

Sue Sleeman



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Profile

Sue has a mixed civil practice covering employment and professional disciplinary/regulatory law. Her practice is predominantly for Claimants in employment cases, and exclusively on behalf of professionals who face proceedings brought by their regulatory body. She is ranked in Chambers and Partners and Legal 500 as a leading barrister for professional discipline cases. She is described as "*extremely impressive in her determination to fight her client's corner with great resolve. She is pragmatic, familiar with the jurisdiction, intelligent, and someone who offers realistic points and puts forward her case very attractively.*" Her clients include teachers, police officers, nurses, pharmacists, other healthcare professionals and more.

Sue is author of the chapter on the Health and Care Professions Council in Professional Discipline and Healthcare Regulators: a Legal Handbook. She is on the Legal Members Panel of the Association of Child Psychotherapists and a member of the Association of Disciplinary and Regulatory Lawyers, the Employment Law Bar Association, the Employment Lawyers Association and the Discrimination Law Association.

Education

MSc (Econ)

BA (Hons) French

Grad Dip Law

Related practice areas

Employment, Discrimination and Equality Law

Professional Discipline and Regulation

Professional Discipline and Regulation

In her professional disciplinary practice Sue appears regularly at a number of statutory regulatory bodies, only ever representing the individual practitioner. The focus of her practice is on health care professions and she regularly represents nurses, health visitors and midwives appearing before the Nursing and Midwifery Council: physiotherapists, paramedics and speech and language therapists appearing before the Health and Care Professions Council, as well as pharmacists, teachers and solicitors. She has experience of cases involving allegations of serious misconduct, including inappropriate touching of patients, incorrect clinical treatment, criminal convictions and health issues.

Recent notable cases include:

- **NMC v JN:** The Registrant, a nurse, faced numerous allegations of misconduct towards vulnerable service users in a residential home. The allegations included some of physical and verbal abuse. The panel heard from seven witnesses for the NMC and the hearing took place over nine days. After Sue's cross examination of the NMC witnesses and hearing evidence from the Registrant, the panel found all of the most serious allegations not to be proven. After further submissions from Sue the panel found that the Registrant was not currently impaired.
- **HCPC v RS:** The Registrant, a physiotherapist, faced serious allegations of inappropriate touching of two female patients. He was subject to interim orders over a lengthy period while criminal proceedings were ongoing. He was acquitted at criminal trial but then faced misconduct proceedings based on the same allegations. Although the Registrant admitted many of the factual particulars and the panel found them to amount to misconduct, following his evidence and Sue's submissions as to his level of insight and remediation, the panel found him not to be currently impaired.

Employment Law and Industrial Relations

Sue represents Claimants bringing claims in the Employment Tribunals on a wide range of issues including unfair dismissal, contract claims, collective redundancy consultation and transfer of undertakings. In recent years the focus of her work has been on complex discrimination cases and whistleblowing. While Sue's employment work is primarily at first instance she also appears in the Employment Appeal Tribunal and the High Court.

Recent notable cases include:

- **DP v Metropolitan Police:** Sue represented a detective constable who had been victimised by his employer for having previously brought, and settled, claims for discrimination on grounds of his Russian national origin. The Employment Tribunal found that he had been victimised by reference to his previous claims in response to a question about his vetting status and suitability by another force to which he was applying for a post. Compensation was agreed following the Tribunal's findings and recommendations were then made regarding the Met's policies and procedures to avoid future victimisation.
- **Anderson v Ryanair:** Sue represented the Claimant, a pilot who had been dismissed for seeking to recruit cabin staff to a trade union. Sue, instructed alone against a QC, succeeded on a preliminary point following which the matter settled.
- **Raw-Rees v Governing Body of St Padarn's Primary School:** Sue represented the Claimant in his successful claim for direct discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. The Claimant had been prevented from applying for the post of headteacher as the school would only consider applications from individuals who were practising Catholics. The Tribunal held that statutory provisions that permit voluntary aided schools to give preference to candidates whose religious opinions are in accordance with those of the school did not provide a defence to an allegation of direct discrimination where other candidates were excluded from the recruitment process.

Before coming to the Bar, Sue worked in the trade union movement for many years including for the National Union of Teachers and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Since joining Doughty Street Chambers in 2004, she has continued to maintain strong links with the trade union movement as the majority of her cases, both in employment and professional discipline, are for members of national trade unions. She has also acted for trade unions and the TUC when facing claims against them in the Employment Tribunals.