Sappho Dias

Year of Call: 1982



Practice Summary

Sappho is an experienced advocate, who has practised both Criminal and Civil law. She began her career as an advocate in 1982 and she has been in continuous practice since that date. After she moved to civil law, she has primarily practised in local government work advising in a wide range of cases from Election Law cases to Court of Protection cases. Of late, because of tragic personal circumstances, she has concentrated and built up a practice advising on legal advice privilege. She has acted as independent counsel for the SFO in a wide range of cases, as well as the Metropolitan Police.

Sappho has been consistently ranked in Band One for Election Law by Chambers and Partners for the past 5 years. As her clients are local authorities (in respect of Election Law), this reflects the degree of confidence they place in her work. In respect of her work on legal professional privilege, the SFO have instructed her in eight different investigations. The Metropolitan Police have instructed her as independent counsel in their investigation into the fire at Grenfell Tower.

Sappho was for many years, a faculty member of the advanced advocacy course at Keble College Oxford (which takes place as a residential course for one week at the end of August each year). She wrote a succession of problems on which the participants worked. In addition, as she is by origin, Burmese, she acted pro bono in a succession of cases for Burmese political prisoners which she took to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. All her clients were high profile political prisoners and she did not lose a single case. She paid a high price for this work and she has been banned from entering Myanmar, her country of origin.

"Knows election law inside and out" Chambers & Partners 2016

Sappho's practice in Election Law has involved advisory work for foreign governments with regard to constitutional amendments. Her domestic practice has involved advisory work to local authorities with particular reference to Election Law, as well as advisory work in respect of the duties owed by Councils and particular officers. Sappho has also appeared in election fraud cases

representing Returning Officers, where in one of those cases the election commissioner commended her work.

Her recent work has involved representing another returning officer in a case where new law was created in that Sappho succeeded in her argument that the Petitioner be ordered to pay not only the normal litigation costs but also that of the set up costs of the election court.

Sappho's work has also involved Judicial Review acting on behalf of Local Authorities in Adult Social Care cases.

Sappho has knowledge of social care law including assessment and care planning duties, eligibility thresholds, the provision of healthcare services and the eligibility of persons subject to immigration control.

In recent times Sappho has represented local authorities in the Court of Protection.

Sappho has represented patient applicants in aspects of discharge of orders made under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Sappho has acted on behalf of local authorities in deaths inquests where the deaths occurred in premises either owned or controlled by local authorities.

Sappho has undertaken advisory work involving all aspects of planning law. More recently she has been involved in advisory work in respect of Petitions to the Parliamentary Committee in respect of HS2.

Sappho has advised local authorities in respect of Section 106 agreements as well as Compulsory Purchase Orders.

Since joining chambers she has renewed work in disciplinary and regulatory law, with particular emphasis on financial regulation, as well as corporate crime. In particular she has defended professionals charged with misconduct. She has also advised companies in respect of compliance with requirements from the Financial Conduct Authority.

The international work undertaken by Sappho Dias has included advisory work in respect of Constitutional law, as well as the drafting of consequential and corollary legislation. She has acted for foreign governments in respect of this advisory work.

Sappho Dias has undertaken advisory work in respect of the interface between civil and criminal law in Competition Law investigations. She has given specific advice in respect of the amended provisions to the Enterprise Act 2002 by the Enterprise and Regulatory and Reform Act 2013.

Sappho has acted on behalf of local authorities in their prosecutions against companies (some of which are substantial) for breeches of health and safety regulations.

Notable Cases

Richards v Devenish (Election Case) [2017] EWHC 37

Alan Walsh Inquest (2017)

Parkinson v Lewis & Ors (Election Case) 2016 EWHC 725 (qb)

Wilson v Aziz (Election Case) (2016)

Mackinlay v Kent Police (Election Case) (2016)

Story v Riordan (Election Case) (2016)

Aussenberg -v- Mr Tim Shields (Chief Executive of Hackney Council) (2015)

Rolls Royce Advisory LLP 2015

Williams -v- Patrick & Others (2014) EWHC 4120 (QB) – Election Case

Laphai Gam –v-State of Myanmar (2014) United Nations WGOAD

La Ring v Myanmar (Human Rights Case) (2014)

Tesco Advisory LLP 2014

Brang Shawn –v- State of Myanmar (2013) United Nations WGOAD

Myint Aye –v- State of Myanmar (2012) United Nations WGOAD

Ko Mya Aye –v- State of Myanmar (2011) United Nations WGOAD

Min Ko Naing –v- State of Myanmar (2008) United Nations WGOAD

Qualifications

- CEDR Accredited Mediator

Appointments

- Chair of the Burma Justice Committee,
- Board Member of the Burma Campaign UK

Areas of Expertise

- Administrative Public Law
- Elections
- Inquiries And Inquests
- Investigations And Resolutions
- Local Government