

Sara Sutherland

Call 2004



Clerks

 Leigh Daniels
 0161 817 2768

 Olivia Cleere
 0161 817 7138

Appointments

- Assistant Deputy Coroner (2011)

Education

- Leeds Girls High School
- Undergraduate Degree: 2:1 BSc (Hons) Psychology, University of Stirling
- Post graduate Diploma in Law at Manchester Metropolitan University, Very Competent
- Bar Vocational Course, Manchester Metropolitan University, Very Competent

Inquests

Sara was appointed an Assistant Coroner in July 2011 and sits on a regular basis throughout the year. She has appeared on behalf of a wide range of properly interested persons, including families, businesses, health authorities, insurance companies, prison officers, police officers, midwives, nurses, pharmacists and doctors.

Sara can advise on paper and in person. She also regularly attends Article 2 inquests on behalf of PIPs. It can be of great assistance instructing Counsel to attend an inquest. Although a police investigation and/or an investigation by the HSE may have wound down, an inquest provides the perfect opportunity to elicit new evidence and/or to explore avenues that were previously not considered or perhaps were not explored with as much vigour as the inquest will allow. Many inquests Sara has been involved in have led to a resumption of police and HSE investigation leading to subsequent prosecution in appropriate cases.

Sara is regularly instructed to conduct the personal injury case and/or clinical negligence case that may follow an inquest and she can provide advice about any subsequent proceedings, whether on paper or in person. Holding the appropriate direct access qualifications, Sara is happy to accept instructions on this basis.

Cases

C died aged only a few days old. The mother had sustained a spontaneous rupture of the membranes at 36 weeks and had attended a hospital. She had not been given antibiotics and had been discharged. C was born by emergency caesarean section a few days later and despite displaying signs of illness, was not treated for many hours. They have since uncovered a number of other deaths, which are now the subject of a police investigation.

C was killed when cycling a bicycle along a main thoroughfare. C struck a pothole and was thrown to the ground sustaining fatal injuries. The family are pursuing a personal injury claim on behalf of the estate of C and dependents.

C (a child, deceased) was admitted to hospital with symptoms of illness but was discharged with advice to return if there was a significant deterioration. C was taken back to hospital 3 days later and sustained life changing injury as a result of Meningitis. I was instructed by the NHS trust to represent their medical practitioners who attended.

As an Assistant Coroner I conducted this inquest. C sustained a small bowel infarction and perforation, which had not been discovered for some time. C was eventually admitted to hospital where surgery took place and they initially made some improvement. Sadly, C's condition took a turn for the worse and they deteriorated and passed away. The family were concerned about the delay in diagnosis and treatment. I entered a conclusion of natural causes.

I was instructed in this high profile case by the family when the Coroner indicated her intention to conclude the inquest. Upon review of the papers it became clear to me that C had been referred to hospital by their GP with signs of meningitis (lethargy, aching, rash, headaches, vomiting, fever) but was met with a diagnosis of food poisoning. I attended at the inquest and following detailed submissions the Coroner agreed to refer the matter to the police. The police have instructed their own medical experts and their investigation is ongoing .

Recommendations

“Sara is supportive, knowledgeable, excellent at getting the best out of witnesses, and realistic.”

“Sara is a first-rate barrister who is strong in all areas. She has excellent client skills.”

The Legal 500 2024

“Sara is very efficient and uses technology well. She is always available to discuss cases and tactics and has great empathy when dealing with sensitive issues.”

The Legal 500 2023

“Sara displays an excellent level of knowledge, supported by bags of common sense with intuition on when to be empathetic and sympathetic and when to attack!”

The Legal 500 2022

“Sara is a knowledgeable and confident lawyer. She is excellent in handling witnesses and is sensitive and empathetic to their needs thus ensuring that she gets the best of them to achieve the best possible and realistic result for her client. She is sensible and grounded in her advice.”

“Sara is very clear, confident and efficient. She is good with clients and a safe pair of hands.”

The Legal 500 2021

“Particularly adept in inquests involving medical institutions.”

“Primarily instructed on behalf of claimants.”

The Legal 500 2020

“She has particular expertise in clinical negligence cases involving infants and children.”

The Legal 500 2018/19

“Very experienced in clinical negligence cases.”

The Legal 500 2017

“An astute and persuasive lawyer.”

The Legal 500 2016

“She is honest and tenacious, and genuinely cares for clients; she goes the extra mile.”

The Legal 500 2015

“She has a broad practice, with particular expertise in industrial diseases cases.”

The Legal 500 2014

Beyond the Bar

In her spare time Sara enjoys running, skiing and playing the piano.