

Dr Alison Seaman (previously Gerry)



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Profile

From the beginning, Alison's practice has had state accountability at its heart: accountability for those in detention, for those who claim to have been abused, and for those who have been discriminated against. This has seen her practice develop from mainly mental health and inquest work to include prison law, and now a substantial field of practice for Alison is actions against the police. Alison has further expertise in claims concerning the failure of police to protect victims of domestic violence and failures to conduct effective investigations into reports of serious offences.

After nearly 20 years of practice Alison recently completed a PhD at Edinburgh University which gave her the opportunity to consider more deeply how state bodies are held accountable in the UK. The title of her thesis was "Specialist domestic human rights tribunals for the UK within a "differential constitution". Her research involved assessing how domestic common law courts have approached protecting positive rights, and whether there is a need for a specialist human rights jurisdiction across the UK. Alison's thesis covered issues of constitutional law, devolution, constitutional theory as well as the domestic protection of human rights. Alison can now bring academic thinking to her practice and a deep constitutional understanding of how the UK's domestic courts protect rights.

What people are saying about Alison

"Alison is an excellent advocate, very clear and persuasive."—Legal 500, 2026

"Alison is incredibly bright, forensically detailed and thorough in her approach, leaving no stone unturned in her legal analysis. She is extremely empathetic to clients and really insightful in terms of the impact of the experiences they have been through. She is an impressive advocate, calm and understated yet confident and compelling in the arguments she makes."—Legal 500, 2026

"Alison is great with clients."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison is very good with judges and intellectual in her approach."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison is methodical and thorough."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison displays a highly creative and effective approach to litigation."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison is a pleasure to work with."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison is simply superb. She is a wonderful advocate, on top of the law, fantastic with clients and a collaborative, supportive person to work with."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison is great with clients. She displays a highly creative and effective approach."
—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"She is a brilliant barrister who keeps a client's objectives at the forefront and is adept at explaining difficult points. She has good judgement and very strong advocacy."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison is very calm, clever and responsive. She is pretty unflappable, she knows what she's doing. She is good on the law and the evidence."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"I am really impressed by Alison. She is good with clients; I've recommended her."
—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison is knowledgeable, down to earth and excellent with clients."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison is an exceptional advocate, deeply committed to her clients, adept at strategy and has first-class knowledge of the law in this area."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"Alison is incredibly good; she is passionate and very good with clients. She never takes a step back in her advocacy, you want her in your corner."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

Alison is ranked as a Band 1 junior in Police Law: Mainly Claimant by *Chambers and Partners UK, 2025*.

"Alison is an excellent jury advocate. She is able to cut to the key points within huge amounts of material, while keeping the jury engaged. Her cross-examination is particularly powerful and she is also excellent with clients."—Legal 500, 2025

"Alison's client care skills are second to none. She is very committed and fights passionately for her clients."—Legal 500, 2024

"Alison is extremely knowledgeable, calm, incredibly detailed and nuanced. She is empathetic with clients, an impressive advocate, and my go-to on really tricky cases with intricate twists and turns."—Chambers and Partners, 2024

"She has a wise approach to cases and leaves no stone unturned in her analysis."—Chambers and Partners, 2024

"She is absolutely formidable and never gives up; when you are against her you really have to work hard."—Chambers and Partners, 2023

Education

PhD

LLM: International Human Rights Law (Distinction)

LLB: Law (First Class)

Princess Royal Scholarship Inner Temple

Related practice areas

Actions Against the Police and Public Authorities

Court of Protection & Mental Health

Inquests and Public Inquiries

Administrative & Public Law

Actions Against the Police and Public Authorities

Alison is currently instructed as junior counsel by the victims of the Hillsborough disaster in a group action against the South Yorkshire and West Midlands Police for misfeasance in a public office.

Recent high court trials include:

- *Jamal Amadu-Abdualla v Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis* [2024] EWHC 3162 (KB). Claim by a 14-year-old boy unlawfully tasered by police.
- *Traylor v Kent and Medway NHS Social Care Partnership Trust* [2022] EWHC 260 (QB). Claim by a daughter who was stabbed multiple times by her father while he was suffering a psychotic episode. The claim was for a failure to protect the daughter from a known risk of harm under Article 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- *(1) MLIA (2) CLEL v Chief Constable of Hampshire* (2017): Case against the police for failure to effectively investigate and protect against domestic violence and abuse.
- *El Hussein v. Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis* (2016): Claim against the police where the police had mis-identified the claimant as a suspect they had under surveillance. Due to the mis-identification, the claimant was subjected to an armed stop and restraint.
- *(1) Mohidin (2) Khan (3) Hegazy (Claimants) v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (Defendant) & (1) Mark Jones (2) Steven White (3) William Wilson (4) Neil Brown (Third Parties)* (2015): Claim against the police for assault, false imprisonment, and racial discrimination.
- *(1) NTC (2) DSC (a child by his litigation friend NTC) (3) SSC (a child by her litigation friend) (4) SRC v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis* (2015): Claim by a mother, her two young children, and her sister against the police for subjecting them to an armed intervention. The police wrongly identified the claimants as being in a flat where a suspect with a gun was being sought.
- Alison continues to represent the victims of the police cover up of the Hillsborough disaster. The Group Litigation claim has been settled by means of a compensation scheme that involves the assessment of individual claims, which is still on going.

