



Helen Stone

Partner

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Helen Stone is a civil litigator who specialises in vindicating the rights of those who have suffered at the hands of the state. Her core work includes inquests, civil claims, and complaints against the police, as well as claims for judicial review and public inquiries.

A dedicated and tenacious solicitor, Helen has long experience in representing at inquests the families of people who died after contact with the police or while in custody. Her cases include some of the most significant police and prison death cases of recent years, helping to achieve justice for the bereaved.

Helen is also an accomplished public inquiry lawyer, having acted for clients in the Azelle Rodney Inquiry, the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, and the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

She carries out public law work on behalf of her clients, including acting in the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court.

Helen has helped her clients achieve significant sums in compensation from state agencies. She also uses her litigation skills to represent both claimants and defendants in civil fraud claims.

She also advises those seeking to achieve accountability for the actions of state agents, whether through disciplinary or criminal proceedings, and in seeking to force authorities to change their policies and procedures.

Helen has a master's degree in Human Rights Law from the University of Nottingham. She regularly gives training, including for the Legal Action Group's Inquest and Inquiries course. She is a member of the Police Actions Lawyers Group and is on the steering group for the Inquest Lawyers Group.

Areas of Expertise

Inquests

Helen is an inquest law expert who has significant experience representing the families of people who have died in police and prison custody, acting in some of the most significant and high profile cases of recent years.

Helen currently acts for:

- The brother of Sean Fitzgerald, who was shot dead by a police firearms officer in January 2019.
- The family of Thomas Orchard, who died following police restraint in October 2012.
- The families of a number of men who have died in HMP Wormwood Scrubs, including the family of Luke Clarke, who was found ligatured in his cell on the Covid-19 wing of the prison on 7 April 2020 less than 24 hours after his arrival in prison. In August 2023 an inquest jury found multiple failures contributed to his death. Helen also acts for the family of Jack Zarrop, who died on 20 March 2021 after he was found ligatured in his cell less than 48 hours after his arrival. In September 2023 an inquest jury found a number failings contributed to his death.

Helen's past inquest experience includes acting for families where the actions of state agents were found to have contributed to the death, including the inquests of Sean Rigg, Jake Hardy, and Duncan Tomlin.

Public Inquiries

Helen is experienced in acting for core participants in public inquiries created under the Inquiries Act 2005. She has acted for the mother of Azelle Rodney, who was shot dead by a police firearms officer in April 2005, in the Azelle Rodney Inquiry. The Inquiry was the first to replace an inquest under the Inquiries Act 2005. Helen has also acted for some of the bereaved, survivors and relatives in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and currently acts for a number of non-state core participants in the Undercover Policing Inquiry, the Inquiry tasked with investigating undercover policing operations in England and Wales since 1968 until the present day.

Actions Against State Bodies

Helen has substantial experience in human-rights related actions against state bodies. In particular this has related to bodies involved in the criminal justice system. Her work has included acting in relation to deaths in police or prison custody, including self-inflicted deaths, restraint-related deaths, and death by police shooting. The cases in which Helen has acted often include complex issues, with a number of investigations, including in relation to disciplinary and/or criminal proceedings, and frequently involve a considerable number of different state agencies. Her work has included acting in relation to the deaths of Sean Rigg, Duncan Tomlin, Azelle Rodney, Thomas Orchard and Sean Fitzgerald.

Helen's work includes acting in civil claims against state bodies, including for breaches of the Human Rights Act 1998, false imprisonment, negligence and misfeasance in public office. Her work has

included being part of the team who won a £3.8 million settlement from Sussex Police for Gary Reynolds who suffered permanent brain injury and partial paralysis following arrest and detention in March 2008. She has also acted for clients in public law challenges against state bodies, including acting for clients in challenging the administration of cautions and challenging decisions not to prosecute through the Victims Right of Review schemes.

Helen's work frequently involves advising in relation to investigations into the actions of state bodies, including those carried out by the Independent Office for Police Conduct, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Health and Safety Executive.

Challenging State Decisions

Helen is experienced in public law challenges in relation to the decisions of state bodies, including by way of judicial review and under the Victims Right of Review schemes.

Helen's judicial review work has included acting for the charity INQUEST as an intervener in the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court in the case of *R (Maughan) v HM Senior Coroner for Oxfordshire*, which considered the standard of proof necessary for an inquest hearing to come to the determination that someone died by suicide. Her other judicial review work has included acting on all three judicial reviews connected with the Azelle Rodney Inquiry, challenging the lawfulness of police cautions, acting for companies in a British Overseas Territory challenging the decisions of an Airport Authority, and as part of the team representing Andrew Adams in the Supreme Court, challenging the Justice Secretary's definition of "miscarriage of justice".

Helen's work in relation to the Victims Right of Review has included success in the CPS overturning their decision not to charge a police officer with perjury.

Civil Fraud

Helen is part of Hickman and Rose's civil fraud team, which acts for both claimants and defendants. The team's cases have included acting in multi-million pound fraud claims, as well as those of a smaller financial value. The team often works in collaboration with the firm's criminal department, in order for their clients have the benefit of both civil and criminal litigation expertise to assist in achieving the client's objectives.

What Others Say

- "Next Generation Partner" in Civil Liberties & Human Rights – *Legal 500, 2024*
- "Next Generation Partner" in Administrative and Public Law – *Legal 500, 2024*
- "Up and coming" – in Civil Liberties and Human Rights – *Chambers UK, 2024*
- "Up and coming" – in Police Law: Mainly Claimant – *Chambers UK, 2023*
- "Spotlight table" lawyer for Inquests – *Chambers UK, 2023*
- "Lawyer of the Week" – *The Times, November 2020*