inquiry:** Instructed by Department of Trade and Industry on behalf of the former Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- **Infected blood Inquiry:** Acting for the DHSC in this high profile inquiry examining the infection of NHS patients through the use of infected blood and blood products.
- **Public inquiry into hyponatraemia-related paediatric deaths in Northern Ireland:** Appeared for 3 different healthcare practitioners in a long-running public inquiry in Northern Ireland, investigating the deaths of 5 children in N.I. hospitals.

Public Law

Leanne's public law work overlaps with her specialist work and knowledge in the healthcare sector, inquests, mental health, professional discipline and the criminal justice system. She also has significant experience of dealing with disclosure and public interest immunity issues, including in the High Court.

Selected Cases

- **Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis v NHS England:** Instructed by the Metropolitan Police in a judicial review of publication of NHS England serious incident report that was critical of the police's use of s136 MHA powers.
- **Advising HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services** in relation to a number of public law issues and the inspection regime for police forces.
- **X v Google Inc.:** Acting for a police force in a High Court application to vary order for disclosure in the context of a highly sensitive police investigation into serious crime.
- **M v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis:** Representing the Metropolitan Police in a judicial review challenge to a police decision not to refer a case to the CPS prior to discontinuing an investigation into a rape allegation.

Professional Discipline & Regulation

Leanne regularly appears on behalf of healthcare professional before their regulatory tribunals (in particular, the MPTS and GDC), and in Trust disciplinary and Maintaining High Professional standards hearings. Leanne's clinical negligence work means she is adept at dealing with 'medical' issues in disciplinary proceedings. Leanne also has experience of police and MOD police misconduct hearings.

Selected Cases

- **GMC v Dr W:** successfully defended a number of dishonesty allegations at a MPTS FTP hearing.
- **A football club v Dr X:** advising first team doctor of a premiership football club in relation to misconduct allegations.
- **GMC v Dr G:** acting for Dr with multiple drink driving conditions at MPTS FTP hearing.
- **Trust v Dr G:** represented Dr at first hearing and on appeal in disciplinary proceedings arising from drug abuse at work.
- **GMC v Dr R:** acting in FTP hearing for junior doctor facing dishonesty charges, which were denied. MPTS accepted no dishonesty and fitness to practice was not impaired.

Sports Law

Leanne's sports law experience comes from both the self-employed bar and working in the sports law team at Charles Russell Speechlys. She undertakes contentious and non-contentious work for governing bodies, athletes and clubs. Leanne has recently been instructed by a national funding body in relation to challenges to funding decisions.

She also applies her clinical negligence and personal injury experience in sporting cases and has been involved in rugby-concussion cases and claims by athletes injured from substandard training facilities.

Leanne has sat on The FA County disciplinary anti-discrimination panel. She is also a former trustee for Women in Sport and a junior international athlete in track and field.

Selected Cases

- Advising first team doctor of a premiership football club in relation to disciplinary proceedings.
- Advising a national funding body in challenges to funding decisions.
- Acting for a junior rugby player who suffered repeated concussions in a personal injury claim.
- **Hillsborough inquests:** Leanne worked with Charles Russell Speechlys as part of the legal team acting for The FA.
- Advising Premiership Rugby on financial regulation and its Salary Capping Regulations.
- Advising sports governing bodies on disciplinary action against members.
- Representing an athlete in a negligence claim against a club and sports ground.
- Advising international athletes and sports officials on disciplinary proceedings and appeals.

Appointments

- Attorney-General's A Panel of Counsel (present)
- Attorney-General's B Panel of Counsel (2016 – 2022)
- Northern Ireland Bar
- Assistant Coroner (London East)
- PNBA Executive Committee Member (2017 – present)

Awards

- Major Scholar, Inner Temple
- Fulbright Scholar
- Sally Ball Award
- Brasenose College Jurisprudence Award

Education

- Postgraduate certificate in sports law (Distinction)

- BVC (Outstanding)
- LLM, University of Pennsylvania (award for highest mark on LLM course)
- BA Jurisprudence (First Class), Brasenose College, University of Oxford

Memberships

- ALBA
- BASL
- PIBA
- PNBA