

Catherine Rowlands



called: 1992
education: LLB (Hons.)

clerk: Elliot Langdorf

Catherine Rowlands has a practice which covers all aspects of public law, especially social housing and community care, as well as property and other civil litigation. She is a robust and tenacious advocate with substantial experience at all levels and has appeared in cases from the House of Lords to the Magistrates Court.

Catherine joined Chambers in 2009 from St Ive's Chambers in Birmingham where she represented housing associations and local authorities across the West Midlands and beyond.

Qualifications: LLB (Hons.) Kings College London and Maitrise, Université de Paris (Pantheon-Sorbonne)

Called: 1992 (Gray's Inn)

Property

Catherine Rowlands also undertakes general civil litigation, especially landlord and tenant and property-related litigation, including boundaries, dilapidations and disrepair claims.

Cases

Catherine Rowlands

Webb and Perks v Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council Land Registry 20th April 2011

Rights of way and estoppel.

See full text of case at: http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWLandRA/2011/2010_0892.html

Publications

Who is an Ordinary Homeless Person?

When determining who is in priority need for housing, local authorities must decide the difficult question of whether a person is more vulnerable than the "ordinary homeless person": *R v Camden LBC ex parte Pereira* (1998) 31 HLR 317. For the first time, the Court of Appeal has given some guidance as to the characteristics of that mythical creature.

Craig Johnson applied to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council as homeless and claimed to be in priority need as he was vulnerable: he was a recidivist offender, a recovering drug user and also claimed to suffer from depression and crippling knee pain. Solihull accepted that he used drugs, but felt that he could stay clear of them, but held that in any event, if he relapsed into drug use, this would not be unusual for a homeless person. He was not, therefore, more vulnerable than the ordinary homeless person.

The Appellant appealed to the Birmingham County Court and then to the Court of Appeal. He argued that he should not be compared with a homeless person who had any of the problems commonly associated with homelessness, such as alcoholism, drug use or depression. Instead, he said, he should be compared with an ordinary person, who happened to be homeless, but was otherwise fully fit and free from any problems.

The Court of Appeal (Arden, Jackson and McCombe LLJ) rejected this as being wholly unrealistic. The "ordinary homeless person" must be assessed in the real world and should not be assumed to be someone who has no experience of drug issues, or other problems. The characteristics of an ordinary homeless person are necessarily imprecise, and it falls to the local authority to consider what features such a person would have. It is not surprising that many homeless people have drug issues, so the reviewing officer was entitled to refer to the SNAP survey of homeless people to determine what an ordinary homeless person is.

[Catherine Rowlands](#) successfully represented Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

More light on article 8: exceptions to the rule

Catherine Rowlands examines the circumstances where a successful defence relying on Article 8 might arise

Catherine Rowlands

in *Local Government Lawyer*.

[More light on article 8: exceptions to the rule](#)

Associations

- Administrative Law Bar Association (ALBA)
- Founding member of Social Housing Law Association