Alison is also a contributing author for **LAG Police Misconduct book**.

Inquiries and Inquests

Alison has extensive experience representing families in inquests involving deaths in police custody and police-related deaths, deaths in prison, and deaths in psychiatric hospital. Alison also has experience of representing the families of those murdered by offenders subject to probation supervision.

Examples of some of her recent cases include:

- Inquest into the death of Jaysley Beck. *Jaysley was just 19 and a gunner in the Royal Artillery when she was found dead in her room, suspended from her door by the belt of her dressing gown. Prior to her death she had been subjected to a sexual assault by a senior ranked officer, and in addition to weeks of inappropriate, obsessive and ultimately frightening behaviour by her line manager. Her complaint in respect of the sexual assault was not properly investigated and was “swept under the carpet.”. During the course of the inquest the army apologised for letting Jaysley down.*
- Inquest into the death of Thomas Orchard. *Thomas was killed as the result of the use of police restraint while he was suffering a mental health crisis. The restraint used included police using an emergency response belt (“ERB”) intended to be used as a limb restraint, as a bit spit guard, placing it over his mouth and nose impeding his ability to breath. Read about the case [here](#).*
- Inquest into the death of Christine McDonald: *Alison represented the daughter of Christine McDonald who took her own life while serving a prison sentence for shop lifting. Christine had multiple mental health issues and was opioid dependent. She tragically took her own life on her second night in prison. She had asked to see a nurse but one was not called, and a message from her daughter to say that her other daughter alive was not passed on to her prior to her death. The jury returned a highly critical conclusion and found neglect contributed to death. Read more about the case [here](#).*
- Inquest into the death of Tia Wilson: *Tia was just 18 when she took her own life whilst detained in a psychiatric ward under the Mental Health Act. She was the youngest patient on an adult ward. Tia was sectioned after trying to strangle herself. Throughout her time on the ward it was clear that Tia’s mental health was deteriorating. The inquest uncovered multi failings in her care, including significant failures on the day she died around the use of observations. Read about the case [here](#).*

- Inquest into the death of Gemma Finnigan: *Gemma was killed by her partner who had been released on life licence having previously been imprisoned for murder. There was clear evidence of an increase in risk which Gemma's family argued were not picked up or acted upon by probation officer.*
- Inquest into the death of Clare Nash: *Clare was stabbed to death in front of her young son by an ex partner. Clare had called the police on a number of occasions prior to her murder reporting the harassment and stalking behaviour of her ex partner. Despite these calls the police failed to take any proactive steps in protecting her. Read about the case [here](#).*
- Alison also represented one of the victims of the terrorist attack in In Amenas, Algeria. In reaching findings, the Coroner highlighted security flaws at the gas plant. Read about this in the press [here](#).

Prison Law and Criminal Justice

Alison regularly represents prisoners in civil claims as well as in judicial reviews and in the parole-related matters. She was junior counsel in the successful group litigation claim against the Home Office concerning the treatment of opiate-dependant prisoners, in which the Home Office conceded liability in negligence, breach of human rights, and assault. She has conducted civil trials on behalf of prisoners against prison officers, including in particular in assault, negligence, and breach of human rights.

Alison has also conducted a number of appeals against sentence and conviction in the Court of Appeal.

Administrative and Public Law

Alison is instructed in prison-, police-, and mental health-related judicial reviews. Examples of her case include the successful challenge to and Inquest verdict in *R (on the application of Rossana Hair) (Claimant) v HM Coroner for Staffordshire (South) (Defendant) & others* and the successful (on appeal) challenge to a Category A prisoner's categorisation in *R (on the application of Mackenzie) v Secretary of State for Justice*.

International Law

Alison is an experienced Constitutional law practitioner, particularly in cases concerning the Caribbean. In addition to her death penalty work, Alison has been instructed in cases in the Turks and Caicos Islands (*R (on the application of Michael Misick) v Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs*) and in Belize [Civil Appeal No.07 of 2011].

Alison has experience in applications to the European Court of Human Rights, as well as before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Notable cases before the European Court of Human Rights include an application on behalf of a child who had been made the subject of a mandatory and indefinite Sexual Offences Notification Order, and on behalf of a mentally disordered offender who is seeking to appeal his life sentence. Alison was also junior counsel in *Boyce & Joseph v R* [2005] 1 AC 400, a challenge to the mandatory death penalty in Barbados before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Costa Rica.

Alison was junior counsel in a group litigation claim against Trafigura, brought by nearly 30,000 claimants in the Ivory Coast, for personal injuries following the dumping of toxic waste at various sites in Abijan, Ivory Coast.

Group Actions

Alison has expertise in group litigation and was junior counsel in the successful group litigation claim against the Home Office concerning the treatment of opiate-dependant prisoners, in which the Home Office conceded liability in negligence, breach of human rights, and assault.

Alison was also junior counsel in a group litigation claim against Trafigura, brought by nearly 30,000 claimants in the Ivory Coast, for personal injuries following the dumping of toxic waste at various sites in Abijan, Ivory Coast.

Alison is junior counsel in the claim by the victims of the Hillsborough disaster against the police following the police cover up of their failings, and the blaming of the Liverpool fans for the disaster.