

**INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD
FEDERATION**

Board of Trustees
21-22 November 2025

BoT/11.25/DOC 5.5

Refers to agenda item 5.5

Agenda Item 5.5: Appointment of the next Honorary Legal Counsel

Summary:

As the second and final term of office of our current Honorary Legal Counsel (HLC) will come to an end on 4th December, the NGC supported by the Secretariat launched a call for applications. This was following the NGC's inability to identify suitable candidates from the applications submitted through Perret Laver for the various vacancies within the federation's governance spectrum. At the closure of the applications, two strong candidates were put forward for an interview with a panel consisting of members of the Nominations and Governance Committee supported by the outgoing HLC and IPPF Global Director, Governance and Accreditation. At the end of the interview, Ms Sarah Hannett was outstanding and was put forward by the NGC members on the panel for a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The NGC members then voted and approved this recommendation for the Board of Trustees' consideration. The bio of Ms Hannett is in annex A and her CV in annex B.

Action Required:

The Board of Trustees is requested **to appoint** Ms Sarah Hannett KC as IPPF Honorary Legal Counsel for a three-year term starting from 5th December 2025.

Annex A: Bio of the recommended candidate Ms Sarah Hannett KC

An external candidate, Sarah Hamnett KC was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 2003, and appointed King's Counsel in 2021. Throughout her career, she has been responsible for advising governmental organisations or third sector organisations, including advising charitable trustees on their regulatory obligations, particularly those arising under equality and human rights law. In the past she has been a member of the Constitution and Appeals Committee of the National Council of Civil Liberties and a member of the Attorney-General's Panel of Counsel. She has regularly advised on, and appeared in, cases concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights ("**SRHR**") both domestically and in the European context, through the European Court of Human Rights, including in cases involving assisted reproduction, surrogacy, marriage equality, trans rights and disability rights. Sarah brings legal experience within international and federated organisations, such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission ("**EHRC**"), a National Human Rights Institution. Her commitment to SRHR is further demonstrated by, for example, her pro bono work on marriage equality (in both *Ferguson* and in *Steinfeld and Keidan*), and her pro bono action in a number of trans rights cases: (i) for Stonewall in *M (Children)*; (ii) for Amnesty International UK in *For Women Scotland*, and (iii) for Liberty in a challenge to the EHRC's short consultation period for the new Code of Practice for Goods and Services revised after *For Women Scotland*.

Annex B: Sarah Hannett KC CV- **ENGLISH ONLY**

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

March 2021	Appointed King's Counsel
Oct 2012 –date	Barrister Matrix Chambers (and 2003-2012, at 4-5 Gray's Inn Square)
July 2003	Called to the Bar of England and Wales (Lincoln's Inn)
2000 - 2005	Lecturer in Law King's College, London (public law, human rights and contract law)

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS AND AWARDS

2025	Shortlisted for Public Services and Charities Silk of the year (Legal 500 UK Bar Awards)
2024	Shortlisted for Public Services and Charities Silk of the year (Legal 500 UK Bar Awards)
June 2022 - date	Member, Constitution and Appeals Committee of National Council of Civil Liberties (Liberty)
2020	Shortlisted for Human Rights and Public Law Junior of the year (Chambers and Partners Bar UK Awards)
2019	Shortlisted for Public Law Junior of the year (Legal 500 Bar Awards)
2013	Bar Pro Bono Award for work on the School Exclusion Project, an organisation that provides pro bono representation to parents whose children have been permanently excluded from school
Feb 2011 –date	Panel of counsel for the Equality and Human Rights Commission
2008 – 2021	Attorney General’s Counsel to the Crown (from 2017 until taking silk, a member of the A panel, the most senior panel)
April 2008 - Jul 2008	Fellow at the Center for Constitutional Rights, New York (Pegasus Scholar)
2004- 2008	Solace Woman’s Aid, Trustee
2003 – 2005	Discrimination Law Association, Executive Committee
May 2002 - Sept 2002	Visiting Professor at McGill University (funded by a Canadian Studies Faculty Research Award)
Jan ’01 - Dec’ 03	Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights, Management Committee

PRACTICE OVERVIEW

I practise in public law, with a focus on human rights and equality. I have appeared in the European Court of Human Rights and in the United Kingdom appellate courts, including the Supreme Court. I have acted in cases concerning Mauritius, the Cayman Islands, Trinidad, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. My work is described in detail at www.matrixlaw.co.uk/member/sarah-hannett/. Recent examples include:

Gender justice:

- *Wilson v. Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis* [2021] UKIPTrib_IPT_15_110_CH: the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (“IPT”) held that the Metropolitan Police had breached the claimant’s rights under Articles 3, 8, 10, 11 and 14 of the ECHR in respect of her sexual relationship with an undercover police officer (Counsel for the IPT). I am presently instructed in two other similar cases as counsel to the IPT: (i) *Ellie and AC*, a case which raises similar issues to *Wilson*, and (ii) *Beth v. MI5* (whether MI5 breached Beth’s rights under the ECHR as a result of her relationship with a CHIS).
- *R (DSD) v. Parole Board of England and Wales* [2018] 3 WLR 829: the Divisional Court held that the Parole Board’s decision to release the convicted rapist John Worboys was unlawful (junior counsel to the Mayor of London).
- Conduct independent investigations, including into allegations of sexual harassment, for example at Balliol College, Oxford (2022) and at a Cambridge College (2023).
- Instructed on behalf of Ofsted in a number of strands of the *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse* (2017-2022).

