

Louise Hartley

Year of Call: 2008

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Overview

Louise Hartley is a specialist regulatory barrister who joined 3PB in October 2024, after five years as Head of Legal at Sport England, a national sport funding organisation and non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

She now has a busy practice spanning professional discipline, regulation (with a particular focus on healthcare and education) and sport.

During her time at Sport England, Louise advised and worked on complex, high-profile sporting matters involving the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), most notably leading Sport England's role in commissioning the Whyte Review, which uncovered systemic abuse in the sport of gymnastics. Louise has an excellent working knowledge of the national sporting environment and a detailed, practical understanding of the NGBs, how they are funded, their governance role and their commercial drivers.

Louise advised on the most recent version of the Code for Sports Governance and supported Sport England's role in the development of the Sports Councils' Transgender Inclusion in Sport Guidance.

As the most senior lawyer within Sport England, leading a team of sixteen lawyers, paralegals and other corporate services professionals, Louise was responsible for advising and delivering at the highest levels. She understands intrinsically the needs of her clients and is always conscious of providing practical, pragmatic, solutions-focused advice.

Louise began her career with a criminal set where she focused on crime, regulatory and immigration work. She appeared in the Crown Courts, High Court and Court of Appeal, as well as in various tribunals.

After a secondment, she joined the Nursing and Midwifery Council's in-house Regulatory Legal Team, managing a large caseload of complex and multi-handed matters, often with significant media interest. She appeared regularly in matters before NMC panels, covering a range of allegations from criminal offences, sexual misconduct, CQC failings, health conditions and competence issues. Louise also appeared frequently in the High Court, defending statutory appeals and making applications for extensions to interim orders.

Within her role as the Head of Legal at Sport England, Louise procured and managed a panel of external law firms. This experience has given her an insight into the needs and demands of in-house teams, who must themselves deliver high quality legal advice at pace and provide an excellent service to their clients.

Outside of busy work demands, Louise is a keen open swimmer. She recently swam the Channel as part of a four-person relay and has competed in various marathon-swimming events.

Recommendations

"In her time as Head of Legal at Sport England Louise has given detailed, appropriate, expert and timely advice both to me and the organisation more widely. She has acted as lead advisor internally whilst also managing a consortia of legal firms providing additional expert views on specific areas of our work.

In terms of focus areas, I would highlight Louise's commissioning and oversight of the Review into systematic abuse in Gymnastics led by Anne Whyte QC; advising at pace on regulatory and other contractual elements around the introduction of the Sport Survival Package during the CV19 pandemic; ensuring Sport England appropriately interprets its regulatory responsibilities and function in particular around complex complaints about National Governing Bodies of Sport; and advising on Sport England's role in the development of the Sports Councils' Guidance on Transgender Inclusion in Sport."

Tim Hollingsworth, Chief Executive, Sport England

Academic qualifications

- BVC, Very Competent, College of Law, London
- LLB (2:1), King's College London

Scholarships

- Harmsworth Scholarship, Middle Temple

Professional qualifications & appointments

- Member of the Sport Resolutions Panel of Arbitrators

Professional bodies

- Honourable Society of Middle Temple
- Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers

Expertise

Professional Discipline

Louise Hartley has a busy professional discipline practice with a particular focus on healthcare and education. She has advised and represented professionals, organisations and regulators before a wide range of regulatory tribunals, including: the General Dental Council; the Healthcare Professions Council; the Nursing and Midwifery Council; the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales; the General Pharmaceutical Council; and the Farriers Registration Council. She appears regularly before the First Tier Tribunal (Care Standards) in Ofsted and CQC appeals.

Louise regularly advises childcare providers at risk of cancellation and suspension following serious allegations being raised against them.

Louise has a particular skill for managing complex cases, involving large volumes of evidence, and prides herself on her careful case preparation, impactful advocacy and approachable style.

Having spent four years in her earlier career seconded to and working as an in-house lawyer at the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), Louise Hartley has a deep understanding of professional disciplinary work. She has appeared in countless hearings before panels, spanning a broad range of complex, multi-handed, and high profile cases. She appeared regularly in the High Court, defending statutory appeals as well as arguing for extensions of interim orders.

