

Mirren Gidda

Call: 2023

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mirren-gidda/>

Specialist in:

- Housing & Community Care
- Prison Law
- Inquests & Public Inquiries Team
- Court of Protection
- Civil Actions Against Public Authorities



Experience

Mirren practises across public and human rights law, including bringing judicial review claims related to prison law, housing, immigration and community care matters, as well as civil actions against the police and other state bodies. Mirren also practises in inquests and inquiries and parole board hearings.

Prior to coming to the Bar, Mirren was an award-nominated journalist, most recently working as an investigative journalist for the human rights organisation Liberty, where she focused on disproportionate policing. In addition to her work as a barrister, Mirren chairs a local police scrutiny group.

Public Law

Mirren is regularly instructed in judicial review matters across a broad range of areas including prison law, migrant rights, housing and homelessness and community care. Mirren has appeared unled in the High Court and led in the Court of Appeal and works across all stages of judicial review proceedings.

Inquests and Inquiries

Mirren represents bereaved families at inquests and has a particular interest in inquests

involving failures by the police and/or prisons.

Mirren is currently instructed on an inquest concerning the seemingly natural death of a prisoner for which she has made successful submissions on Article 2 engagement and the need for a jury. She is also instructed on inquests into the death of a person in police custody, the death of a prisoner on remand and the death of a patient while under section.

Mirren has recently finished two jury inquests into the suicide of a sectioned patient while on unescorted leave and the death of a prisoner from psychoactive substances for which the juries found causative and non-causative failures. She has previously represented families in inquests concerning the deaths of two young children and the death of a patient in a psychiatric hospital, for which she made successful submissions on the need for a neglect rider to be added to the conclusion.

Mirren is interested in developing an inquiries practice and is currently instructed as a junior on an ongoing inquiry.

Civil Actions Against the State

Mirren is regularly instructed in civil actions against police forces and prisons and has experience bringing cases concerning trespass to the person, unlawful arrest and breaches of the Equality Act 2010. Mirren's prior journalistic experience means she is particularly skilled at determining what evidence is needed to bring a successful claim and how to obtain it.

Prison Law

In addition to her work on prison inquests and civil actions against prisons, Mirren represents prisoners in Parole Board hearings and has additional experience with both complex finding of fact and public parole hearings.

Education

BPP, Bar Training Course, High-Level Distinction (previously referred to as an Outstanding)

BPP, Postgraduate Diploma in Law, Distinction

King's College London, MA Terrorism, Security and Society, Distinction – first in year

University College London, BA English Literature, 2:1

Scholarships

Gray's Inn, Roger Cox Bar Course Scholarship
BPP, Advocacy Scholarship
Gray's Inn, Enoch Dumbutshena GDL Scholarship

Memberships

Human Rights Lawyers' Association
Inquest Lawyers' Group
Association of Prison Lawyers
Co-convenor, Police Action Lawyers' Group
Chair, Tower Hamlets Community Monitoring Group

Cases

High Court quashes unlawful no-release decision by the Parole Board

In the case of *R (Richards) v Parole Board of England and Wales* [2026] EWHC 394 (Admin), Mirren succeeded in challenging a no-release decision by the Parole Board and its subsequent reconsideration decision, which found against the Claimant.

In May 2025, the Parole Board concluded its review of the Claimant's case and decided not to direct his release from prison. At two separate points in its decision, it referred to the Claimant's licence automatically terminating after two years in the community. This was and is an impossibility; the Claimant is a life-sentenced prisoner and his licence cannot terminate.

The errors were brought to the Parole Board's attention, which used rule 30(1) of the Parole Board Rules 2019, the slip rule, to remove one of them. The Claimant applied for reconsideration of the Parole Board's decision, but his application was refused.

Mirren and her instructing solicitors, Andrew Sperling and Emma McClure of SL5 solicitors, brought a judicial review challenging the Parole Board's unlawful use of the slip rule and its decision for material error of fact.

