

Leanne Woods

Call: 2005



Leanne Woods specialises in clinical negligence, professional discipline and regulation, inquests and public inquiries, police law, and public law. She also has significant experience in sporting disputes. She is appointed to the Attorney-General's B Panel of counsel and is called to the bar in Northern Ireland.

Leanne is approachable, practical and a team player and is particularly aware of providing timely and responsive client care.

'Leanne is very tenacious and doesn't shy away from a fight on behalf of her client.'

Legal 500 2021

'Has an eye for detail and is extremely sensitive with clients.'

Legal 500 2021

'She has excellent analytical skills.'

Legal 500 2019

Clinical Negligence

Leanne has extensive experience of clinical negligence claims, acting for claimants and defendants in both medical and dental work. She drafts pleadings, advises, appears in trials in the High Court and County Court and regularly attends settlement meetings. Leanne has specialist experience of claims arising from custodial or secure settings and claims involving the armed forces, including for psychiatric injury.

In January 2020, Leanne spoke about Fatal Claims at [AvMA Clinical Negligence: Law Practice & Procedure 2020](#).

Examples of recent instructions:

- Failures in privately funded fertility treatment.
- Fatal Accident Act claim against GP relating to cardiac condition in a young patient.
- Negligently damaging vas deferens during abdominal surgery.
- Dental claims.
- Failure in antenatal care leading to death in utero and psychiatric injury to mother.

Selected Cases

- **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 has a wealth of experience of inquests, including a number of high profile, long-running cases. She regularly acts in Article 2 inquests for families, NHS Trusts, healthcare practitioners, the prison service and police forces. She frequently acts for medical staff in death in custody inquests.

She has specialist knowledge of dealing with public interest immunity issues in the context of inquests, including applications to the High Court.

Leanne also sits as an Assistant Coroner in London East.

Selected Cases

- **Inquest into the death of Alexander Perepilichnyy:** Junior counsel to the inquest in this inquest into the

unexplained death of a Russian national on British soil in which Russian state involvement was alleged.

- **HM Coroner for Surrey v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2016] EWHC 3001 (Admin):** Junior counsel for the Surrey Coroner in the Home Secretary's application to withhold documents from an inquest on public interest immunity grounds.
- **Inquest into the death of Daryl Hargrave:** Acting for the Prison and Probation Service in a 4 week inquest into the suicide of a young prisoner who suffered from psychosis.
- **Inquest into the death of Amy El-Keria:** Acting for a psychiatrist in 4 week inquest into the death of a 14 year old who died while having psychiatric care at the Priory Hospital.
- **Inquest into the death of Daniel Maynard:** Acting for the Metropolitan Police Service in inquest into death of a mentally ill man who killed himself after police contact.
- **Hillsborough inquests:** Worked with Charles Russell Speechlys as part of the legal team acting for The FA.
- **Inquest into the death of Scot Young:** Representing a mental health trust in the inquest into the death of a millionaire who died after falling onto railings outside his flat, shortly after being discharged from a mental health facility.
- **Inquests into the 52 deaths arising from the 7 July 2005 London bombings:** Instructed as sole junior for the British Transport Police.

Public Inquiries

Leanne has been involved in a number of long-running, high profile inquests and inquiries. She has significant experience of dealing with disclosure and public interest immunity issues, including High Court applications.

Selected Cases

- **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 undertakes a broad range of public law and human rights work for both claimants and defendants in the fields of:

- Health and mental health
- Prisons
- Inquests
- Professional discipline and regulatory proceedings
- Police law

She also has significant experience of dealing with disclosure and public interest immunity issues, including High

Court applications.

