

Sarah Hannaford KC

Call: 1989 (2015 Northern Ireland) Silk: 2008

"Sarah Hannaford is a real tour de force. She is engaging, fiercely intelligent and loved by the clients."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2026



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Practice Overview

Sarah Hannaford KC is a leading commercial barrister with a practice that spans both the United Kingdom and international markets. Sarah was appointed Head of Chambers in 2025. She specialises in construction, engineering, infrastructure and energy disputes, as well as professional negligence work within these areas. Over the past fifteen years, she has also developed an unrivalled procurement practice. In recognition of the significance of her practice, Sarah was included in The Lawyer's Hot 100 list in 2022, and several of her cases have been featured in their annual "Top 20 cases" lists, most recently in 2025.

Sarah is widely regarded as a star of the Procurement Bar and is the natural choice for complex, high-value procurement issues. She is instructed in the most significant cases in this area, regularly advising government bodies, local authorities, utilities and industry clients. Sarah has acted in numerous high-profile procurement challenges, including the prominent case of

Siemens v HS2, an important decision on manifest error, conflicts of interest and judicial review in which Sarah's clients were successful on all claims. She also acted for the Gambling Commission in a dispute over the extremely high-value contract to run the National Lottery, which led to an application to the Court of Appeal, and Bechtel v HS2 concerning the construction of Old Oak Common Station. Sarah's status in this area led to her involvement in the publication of the Cabinet Office's Green Paper on Transforming Public Procurement.

Sarah is recommended by Chambers UK Bar as a "multi-talented QC with a remarkably wide practice." She is widely acclaimed for her advocacy, grasp of case details and ability to work well with clients, leading to regular instructions in complex construction and commercial disputes in the UK Courts, adjudication and international arbitration. She has experience in the full range of contractual claims arising from construction projects, including claims related to defects, termination, delay and professional negligence. Sarah has substantial experience in disputes involving most standard form contracts, including the JCT standard forms, ICE, NEC, IChemE and FIDIC forms. She also regularly advises on PFI, PPP and facilities management contracts, including in both the waste and health sectors. Additionally, she has considerable expertise in energy, offshore construction and shipping disputes, including acting in high-profile disputes such as the Solitaire and the Varg.

Sarah was called to the Northern Ireland Bar in 2015. In addition to her work as Counsel, Sarah sits as arbitrator and is a trained mediator and adjudicator.

Practice Areas

Construction & Engineering

- **Secretary of State for Defence v Turner Estate Solutions Ltd** – Acting for the Claimant in a substantial long-running dispute in relation to a final account and defects at a nuclear submarine base. Reported judgments related to the Secretary of State's application under s.68 of the Arbitration Act 1996 and an application for determination of a preliminary point of law under s.45 of the Act.
- **AMEC Group Ltd v Secretary of State for Defence** – Acting for the Secretary of State for Defence in a high value (£100m+) and long running dispute in relation to a nuclear submarine base, including an appeal under s.69 of the Arbitration Act 1996.
- **WW Gear Construction Ltd v McGee Group Ltd** – Acting for the Defendant in Part8 proceedings in which the Claimant sought a declaration of the meaning of a clause in the amended form of the JCT Trade Contract.
- **Harrison v Shepherd Homes Ltd and NHBC** – Acting for the NHBC in a substantial claim by c.70 home-owners arising out of foundation and infrastructure defects in a housing estate in Hartlepool.
- Advising a council on claims and remedies against its developer and contractors in relation to concrete defects in 2 high profile new council buildings.
- Acting for a Northern Ireland construction company in relation to the settlement of a quay.

- Acting for London Underground in a substantial adjudication in relation to an NEC contract for station modernisation and upgrades.
- Acting for the Secretary of State in relation to major defects arising from the design and construction of the Thelwall Viaduct under the ICE standard contract form. Reported decision included a judgment setting out the test for the meaning of “dispute”.

