



Sophie Ashford



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Sophie has a broad practice across the span of Chambers' core areas with an emphasis on commercial litigation, insurance law, sports law, property damage and inquests.

Prior to joining Chambers, Sophie was a judicial assistant to Dame Victoria Sharp, President of the King's Bench Division in the Court of Appeal and qualified as a solicitor having worked at a US commercial law firm in their London and Singapore offices.

Her recent work includes:

- David Wood Baking (UK) Limited v QBE & Ors (Comm): representing the policyholder in a c.£100m insurance coverage dispute arising out of a substantial fire at a commercial premises. The matter proceeded on an expedited basis and settled shortly before trial (led by Daniel Shapiro KC, Michael Harper and Hamish Fraser).

Insurance & Reinsurance

Sophie gained experience during pupillage of a broad spectrum of insurance work whilst supervised by James Sharpe and David Myhill.

Examples of her recent work include:

- David Wood Baking (UK) Limited v QBE & Ors (Comm): representing the policyholder in a c.£100 million insurance coverage dispute arising out of a substantial fire at a commercial premises. The matter proceeded on an expedited basis and settled shortly before trial (led by Daniel Shapiro KC, Michael Harper and Hamish Fraser).
- Advising a policyholder in relation to a multi-million insurance coverage dispute arising out of a substantial fire (led by Daniel Shapiro KC).
- Advising an insurer in relation to an insurance coverage dispute arising from historic construction projects and the Building Safety Act 2022 (led by Daniel Shapiro KC)
- Advising an insurer on a potentially fraudulent claim brought in relation to water damage.
- Advising an insurer regarding a potential fraud invocation in relation to a claim for alleged malicious



damage and theft.

Commercial

Sophie welcomes instructions across the broad spectrum of commercial disputes.

Examples of her own recent work include:

- Acting as junior counsel for the Claimants in *Município de Mariana and others v BHP Group* in their class action for damages caused by the collapse of the Fundão Dam in Brazil.
- Acting for the claimant in a dispute relating to the provision of IT services.
- Drafting a defence for the freeholder in a case involving unpaid invoices and defective building works. The matter engaged questions of privity of contract and agency.

Before joining Chambers, Sophie built up significant experience working on high value claims as a trainee solicitor at a US commercial law firm. For example, she worked on

- a deceit claim brought before the Commercial Court arising out of a private equity investment;
- an urgent application for a worldwide freezing injunction; and
- jurisdiction and enforcement advice for a large social media company.

She also spent time on secondment to the in-house legal team at Nestle UK providing advice in a broad range of commercial matters including leading negotiations to recover costs caused by a supplier's breach of the contract.

Sports Law

Sophie is growing this area of her practice and is a member of Sport Resolutions Pro Bono Service.

Recent examples of her work include:

- Advising a footballer in relation to a claim made under an insurance policy.
- Successfully striking out a claim brought against a sports club stemming from an individual's expulsion from the club.

Property Damage

Sophie's recent experience in property damage claims includes:

- Advising a freeholder in relation to water damage allegedly caused to a neighbouring property.
 - Drafting a defence in relation to hot works and repairing fire damage to a shop (during pupillage).
 - Drafting particulars of claim in an action brought for fire damage to the roof of a building (during pupillage).
 - Drafting particulars of claim in a six-figure claim for property damage arising from an escape of water in a large domestic property.
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Personal Injury

Sophie has a busy court practice and is regularly instructed by defendants in fast track, intermediate and multi-track Employers' Liability, Public Liability and Road Traffic Accident claims.

Professional Negligence

Sophie has provided written advice in relation to:

- Allegations made against solicitors for failing to issue proceedings against the correct parties.
- Allegations made against solicitors in relation to the scope of work in a multi-million pound property transaction.
- Allegations made against solicitors for failing to provide correct advice on limitation resulting in the inability to bring parts of a claim.

Construction

Sophie was instructed as junior counsel by the Claimants in *Município de Mariana and others v BHP Group* (the Fundao Dam disaster litigation).

Sophie also benefits from experience gained as a trainee solicitor in the White & Case litigation and international arbitration teams in London and in Singapore where she worked on multi-jurisdictional construction cases.

Inquests & Public Inquiries

Sophie acted as sole counsel in a three-week jury inquest. The inquest concerned the death of a 24-year old man on the same day he was released from police custody. Sophie acted for a healthcare professional. At the conclusion of the inquest the Coroner ruled that it would not be safe for the jury to find that the acts or omissions of police officers or healthcare professionals had probably caused or contributed to the death and withdrew the issue from the jury. The healthcare professional was not criticised during the inquest and no Regulation 28 report was issued. The case received national press coverage:

BBC News

Wales Online

Sophie also gained wide-ranging inquest experience whilst undertaking pupillage with Mike Atkins and Helen Pagett, assisting on a variety of cases including:

- Aiding preparations for an inquest into the death of a university student.
- Aiding preparations for an inquest into the death of an employee on a shop floor.
- Assisting with preparation ahead of a PIR in response to a request by the coroner for written



submissions on Article 2.

Criminal Regulatory

Sophie gained experience during pupillage of a variety of health and safety proceedings whilst supervised by Mike Atkins.

Prior to joining Chambers, Sophie worked in the in-house legal team at Nestle UK where she worked on a broad range of regulatory matters.

As judicial assistant to Dame Victoria Sharp P, Sophie assisted with the case of *R v Rebelo* [2021] EWCA Crim 306. The indictment alleged a food regulatory offence, unlawful and dangerous act manslaughter and gross negligence manslaughter. The Court of Appeal considered whether the trial judge's direction on causation in respect of gross negligence manslaughter was appropriate.

Motoring offences

Sophie's motor offences work includes trials for a range of motoring offences.

Recent highlights include:

- Securing an acquittal at trial in respect of a careless driving case.
- Securing an acquittal at trial in respect of a serious injury by careless cycling case.

Qualifications

- BA in History – First Class, Jesus College, University of Cambridge
- GDL (Distinction), LPC (Distinction) and Bar Transfer Test, BPP University

Memberships

- LCLCBA
- COMBAR
- Young Fraud Lawyers Association
- Sport Resolutions Pro Bono Service