In a judgment that appears to be the first to consider the Parole Board's use of the slip rule, Judge Barry Clarke held that the Parole Board's error as to the Claimant's sentence was not one "*capable of correction via the slip rule*" (§53), and the reconsideration decision erred in law in considering otherwise.



Having made that decision and so having upheld the Claimant's first ground of challenge, Judge Clarke held that the decision suffered from material error of fact, applying the well-known test in *E v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2004] 2 WLR 1351.

Judge Clarke quashed the Parole Board's decision, the decision as amended using the slip rule, and the reconsideration decision and ordered the Claimant's case to be heard by a differently constituted panel of the Parole Board on an expedited basis.

Mirren was instructed by Andrew Sperling and Emma McClure of SL5 solicitors and assisted by Yasmin Karabasic of SL5 solicitors

Inquest jury concludes failures by police and prison staff possibly contributed to the death of Nickolas Fretwell

Mirren represented the family of Nickolas 'Nick' Fretwell, whose inquest took place between 26 January 2026 and 5 February 2026 at the Kent and Medway Coroner's Court. The jury heard that Nick, a bus driver and loving father, had been remanded into custody at HMP Elmley on 14 October 2024 and died just two days later on 16 October 2024.

The jury heard that Nick was first arrested by Kent Police on 12 October 2024. Kent Police was responsible for completing a person escort record ('PER') to inform HMP Elmley of relevant risk information. The PER did not include the fact Nick had been stopped by police some months prior intending to take his own life.

The jury heard that when Nick arrived at HMP Elmley, there were errors made in his risk assessments and his historic suicide and self-harm risks were not properly recorded. An ACCT was not opened for Nick. The jury concluded that on 16 October 2024, Nick died by suicide.

The jury found that the following failures possibly contributed to Nick's death:

- Nick's PER was lacking in emphasising the level of intention rather than ideation of suicide.
- Prison assessments of Nick were incorrectly entered. This included the Prison Reception Screening Tool, which noted incorrectly that Nick had not self-harmed outside of prison and omitted his mental health history; the secondary mental health screening, which incorrectly noted Nick had no mental health needs; and Nick's mental health assessment, which incorrectly noted he had no historic suicide or self-harm risk.
- Prison documentation had not been completed or was missing. This included HMP Elmley's



'Bus to Bed' checklist, which is aimed at reducing suicide and self-harm in the prison.

The Coroner indicated she will be making Prevention of Future Deaths reports in this case, which are awaited.

Mirren was instructed by Bronte Cook and Courtney Smith of Irwin Mitchell Solicitors.

Inquest into the death of Amer Ali Fareed

Mirren represented the family of Amer Ali Fareed, whose inquest took place between 23 June and 27 June 2025 at Surrey Coroner's Court. The jury concluded that Amer, a prisoner detained at HMP High Down, died from drug toxicity leading to heart failure. The jury found that "there was a serious failure in the screening and the referral procedures for Amer to be provided the relevant [substance] misuse support" and that there was "a failure to carry out the scheduled welfare and rol[l] check call at 8pm". The jury further found that there was a delay in allowing paramedics access to Amer and that "the availability of synthetic cannabinoid in HMP High Down in the summer of 2023 may have contributed to his death on 8 August 2023".

During the inquest, the jury heard that at the time of Amer's death, HMP High Down was dealing with a high level of drugs in the prison, particularly psychoactive substances, and that there was a lack of resources to combat this. The jury also heard that Amer, who had a known history of substance misuse, was not referred for substance misuse support as he should have been in line with prison practice.

Mirren was instructed by Aya Alshekhili at Imran Khan & Partners.

R (Neophytou) v Governor of HMP Berwyn

EWCA Civ 348

Mirren was led in the Court of Appeal in a case brought by a prisoner seeking Early Release on Compassionate Grounds ('ERCG') on the basis of health needs.

The resulting judgment ensures the correct application of the Secretary of State for Justice's policy, which requires that where an ERCG application is made for health reasons, it must be submitted to the Secretary of State's specialist central team, unless it is clear the prisoner's experience of imprisonment does not cause suffering greater than the deprivation of liberty intended by the punishment.



Read the reported judgment [here](#).

