

Laura Hughes

Partner

 Nottingham

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Laura Hughes is a Partner at Browne Jacobson. She heads up the public law team, as well as being the head of the insurance and public risk department, and the executive lead for Wales. Laura is an experienced public law expert who advises her clients on their most important and high-profile matters. She acts across the public sector advising clients in government, local government, education, health, audit, sports and natural resources.

Laura was named in the Lawyer's Hot 100 for 2025, and was named Law Firm Lead of the Year at a National/Regional Firm at the Women and Diversity in Law Awards 2025.

Laura has over 20 years' experience advising public sector clients on the full range of public law matters including devolution, local government reorganisation, consultation, statutory interpretation, statutory and guidance drafting, judicial review, health, education and regulatory matters. Laura's clients include Welsh Government, Defra, Natural Resources Wales, Sports England, Qualification Wales, UK Sport and the Cabinet Office.

Laura's vast and wide-ranging experience across the public sector means that she is highly sought after when dealing with high profile, novel, contentious and complex matters. For example, Laura was the lead lawyer advising on the creation of the country's first ever Combined County Authority in the East Midlands; and supported Qualification Wales through its covid response dealing with the cancellation of exams and their replacement.

Laura is happiest when she is sat around a client's Board or Executive table helping them through their trickiest issues to a decision which is defensible, lawful and made in the public interest

Expertise

Arm's length bodies

Central government

Education

Emergency services

Energy and infrastructure

Government

Health and life sciences

Local government

Featured experience

Charnwood Borough Council

Advising Charnwood Borough Council in relation to a certificate of lawful use or development (CLEUD) involving an area of land on which an applicant stated he had been using for up to 140 caravans when, in fact, only 10 were allowed on the site. Laura advised on the legal arguments and evidence submitted by the applicant and reviewed third party evidence to assist the Council in their determination of the CLEUD application.

County Council

Conducting complex litigation for a county council in the administrative court and Chancery Division in relation to their decision to require payment from a community association for use of rooms within a primary school.

Natural England

Defending several judicial reviews for Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales regarding their decisions on the designation of sites of special scientific interest, consideration of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) Regulations and the exercise of discretion in relation to an agri-environment scheme.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Advising on all aspects of planning, highways and compulsory purchase - recently advising the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in relation to the redevelopment of Cremorne Wharf, a major regeneration project.

Testimonials

"Laura Hughes – excellent understanding of the client's business and able to give credible advice to Board members in difficult circumstances."

Legal 500 2023,

"Laura Hughes – diligent and user friendly."

Legal 500 2022 ,

