

Sara Smith FCA



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Overview

Sara has over 25 years' experience in the accounting profession. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales and a member of the Compulsory Purchase Association.

Sara specialised in forensic accounting on qualification and held client-facing roles within the forensic accounting team of KPMG LLP from 2000, latterly leading the firm's national forensic disputes practice. Smiths Forensic Accounting Limited was established by Adam and Sara Smith in 2024.

Whilst Sara has a broad range of forensic accounting experience, including the investigation of fraud and financial misconduct and regulatory matters, her main area of focus is dispute advisory services. In this regard, Sara is engaged by clients in an expert witness, independent expert or advisory capacity and has prepared many reports for the purpose of Court proceedings, ADR or to inform settlement discussions. Sara has given expert evidence in the High Court.

Professional experience

Sara works with clients across a broad range of disputes and her experience spans a wide range of clients and sectors. Examples of her experience include:

- Retail/hospitality sector: Appointed by an Acquiring Authority to prepare advisory papers in relation to multiple disturbance compensation claims received from occupiers of premises subject to compulsory acquisition as part of an urban regeneration scheme.
- Renewable energy: Preparation of an advisory report on behalf of the defendant party in relation to the assessment of compensation payable to the landowner in connection with a major infrastructure scheme. The work involved the valuation of the claimant's business and consideration of other potential areas of claim arising from either relocation or extinguishment of the business, including additional costs and consequential losses.
- Private education sector: Supported the expert in preparation of expert witness reports addressing claims brought for disturbance compensation in relation to a major infrastructure scheme. The matter had been referred to the Upper Tribunal. Following a meeting between the expert accountants, settlement was reached at mediation.
- Retail sector: Appointed by an Acquiring Authority to prepare an advisory report in connection with a compensation claim brought by a retailer following the compulsory acquisition of its trading premises, resulting in the extinguishment of the business. The report provided a critique of the claim and presentation of alternative loss calculations.
- Hospitality venue: Appointed by the claimant to prepare an advisory report addressing the extinguishment valuation of a public house compulsorily acquired as part of a transport scheme. The business was unique in that it was adjacent to a Premier League football stadium. The report was used to inform the parties' settlement negotiations.
- Construction sector: Provided advisory services in connection with the extinguishment of two businesses as a consequence of a major infrastructure scheme. Instructed by the Acquiring Authority, the report critiqued the claims presented by the affected businesses and presented alternative calculations of the losses arising.
- High-street retailer: Appointed by the claimant to prepare an advisory report in connection with the potential extinguishment of a retail store as part of a regeneration scheme. The report addressed some of the key components of an extinguishment valuation for the purpose of the compensation discussions between the parties.