Selected Cases

- **Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis v NHS England:** Instructed by the Metropolitan Police in a judicial review of the publication of conclusions reached by NHS England in a serious incident report that criticised the police's exercise of powers under s.136 Mental Health Act 1983.
- **W v Ministry of Justice:** Acting for the MoJ in a claim brought for an alleged breach of Article 8 arising out of a prison service decision to prevent contact between a father and son.
- Advising HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services in relation to a number of public law issues and the inspection regime.
- **S v Ministry of Justice:** Acting for the MoJ in a number of HRA claims arising from alleged discrimination on the grounds of religion.
- **X v Google Inc. :** Acting for a police force in a High Court application to vary an order for disclosure of information based on the potential prejudice that disclosure would have to the police investigation into serious crime. Application was made urgently and without notice and included requests for anonymity.
- **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 has significant experience in the field of professional discipline and her practice includes the regulation of healthcare professionals, the police and the military. In the healthcare field, Leanne regularly appears in interim and full hearings in the MPTS, the GDC and other tribunals. She also acts for practitioners in NHS England proceedings and in internal disciplinary hearings brought by NHS Trusts. Leanne acts in police and MOD police misconduct hearings, including as a legal advisor. She has been described by a Metropolitan Commander as the most effective presenting officer who had appeared before her.

Leanne is a tenacious advocate and skilled at cross-examination and is known for her client friendly approach and sound judgment.

Selected Cases

- **GMC v Dr N:** Appeared at an FTP hearing before the MPTS on behalf of a doctor accused of inappropriate sexual relationships with 2 patients, dishonesty and clinical failures. While the GMC argued that erasure was the appropriate sanction, the Panel imposed a short suspension.
- **GMC v Dr R:** Acted in a full FTP hearing for a junior doctor facing a number of dishonesty charges, which were denied. The Tribunal accepted there had been no dishonesty and that the doctor's fitness to practice was not impaired. The GMC then made an application for a warning, which Leanne successfully argued against.
- **GMC v Dr F:** Acted in FTP hearing for a consultant who had treated a family member and who was

accused of dishonesty.

- **GMC v Dr B:** In a highly contentious review hearing concerning a doctor's mental health, Leanne undermined the reliability of the GMC's evidence of alcohol testing and persuaded the Panel that previously imposed conditions relating to alcohol consumption had not been breached.
- **GDC v Dr S:** Leanne appeared for a practitioner who had criminal convictions for prescribing-related offences in a mixed health and misconduct FTP case.
- **GMC v Dr M:** Acted at an interim hearing for a doctor accused of a number of dishonesty allegations, including criminal fraud. The GMC argued for an interim suspension in the public interest but Leanne persuaded the Panel that conditions were sufficient.

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 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.

Court of Protection

Leanne appears on behalf of local authorities and persons lacking capacity at best interests and capacity hearings in the Court of Protection. She also has significant experience of acting for police forces in such proceedings, often on disclosure issues. Leanne was a co-author of Medical Treatment Decisions and the Law: the Mental Capacity Act in Action.

Health Law

In the healthcare field, Leanne's practice includes (in addition to clinical negligence, inquests and professional discipline):

- Mental health and human rights
- Judicial review
- Medical product liability (including the group action for hip replacement devices)
- Cases involving questions of confidentiality

Selected Cases

- **Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis v NHS England:** Instructed by the Metropolitan Police in a judicial review claim of the publication of conclusions reached by NHS England in a serious incident report that criticised the police's exercise of powers under s.136 Mental Health Act 1983.
- **Various claimants v De Puy:** Part of the team advising on quantum in this group action arising from defective hip replacement devices.
- **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.

Local Government & Police Law

Leanne's experience covers the full spectrum of police law work and in particular, civil actions against the police, inquests and public law. She also has expertise in disclosure and public interest immunity issues and a special interest in cases with a mental health element. Leanne has acted for and advised a large number of forces around the country and other bodies, such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Selected Cases

- **Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis v NHS England:** Leanne was instructed by the Metropolitan Police in a judicial review of the publication of conclusions reached by NHS England in a serious incident report that criticised the police's exercise of powers under s.136 Mental Health Act 1983.
- **Inquest into the death of Daniel Maynard:** Acting for the Metropolitan Police Service in inquest into death of a mentally ill man who killed himself after police contact.
- **Inquests into the 52 deaths arising from the 7 July 2005 London bombings:** Leanne was instructed as sole junior for the British Transport Police in these high profile inquests.
- **X v Google Inc:** Acting for a police force in a High Court application to vary an order for disclosure of information based on the potential prejudice that disclosure would have to the police investigation into

serious crime. Application was made urgently and without notice and included requests for anonymity.

Appointments

- Attorney-General's B Panel of Counsel (2016 – present)
- 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