



Barrister

SOPHIE WALKER

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Call: 2016



Specialist in
Family
Personal Immigration
Business Immigration
Prison Law
Public Law
Inquests & Public Inquiries Team
Modern Slavery & Trafficking Team
Specialist Family & Immigration Team

Experience

Sophie is an experienced human rights practitioner, having previously spent five years as a US Attorney representing death row prisoners, and three years as a solicitor, before being called to the Bar in 2016.

Sophie's expertise spans criminal and civil law. She appears regularly in the criminal courts, as well as the Asylum and Immigration Chamber of both the First and Upper-tier Tribunal in complex protection claims, and for vulnerable children and victims of trafficking. She has a developing Judicial Review and civil practice including trafficking, prison and police law.

She also has a flourishing inquest practice, where she acts exclusively for bereaved families in both Article 2 and domestic inquests. She has particular experience in deaths arising within community mental healthcare, and also in the probation context where her background in criminal law is of particular assistance.

Sophie also appears in family proceedings courts and county courts, with focus on private law children matters and cases involving serious domestic abuse.

Notable cases

LW, KT, MC & Faulder v Sodexo Ltd & Secretary of State for Justice [\[2019\] EWHC 367 \(Admin\)](#)

The case arose out of the illegal strip searching of four claimants at HMP Peterborough. The first Claimant is a transgender prisoner, the other three are female. Sodexo conceded that the strip searches were unlawful and that there had been systemic failings, the claim was pursued against the Secretary of State for failing to place adequate safeguards to protect the Claimants. The High Court held that the failings were serious, systemic and widespread, and the legal framework relied on by the Secretary of State was ineffective to ensure that Sodexo had adequate systems in place, in breach of Article 8.

Inquest in the death of a child under the care of community mental health team (2019)

A sixteen-year-old girl under the care of the community mental health team and social services, who died after stepping in front of a train. The Coroner acknowledged that there were issues with communication between social services and the family.

Inquest into the death of a person required to reside in an Approved Premises (2018)

The terms of the deceased's licence required that he reside at an Approved Premises between 11pm and 7am following his release from prison. During this time he became unwell and there was a delay in providing him with emergency medical treatment. The Coroner found that he was dependent on

Approved Premises staff (“being unconscious in a locked room”) and that it is possible that timely medical treatment would have led to his survival

R v AT [2018] EWCA 1890 (Crim)

The Applicant was convicted of a single count of causing or allowing the serious physical harm of a child, contrary to section 5(1) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. She was sentenced to an extended sentence of ten years. The Court found that the sentencing judge had unlawfully relied on draft sentencing guidelines and that there was no sufficient basis for finding that the appellant intended really serious harm. Her extended sentence was quashed and she was re-sentenced to a five years imprisonment.

Background

Before joining the Bar, Sophie has considerable experience in the charity-sector. She completed a two-year legal fellowship at the not-for-profit Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama, representing death row prisoners in both state and federal courts. She also challenged the incarceration of terminally ill prisoners and was part of the team that successfully challenged sentencing of children to whole-life sentences at the US Supreme Court, *Graham v Florida*, 560 U.S.48. In 2009, she joined Reprieve UK, where she advised on domestic and international law relating to capital punishment and consular assistance.

In 2014, Sophie became the founding director of Appeal, a not-for-profit law firm that sought to overturn miscarriages of justice.

Sophie undertakes substantial pro bono work for INQUEST, Centre for Women’s Justice, Advocate, Bail for Immigration Detainees, RAMFEL and Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association. She is also the director of [JUST: Access](#) a social enterprise that harnesses technology to overcome the justice gap.

Education

Oxford University, BA in Jurisprudence
New York University School of Law, LLM

Memberships

Criminal Appeals Lawyers Association
Immigration Law Practitioners’ Association

Awards

Women of the Year Achievement Award (Women of the Year Awards 2015) Margaret Pollock
Scholarship (Oxford University 2006)

CASES

R v D

Following a successfully application to exclude ABE interviews of child-complainants due to late disclosure, the CPS offered no evidence.

Related Barristers:

[Sophie Walker](#)

R (Coll) v Secretary of State for Justice

[2017] UKSC 40

The Supreme Court unanimously allowed the appellant's appeal and granted a declaration that the provision of Approved Premises constitutes direct discrimination against women.

Area of Law:

Prison Law, Public Law

Related Barristers:

[Sophie Walker](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Chapter: Investigation in Criminal Appeals Cases, Book: Criminal Appeals Handbook (Bloomsbury Professional)

Criminal Appeals Handbook provides practical assistance to legal representatives of clients who are seeking to challenge convictions or sentences in the Court of Appeal and beyond.

Area of Law:

Crime

Related Barristers:

[Sophie Walker](#)

Protecting inferences of fact in defamation law: Fair Comment and Honest Opinion

Analysing the treatment of comments, facts and factual inferences and explaining how a better approach is possible for English courts.

Pub: Cambridge Law Journal

Area of Law:

[Civil Law](#)

Related Barristers:

[Sophie Walker](#)