Public Procurement

- ***Siemens Mobility Limited v High Speed Two (HS2) Limited*** – Acting for the successful Defendant in this long running procurement challenge by Siemens to HS2’s award of a contract for the provision of rolling stock to a joint venture comprising Bombardier and Hitachi. O’Farrell J dismissed all 17 of the claims brought by Siemens.
- ***International Game Technology Plc v Gambling Commission*** – Acting on behalf of the Gambling Commission in challenges by Camelot (the incumbent and second placed bidder) and its sub-contractor, IGT, to its award of the hugely high-profile licence to run the National Lottery.
- ***Atos Services UK Ltd v Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy & Another*** – Acting for the Met Office in a procurement challenge concerning the prestigious contract for a state of the art weather and climate change Supercomputer which was awarded to Microsoft.
- ***Bechtel Limited v High Speed Two (HS2) Limited*** - Acting for the Defendants in this claim arising out of the procurement run by HS2 for the construction partner contract for Old Oak Common Station. Bechtel, an unsuccessful bidder, challenged the outcome and process of the procurement, alleging that there were manifest errors in scoring.
- ***Joseph Gleave & Son Ltd v Secretary of State for Defence*** – Acting for the Defendant in a further challenge in the TCC to the MOD’s procurement of hand tools essential for the military. It was held that, where a party challenged the legality of the tender documents in a public procurement case, there was no presumption in favour of an expedited trial.
- ***Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust v NHS Swale Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley*** – Acting for NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Groups in successfully lifting an automatic suspension.
- Acting for the Legal Aid Agency (formerly the Legal Services Commission) in a number of challenges to its procurement of legal aid services, in the TCC, Administrative Court and Court of Appeal. Most recently, she was instructed to defend challenges brought by 115 claimants to a procurement by the LAA for contracts for criminal legal aid work.
- ***Geodesign Barriers Ltd v Environmental Agency*** – Acting for the Claimant in a challenge to the procurement of flood barriers.
- ***Solent NHS Trust v Hampshire County Council*** – Acting for the Claimant in this procurement challenge concerning alleged errors in the evaluation of the tenders in respect of £40m contract for substance misuse recovery services.
- ***Heron Brothers Ltd v Central Bedfordshire Council*** – Acting for the Claimant in a challenge to the procurement of a construction project. The case concerned time limits for service of Claim Forms in procurement cases and whether a Court could extend the time for service or otherwise correct defects in the service.

- **NATS (Services) Ltd v Gatwick Airport Ltd** – Acting for the Claimant in a substantial procurement challenge relating to the provision of air navigation services at Gatwick Airport. This is one of a small number of cases in which the claimant has been successful in resisting an application by the defendant to lift the automatic suspension.
- **DWF LLP v Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills** – Acting for the Secretary of State in a Court of Appeal procurement challenge.
- **Travis Perkins Trading Company Limited v Caerphilly County Borough Council** – Acting for the claimant in a substantial procurement dispute relating to a contract for the supply of building materials in Wales.
- **Covanta Energy Limited v Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority** – Defending a claim concerning the procurement of a contract for a high-profile waste disposal project. The case raised complex questions about the operation of the competitive dialogue procedure and the UK’s transposition of European Directives and was widely reported in the press.
- **BY Development Ltd & Ors v Covent Garden Market Authority** – Acting for Claimants in relation to alleged flaws in the procurement process for a £2bn project to redevelop New Covent Garden Market.
- **Alstom Transport v Eurostar International Ltd** – Acting for the Claimant in the high-profile litigation concerning the award of a €1.2bn contract for supply of trains for the Eurostar service. The case raised issues under the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006, including the definition of utilities.
- Acting for National Express in the high-profile cancellation of the Great Western train franchise competition (related to the West Coast Main Line dispute).

Commercial & PFI

- Acting for the Ministry of Justice in claims for recovery of overpayments of some £200m under contracts with Serco and G4S for electronic monitoring/tagging of offenders.
- Acting for a major facilities management company in high value adjudications in the health sector.
- Acting for Government Department in adjudication claims arising from a contract for the provision of security services to the courts.
- Acting for an NHS body in a major dispute over payment for patient transport services.
- Acting for Government departments in relation to contract disputes for the provision of food to prisons and offender management services.
- Advising on the termination of a facilities management contract.
- Advising on a PFI contract for facilities management services at courts.
- Regularly acting on PFI contracts cases in the waste and health sectors.

Energy & Offshore Construction

- Advising on contractual issues in relation to the proposed development of wind farms.
- Acting for the contractor in a substantial trial concerning the re-processing of spent fuel at Sellafield.

- Acting of the Defendant in procurement challenges relating to de-commissioning of Sellafield.
- Advising in relation to a contract for operation of a natural gas transmission pipeline.
- Acting for the Singaporean shipyard Sembawang in relation to a long-running arbitration under LMAA rules concerning a pipe-laying vessel for the oil & gas industry. The arbitration was the largest marine arbitration ever held in London.
- Acting for the contractor in disputes about the design and construction of a energy from waste plant in the UK.

Professional Negligence

- Acting for a multi-disciplinary consultancy in a substantial claim for professional negligence relating to the design and construction works at a school.
- Acting for the Claimant in a claim against engineers relating to defects in a warehouse including cracking concrete and water ingress.
- Advising employers on professional negligence issues arising in public procurements.

