Louise Hartley

Year of Call: 2008
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Overview

Louise Hartley is a specialist regulatory barrister practising in professional discipline, regulation and sport. She advises and represents professionals, organisations, regulators and appellants before a wide range of regulatory tribunals and the courts.

Louise has particular expertise in healthcare and education regulation, including a substantial practice advising and representing childcare and care providers in Ofsted and CQC appeals against suspension and cancellation. She has significant experience in adult and child safeguarding matters and understands the profound personal and professional consequences these cases carry for her clients.
Louise is known for her careful, thorough case preparation, impactful advocacy and approachable style. She brings a practical, solutions-focused approach to complex and high-stakes regulatory work.

Before returning to the self-employed bar, Louise spent five years as Head of Legal at Sport England, where she led a team of sixteen and advised at the most senior levels on public law, as well as on regulatory, commercial, data protection and safeguarding matters. That experience, including managing Sport England's role in the Whyte Review into systemic abuse in gymnastics, gives her an unusually deep understanding of regulation and safeguarding within the sporting landscape.

Outside of practice, Louise is an accomplished open water swimmer. She recently completed a Channel swim as part of a four-person relay and has competed in a number of 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 and Regulatory Law

Louise Hartley has a busy professional discipline practice, with particular focus on healthcare and education. She advises and represents professionals, organisations and regulators before a broad range of tribunals, including the General Dental Council, the Health and Care Professions Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council ("NMC"), the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, the General Pharmaceutical Council and the Farriers Registration Council.

She appears before the First-tier Tribunal (Care Standards) in Ofsted and CQC appeals, and regularly advises and represents childcare and care providers facing suspension or cancellation of their registrations following serious allegations.

Louise has particular skill in managing cases involving large volumes of evidence and complex chronologies. Her four years at the NMC gave her a deep and practical understanding of how regulators operate, an insight that now informs her advocacy and advice whether she is acting for registrants or regulators.

Recent Cases

NMC v Richmond [2025] EWHC 1828: Louise successfully resisted the NMC's application in the High Court to extend an interim order restricting a registrant's practice. Following detailed written and oral submissions, the High Court refused the application, a rare outcome that generated significant discussion. This was the first successful application of the principles set out in NMC v Persand on the requirements for interim orders.

GDC v M: Louise acted for a dental surgeon facing loss of her registration following a significant number of driving convictions and allegations of dishonesty. The case required detailed written submissions on the criminal law applicable to the driving matters and a careful analysis of the authorities on dishonesty. Dishonesty was ultimately not found proved. The Committee determined that while the convictions amounted to misconduct, there was no current impairment.

NMC v D: A substantial and complex case involving serious allegations against a registered nurse who was also the registered provider of a nursing home. The charges spanned safeguarding concerns, deprivation of liberty, management of complex psychiatric presentations, discrimination and data protection. The substantive hearing ran for 20 days across 2025 and 2026. A number of charges were dismissed at half time, and a significant number were found not proved. The registrant avoided removal from the register.

NMC v L: Louise acted for a registered nurse and registered manager of an independent hospital for patients with autism spectrum disorders. The NMC's allegations included discrimination against a member of staff with a protected characteristic. Following detailed written and oral submissions, Louise successfully argued that there was no case to answer on all charges.

Farriers Registration Council v P: Louise represented a farrier charged with striking a horse with a hammer who faced a serious risk of erasure from the register. She secured a six-month suspension, allowing the registrant to retain his registration and his livelihood.

Ofsted & CQC Appeals

Louise has a substantial and well-developed practice representing childcare and care providers in the First-tier Tribunal (Care Standards). She acts regularly for childminders, nurseries, children's homes and care homes, challenging Ofsted and CQC suspension and cancellation decisions. Louise combines strategic clarity with genuine sensitivity, advising clients with confidence and pragmatism.

Louise has considerable experience of negotiating settlements outside the Tribunal, and where that is in a client's best interests, she will pursue this with the same rigour she brings to contested proceedings.

Safeguarding

Louise has a keen interest in safeguarding and has developed in-depth knowledge of this area across both the regulatory and sporting contexts. She understands the importance of approaching these matters with care, diligence and sensitivity.

She advises and represents clients in serious safeguarding matters before disciplinary and appeal panels, and is able to advise at all stages from investigation and charging through to hearings and appeals.

Sports law

Louise Hartley has an outstanding working knowledge of the national sporting landscape built over five years as Head of Legal at Sport England. She advises National Governing Bodies and other sports organisations on governance, safeguarding, discipline and regulatory compliance.

Louise has extensive experience of the governance frameworks that apply to NGBs, including the Code for Sports Governance, and a detailed, practical understanding of how those bodies are funded, structured and held to account. She contributed to the development of the Sports Councils' Transgender Inclusion in Sport Guidance.

Louise led Sport England's role in commissioning the Whyte Review into systemic abuse in gymnastics.

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 Administrative Law

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 freedom of information.