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

- *H v. United Kingdom* [2022] 32185/20: the European Court of Human Rights held that the UK’s statutory scheme for attributing parenthood in the case of assisted reproduction complied with Article 8 of the ECHR (counsel to the United Kingdom Government).
- *First Protocol 16 Advisory Opinion by the European Court of Human Rights* (2019): concerning the registration of children born by surrogacy abroad in France (counsel for the United Kingdom Government).
- *R (McConnell) v. Registrar General* [2010] 3 WLR 683 (CA): whether the system for registering trans parents on a birth certificate complied with Articles 8 and 14 of the ECHR (counsel for the Registrar General).

Sexual orientation/marriage equality:

- *Ferguson and Others v. United Kingdom*: acting on behalf of the applicants in an ongoing challenge in the European Court of Human Rights to the revocation of the right to same-sex marriage in Bermuda.
- *Steinfeld and Kheidan v. Secretary of State for International Development* [2020] AC 1: the UK Supreme Court held that the exclusion of heterosexual couples from civil partnerships constituted a breach of Articles 8 and 14 of the ECHR (counsel for the appellant couple).

Trans rights:

- *For Women Scotland v. The Scottish Ministers* [2025] UKSC 16: the UK Supreme Court held that the statutory definition of “sex” in the Equality Act 2010 is biological such that a gender recognition certificate issued under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 does not alter a person’s sex for the purposes of the Equality Act (counsel for the Intervener Amnesty International UK).
- *In the Matter of M (Children)* [2018] 4 WLR 60: the Court of Appeal considered whether the decision of the Family Court that a trans parent could not have direct contact with her children complied with the ECHR and the Equality Act 2010 (junior counsel to Stonewall).

Race/religion:

- *R (TTT) v. Michaela Community Schools Trust* [2024] HRLR 9: the school’s policy of banning prayer rituals, including for Muslim pupils, did not breach the ECHR or the Equality Act 2010 (counsel to the claimant).
- *EHRC Investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party* (2019-2020): acted as counsel to the EHRC.
- *EHRC Inquiry into Racial Harassment in Higher Education* (2019): acted as counsel to the EHRC.

Disability:

- *AA v. United Kingdom*: acting on behalf of the applicants on ongoing claim in the European Court of Human Rights that the jurisdictional bar on claiming damages for children alleging disability discrimination against a school breaches Article 14 of the ECHR. I also acted as counsel for the applicants in the domestic proceedings: *R (AA and CC) v. Secretary of State for Education* [2022] EWHC 1613 (Admin).

EXAMPLE PUBLICATIONS

- Books: *Blackstone's Guide to the Human Rights Act 1998* (OUP, 2024), with John Wadham, Helen Mountfield KC, Raj Desai, Jessica Jones, Eleanor Mitchell and Aidan Wills
- Special Educational Needs and the Law* (LAG, 2017), with Aileen McColgan KC and Elizabeth Prochaska
- Book chapters 'National Security and Education', in *National Security Law, Procedure and Practice* (OUP, 2024) by Robert Ward KC and David Blundell KC
- 'The Influence of the European Convention on Human Rights' in *Information Rights* (Bloomsbury, 2023) by Philip Coppel KC
- Articles: 'A Tale of Judicial Perseverance: the Restoration of Habeas Rights for Guantanamo Detainees' [2008] Public Law 636
- '*Ultra Vires* Representations and Illegitimate Expectations' (with Lisa Busch) [2005] Public Law 729
- 'Third Party Interventions: In the Public Interest?' [2003] Public Law 128
- 'Equality at the Intersections: The Legislative and Judicial Failure to Tackle Multiple Discrimination' (2003) 23 Oxford Journal of Legal Studies 65
- 'The Regulation of Abortion in the United States: The Decision of the Supreme Court in *Stenberg v Carhart*' [2001] Public Law 480

EDUCATION

- Sept '99 **McGill University**
LLM in Comparative Human Rights Law and Cultural Diversity (Canadian Commonwealth Scholar; Dean's Honour List)
- June '98 **University of Nottingham**
LLB (top First Class Honours in year)
Sweet & Maxwell Prize and the Law Students Graduate Prize, both awarded to the student at the top of the graduating class; Rowe & Maw prize for the best overall second year examination results; Simmons & Simmons Scholarship for Law with American Law (third year spent at the University of Texas School of Law); University Exhibition prize awarded to outstanding students in the Part I degree examinations