She was responsible at the NMC for a large caseload of complex, high profile and multi-handed matters. This involved making sound, legally supported judgments on case strategy and investigating deficiencies in cases. She routinely provided advice to the regulator to ensure effective consideration of cases and legally-sound decision making, as well as producing comprehensive written determinations.

While at the NMC, Louise regularly provided advice to senior management on the merits of appeals. This involved detailed analysis of panel decisions, extensive legal research, and when defending decisions, drafting appeal documents and skeleton arguments.

Louise is experienced in providing training on regulatory law and process, as well as advocacy skills coaching to new team members, trainees and pupils.

Reported cases include:

Watters v Nursing and Midwifery Council [2017] EWHC (Admin) 1888

Holder v Nursing and Midwifery Council [2017] EWHC 647 (Admin)

Nursing and Midwifery Council v Kendrick [2016] EWHC 2402 (Admin)

Nursing and Midwifery Council v Frangos [2017] EWHC (Admin) 1538

Nursing and Midwifery Council v Soondressen Cooppen [2017] EWHC 898 (Admin)

Sports law

Louise Hartley was Head of Legal at Sport England for over five years from March 2019 until October 2024. This saw her responsible for public law, regulatory, commercial, data protection, information governance, safeguarding and giving advice on numerous other general in-house legal and regulatory matters.

She was the most senior lawyer in this national sports funding organisation, a non-departmental public body sponsored by DCMS. She reported to Sport England's Chief Finance Officer and lead a team of sixteen with five solicitors, three paralegals as well as the Information Governance Manager, Data Protection Officer, Head of Risk, Assurance and Counter Fraud and the Head of Procurement reporting to her.

Louise has extensive experience of sports governance and safeguarding, having overseen and advised on reviews of NGBs in her time at Sport England. She worked closely with sports organisations who had received allegations of safeguarding breaches as well as serious complaints about their policies and procedures.

Safeguarding

Louise has a keen interest in safeguarding, having gained in-depth knowledge and experience in the sporting context. She understands the importance of handling these matters with the utmost care, diligence and sensitivity.

Since returning to the self-employed bar, Louise has advised and represented NGBs in serious safeguarding matters. She is able to advise on investigations and possible charges, as well as represent clients before disciplinary and appeal panels.

Regulatory

At Sport England, Louise provided advice on compliance and regulatory matters to the Executive Team, Chief Executive Officer and the Board. She also managed the litigation in which the organisation is involved, including instructing external lawyers.

She oversaw Sport England's Complaints Procedure including strategic advice on the handling of complaints about and the investigations into National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and other funded organisations.

Louise was responsible for the management of Sport England's role as a commissioning organisation in the Whyte Review into allegations of mistreatment within UK gymnastics.

She has an in-depth understanding of disciplinary procedures within sport and is well placed to assist with drafting, reviewing, and amending rules, regulations, policies and procedures for sports bodies.

Commercial

Louise has managed a number of commercial and intellectual property issues in sport including advising on brand protection, licensing and strategic/commercial partnerships for the This Girl Can campaign; and provided counsel and strategic advice on novel and complex investments of Lottery and Exchequer funding, including various emergency Covid 19 support packages to support the sports sector.

Data Privacy/information law

Louise is an expert on data and privacy issues in sports organisations; and advised on all information law matters including the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. She held the role of Sports England's Acting Data Protection Officer from September 2019 to March 2020.

Public and Regulatory

Louise Hartley is an expert in public law and regulatory issues, having worked as a senior in-house lawyer for Sport England,

the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the Phone-paid Services Authority (PSA).

Louise is highly experienced in investigations and enforcement casework and appearing for regulators and appellants at tribunals.

Louise has managed and conducted a number of judicial review proceedings. She has also identified and analysed legislative and regulatory changes to ensure regulators' organisational compliance.

Leading the GDPR implementation project at the PSA, Louise is an expert in data retention, storage and privacy issues at regulatory organisations; and has given presentations to industry stakeholders, the PSA and Sport England boards as well as provided internal training sessions on topics including data protection, anti-bribery and