Property

- **Kaye v Lawrence** – Acting for the Appellant in this appeal concerning the extent to which security may be required under section 12(1) of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.
- Advising on party wall issues during an ongoing major central London development.
- Frequently advising on party wall appeals, rights of light and other easements.
- Professional negligence claim in relation to structural damage to three properties during construction of a substantial development.

IT & Technology

- Acting for the Ministry of Justice in claims for recovery of overpayments of some £200m under contracts with Serco and G4S for electronic monitoring/tagging of offenders.
- Acting for a Government department in relation to delays and additional costs of the implementation of a substantial new IT system.
- Regularly advising Government departments and NHS bodies on procurement and contractual issues arising from contracts for IT services.

Reported Cases

- Siemens Mobility Limited v High Speed Two (HS2) Limited [2023] EWHC 2768 (TCC)

- International Game Technology v The Gambling Commission [2023] EWHC 1961
- Camelot UK Lotteries Ltd v The Gambling Commission [2022] EWHC 1664 (TCC)
- Atos Services UK Ltd v Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy & Anor [2022] EWHC 42 (TCC)
- New Lottery Company Limited v The Gambling Commission and Allwyn Entertainment Limited and Ors [2026] EWHC 891 (TCC)
- The New Lottery Company Limited & Anor v The Gambling Commission [2025] EWHC 1058 (TCC)
- Mornington 2000 LLP (t/a Sterilab Services) & Anor v Secretary of State for Health and Social Care [2025] EWHC 540 (TCC)
- Pevensey Coastal Defence Ltd v Environment Agency [2024] EWHC 1435 (TCC)
- International Game Technology Plc v Gambling Commission [2023] EWHC 2226 (TCC)
- Kellogg Brown & Root Limited v MOPAC & MPS [2021] EWHC 3321 (TCC)
- Bechtel Limited v High Speed Two (HS2) Limited [2021] EWHC 458 (TCC)
- Community R4C Ltd v Gloucestershire County Council [2020] EWHC 1803 (TCC)
- DHL Supply Chain v Secretary of State for Health and Social Care [2018] EWHC 2213 (TCC)
- CEMEX UK Operations Ltd v Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd [2017] EWHC 2425 (TCC)
- Joseph Gleave & Son Ltd v Secretary of State for Defence [2017] EWHC 238 (TCC)
- Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust v NHS Swale Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley ([2016] EWHC 1393 (TCC))
- Geodesign Barriers Limited vs The Environment Agency [2015] EWHC 1121 (TCC)
- Solent NHS Trust v Hampshire County Council [2015] EWHC 457 (TCC)
- NATS (Services) Limited v Gatwick Airport Limited [2014] EWHC 3728 (TCC)
- NATS (Services) Limited v Gatwick Airport Limited [2014] EWHC 3133 (TCC), [2014] WLR(D) 416, [2015] PTSR 566
- Secretary of State for Defence v Turner Estate Solutions Ltd [2014] EWHC 244 (TCC)
- Covanta Energy Ltd v Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority EWHC 2922 (TCC)
- AMEC Group Ltd v Secretary of State for Defence EWHC 110 (TCC); [2013] All ER (D) 93 (Feb)
- WW Gear Construction Ltd v McGee Group Ltd EWHC 1509 (TCC)
- BY Development Ltd & Ors v Covent Garden Market Authority EWHC 2546 (TCC)
- Hossacks (A Firm of Solicitors), R (on the application of) v The Legal Services Commission EWCA Civ 103
- Harry Yearsley Ltd v Secretary of State for Justice EWHC 160
- Alstom Transport v Eurostar International Ltd & Anor EWHC 2747, [2011] Eu LR 229

