



Sophie Ashford



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Sophie Ashford is developing a broad practice across the span of Chambers' core areas, with an emphasis on commercial disputes, property damage, insurance, inquests and inquiries, professional negligence and criminal regulatory.

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. She also trained as a commercial solicitor at a US commercial law firm in their London and Singapore offices, spending a year working in the international arbitration and civil litigation teams, six months on secondment in-house at Nestle UK and six months in the Financial Restructuring and Insolvency team.

Insurance & Reinsurance

Sophie sat with David Myhill and James Sharpe during pupillage working on a broad spectrum of insurance work. Examples of her insurance work include:

- Advice for an insurer on the prospects of successfully overturning a longstanding Court of Appeal decision (during pupillage).
- Advice for an insurer on a potentially fraudulent claim brought in relation to water damage.
- Advice regarding a potential fraud invocation in relation to a claim for alleged malicious damage and theft.

Commercial

Sophie benefits from experience gained as a pupil supervised by James Sharpe. Examples of her own recent work include acting for the insurer of a large hotel chain in relation to losses suffered by a guest during a stay.

Sophie is instructed as junior counsel by 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.



Before joining Chambers, Sophie built up significant experience as a trainee solicitor at a US commercial law firm. For example:

- Assisting with witness statements and disclosure tasks in a deceit claim arising out of a private equity investment.
- Assisting with a filing for a worldwide freezing injunction.
- Sophie's experience in-house at Nestle has provided her with a very commercial and practical approach to disputes.

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.

Property Damage

Sophie's recent experience in property damage claims includes:

- Representing 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).

Construction

Sophie 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.

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

Personal Injury

Sophie has a busy court practice and regularly appears in the county courts on matters including public liability and road traffic accidents.

Sophie's recent work includes:

- Representing a school in relation to a teacher bringing a Covid-19 related claim against her
-



employer.

- Successfully representing a school in relation to a claim brought by an employee who sustained an injury in the workplace.

Inquests & Public Inquiries

Sophie recently 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 was seconded to 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 and both 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.



Sports Law

Sophie is a member of Sports Resolutions' Pro Bono Service.

Qualifications

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

Memberships

Member of the Sport Resolution's Pro Bono Service