- Kaye v Lawrence EWHC 2678 (TCC), [2010] NPC 106, [2011] 1 All ER 1088, [2011] BLR 77, [2010] 44 EG 124, [2011] 1 EG 66, [2011] CILL 2955
- Croft House Care Ltd v Durham CC, Orchard Home Care Ltd v Durham CC, Kelly Park Caring Agency v Durham CC EWHC 909 (TCC), [2011] PTSR 363
- Exel Europe Ltd v University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust EWHC 3332
- European Dynamics SA v HM Treasury (sued as Buying Solutions) EWHC 3419 (TCC), [2010] Eu LR 397, (2010) 26 Const LJ 191 and 128 Con LR 36
- Amaryliss Ltd v HM Treasury (sued as ogcbuying solutions) (No.2) EWHC 962 TCC, [2009] EWHC 1666 (TCC), (2009) 25 Const LJ 528, [2009] BLR 425 and [2010] Eu LR 152
- VGC Construction Ltd v Jackson Civil Engineering Ltd EWHC 2082, TCC, (2008) CILL 2627
- British Nuclear Group Sellafield Ltd v Kernkraftwerk Brokdorf and others EWHC 2245 (Ch) (long trial concerning re-processing of spent fuel at Sellafield)
- Mast Electrical Services v Kendal Cross Holdings Ltd EWHC 1296 (TCC)
- R (on the application of the Law Society) v Legal Services Commission & the Lord Chancellor EWCA Civ 1264; [2008] 2 W.L.R. 803; [2008] 2 All E.R. 148
- Environment Agency v Lewin Fryer & Partners Con LJ Vol 22 No.8 p574 TCC; EWHC 1597 (TCC)
- BFS Group Ltd v (1) Secretary of State for Defence (2) Purple Foodservice Ltd EWHC 1513 (Ch); [2006] Eu. L.R. 1101
- AMEC Civil Engineering Ltd v Secretary of State for Transport (2005) 1 WLR 2339 CA, [2005] Con LJ Vol. 21 No.8 p.640 CA, [2005] 101 Con LR 26 CA, [2005] CILL 2228 and [2005] BLR 227 CA and [2005] CILL 2189 TCC (the meaning of 'dispute' and the operation of Clause 66 of the ICE standard form)
- AMEC Civil Engineering Ltd v Secretary of State for Transport (101 Con LR 26 CA) 101 Con LR 26 CA
- AMEC Civil Engineering Ltd v Secretary of State for Transport (Con LJ Vol. 21 No. 8 p.640 CA) Con LJ Vol. 21 No. 8 p.640 CA
- AMEC Civil Engineering Ltd v Secretary of State for Transport (CILL 2189 TCC) CILL 2189 TCC
- AMEC Civil Engineering Ltd v Secretary of State for Transport (CILL 2228 and [2005] BLR 227 CA) CILL 2228 and [2005] BLR 227 CA
- CIB Properties Ltd v Birse Construction BLR 173 TCC
- RSL (South West) Ltd v Stansell Ltd CILL 2012 TCC and [2003] EWHC 1390 (TCC)

Other information

Education & Professional Career

- Called to the Bar of Northern Ireland, 2015
- Queen's Counsel, 2008
- Trained Mediator, 2006
- TECBAR Accredited Adjudicator, 2004
- Appointed to the Treasury A Panel, 2003
- Member (and former Committee Member) of the Technology and Construction Bar Association (TECBAR) 1991
- Keating Chambers, 1990
- Called to the Bar (Middle Temple), 1989
- MA in Jurisprudence, Lincoln College, Oxford, 1986

Additional Information

In her spare time Sarah enjoys skiing and is a keen tennis player.

Memberships

- Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (MCIArb)
- Technology and Construction Bar (TECBAR)
- Commercial Bar Association (COMBAR)
- International Bar Association (IBA)
- Society of Construction Law (SCL)
- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb)

Seminars & Publications

- Co-author, Keating on Construction Contracts – Tenth Editions (2016)
- Co-author, Keating on Construction Contracts – Ninth Edition (2012)
- Procurement Problems in the Credit Crunch (17 July 2009)
- RICS Case in Point: Rights to Light, 2008
- Halsbury's Fuel and Energy Volumes 19(1) to (3) (October 2007)
- RICS Case in Point: Party Walls (co-authored with Jessica Stephens), 2004

Lectures

- Regularly lectures in construction and procurement industry events including White Paper conferences, RICS construction conferences and Procurement Lawyers Association seminars.

Recommendations

"Sarah is an extremely bright and skilled construction silk who expresses herself in a straightforward and unambiguous manner. She has an excellent eye for detail, great analytical skills, and is able to quickly and methodically cut through the detail to reach the relevant facts and issues."

Construction, Legal 500 UK Bar 2026

"Sarah Hannaford is a real tour de force. She is engaging, fiercely intelligent and loved by the clients."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2026

"She has first-class analytical skills and an excellent attention to detail."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2026

"Sarah is very precise, clear on the way pleadings should be prepared and gives a good level of information. She is very authoritative in court."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2026

"Sarah is an extremely well-regarded silk. She is passionate about her cases and very impressive in oral submissions."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2026

"Sarah Hannaford is so pragmatic and I can't rate her highly enough."

Public Procurement, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2026

"Sarah is the leading procurement silk, in my view. Her experience and reputation precede her. The quality of her advocacy is second to none."

Public Procurement, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2026

"Sarah Hannaford is determined, experienced, an extremely effective court advocate and someone who knows procurement law inside out."

Public Procurement, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2026

"She brings her judgement and experience to bear to steer cases in the right direction."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Sarah is terrifically clever."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"She knows when to push a point and she is incredibly persuasive."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Sarah Hannaford is incredible on her feet."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Very thorough, absolutely knows her stuff and comes up with creative arguments."

Public Procurement, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"She is a superb strategist and one of the best counsel you could have when it comes to procurement litigation."

Public Procurement, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Sarah is always dependable and great to work with."

Public Procurement, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Sarah is totally excellent."

Public Procurement, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Sarah Hannaford has good advocacy skills, provides robust advice and is easy to work with."

Public Procurement, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"She is the go-to for public procurement challenges."

Public Procurement, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Sarah is very good at grasping the key issues of the case and understanding the strength and weaknesses. Her advocacy is superb."

Construction, Legal 500 UK Bar 2025

"Sarah is a top KC and one of the best for public procurement. An astute and reliable strategist."

Public Procurement, Legal 500 UK Bar 2025

'A true expert in procurement law.'

Public Procurement, Legal 500 2024

'Sarah is a superb advocate and a great adviser. She is authoritative, very clear with solicitors and clients, and rightly has a great reputation as one of the best in the public procurement world. Her preparation for advocacy is absolutely meticulous, delving right into the detail, and coming up with additional points to support her advocacy. Her cross-examination skills are first-class. She is also very responsive, working extremely hard to get everything done to the best of her ability.'

Construction, Legal 500 2024

'A go-to silk for procurement challenges. She is incredibly bright, insightful and hard-working, and has excellent advocacy skills.'

Construction, Chambers UK Bar 2024

'The first choice for high-profile procurement litigation, she is formidable and one of the brightest silks around. She is always quick to pick up the detail.'

Construction, Chambers UK Bar 2024

'Sarah is an absolutely superb advocate. She is crystal clear, totally in command of all the issues and the facts, and her cross-examination was a joy to watch.'

Construction, Legal 500 2023

"A top-drawer procurement adviser and advocate. Robust and determined, she presents the case clearly, concisely and with a focus on the key issues."

Public Procurement, Legal 500 2022

"Extremely knowledgeable and very good at thinking on her feet. Communicates in a very effective way which distills complicated issues into very digestible and understandable way."

Construction, Legal 500 2022

"She is efficient and innovative with her arguments and one of the few truly specialist procurement counsel."

Public Procurement, Chambers UK Bar 2022

"Superb in terms of her written work and an excellent advocate, she works very well with clients."

Public Procurement, Chambers UK Bar 2022

"She is responsive, gets to the core essentials and reads the tribunal very well."

Construction, Chambers UK Bar 2022

"She is everything you could wish for in an advocate: She retains the facts, she knows the law, and she makes her points with killer precision."

Procurement, Legal 500 2021

"An all-round superb barrister. She has the analytical abilities, attention to detail and presentational skill to be expected of senior counsel at Keating but she also brings a commercial approach and excellent case management."

Construction, Legal 500 2021

"A good cross-examiner who makes her submissions in a punchy, forceful way, whilst always exhibiting pragmatism and good sense."

Public Procurement, Chambers UK Bar 2021

"Sarah cuts to the heart of a matter quickly and her incisive, robust views are much appreciated by clients."

Public Procurement, Chambers UK Bar 2021

"She is fabulous to work with - spot on with her legal analysis of cases, good at managing challenging clients and an impressive advocate."

Construction, Chambers UK Bar 2021

"She is fabulous! A superb intellect, endlessly creative and a great advocate."

Public Procurement, Chambers UK Bar 2020

"The go-to choice for difficult procurement questions. Her advice is precise and clear in a field which often has grey areas."

Public Procurement, Chambers UK Bar 2020

"She offers technical competence and commercialism."

Construction, Chambers UK Bar 2020

"She is at the forefront of the construction sector."

Construction, Legal 500 2020

"She has fantastic black letter analysis combined with a keen eye to the client's commercial drivers."

Procurement, Legal 500 2020

"A brilliant and wonderful advocate" who "is meticulous and really hard-working, and cares about her cases".

Who's Who Legal 2019: UK Bar Construction

"She is excellent with clients and superb on her feet, making her a real asset to any case."

Public Procurement, Chambers UK Bar 2019

"A leading light in international procurement issues because her knowledge base and experience working with government bodies is excellent."

Construction, Chambers UK Bar 2019
