

# PUBLIC LAW CHILDREN CONFERENCE

Tuesday, 27th June 2023

12.30pm - 5.00pm @ Bristol Old Vic, Kings Street

Cost: £55 + VAT

## Making 26 weeks count! How to meet the challenges facing care lawyers.

We will be joined by HHJ Wildblood KC, and our children public law barristers will present 26 minute presentations on the current issues effecting care lawyers.

The seminar will be chaired by Lindy Stephens, Principal Solicitor at Oxfordshire County Council.

The seminar will conclude with a question and answer session with our expert barristers, as well as drinks and canapes.

CPD: 3 hours

This half day conference is designed for all family law practitioners.

### Highlights

- Reopening findings and instructing experts
- Assessing family members abroad and the adoption procedure
- Forced marriage protection orders
- Preparing independent assessments for Court
- Advances in toxicology testing for care proceedings
- The evolution of role of the Children's Guardian within fact finding hearings
- Applications for phone interrogation and analysis

Organised by



Exhibitor



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# PUBLIC LAW CHILDREN - 27TH JUNE

Making 26 weeks count! How to meet the challenges facing care lawyers.

12.30pm - 12.55pm	Registration and lunch
12.55 - 1.05pm	<b>Welcome and introduction from chair</b> Lindy Stephens, Principal Childcare Solicitor, Oxfordshire County Council
1.05 - 1.20	<b>26 weeks – whats new?</b> HHJ Wildblood KC
1.20 - 1.46pm	<b>Two hot topics in public law by Lucy Reed KC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Reopening findings</li><li>■ Instructing experts</li></ul>
1.46 - 2.12pm	<b>Advances in toxicology testing for care proceedings</b> David Nicholson, Managing Director and Martyn Danks, Head of Sales & Market Operations, DNA Legal
2.12 - 2.22pm	<b>An introduction to OurFamilyWizard</b> James Evans, Head of UK Professional Education
2.22 - 2.48pm	<b>Forced marriage protection orders</b> Glen Pritchard, Barrister
2.48 - 3.00pm	Refreshments
3.00 - 3.26pm	<b>Instructing and undertaking independent parenting assessments – ensuring an efficient, effective and fair process for all.</b> Mark Sloman, Aspire Social Work
3.26 - 3.52pm	<b>Neutral and independent – The evolution of role of the Children’s Guardian within fact finding hearings.</b> Ryan Morgan, Barrister
3.52 - 4.18pm	<b>Tricky issues in public law by Julia Belyavin</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Assessing family members abroad</li><li>■ Adoption procedure</li></ul>
4.18 - 4.44pm	<b>Application of mobile phone evidence in the Family Court</b> Sarah Vella, Evidence matters
4.44 - 5.00pm	Q&A session
5.00pm	Close for drinks and canapes

# SPEAKERS

“St John’s Chambers is a very strong family set, housing a team which covers all aspects of family law.”

LEGAL 500, 2023



**Lindy Stephens**

Principal Childcare Solicitor,  
Oxfordshire County Council

Lindy is a very well known family and public law practitioner and experienced advocate spending the majority of her career in the South West. Having qualified in 1995 as a Solicitor, Lindy spent 23 years in private practice. She became a member of the Law Society’s Children Panel in 1999 and also became an Accredited Resolution practitioner specialising in Advocacy, Children and Domestic Abuse. Lindy also qualified as a Resolution trained All Issues Family Mediator in 2011. Lindy has held senior management roles since 2000. In 2017 Lindy moved to work in the public sector and has since then lead teams at Plymouth City Council, Northamptonshire and most recently Oxfordshire County Council. Her work now primarily focusses on working with children’s social care to assist in strategic planning and policy making to improve practice and processes. She mentors lawyers, with an emphasis on training and streamlining to ensure a consistency of quality, decision making, advice and professionalism. She is currently helping to steer Oxfordshire’s legal services department through a period of transformation.



**Abigail Bond**

Call: 1999

**“Abigail is very approachable with an excellent knowledge of the law.” ‘She provides commercial, realistic advice to clients.’ ‘Abigail is always well prepared and is a safe pair of hands for complex children public law matters.’** CHAMBERS UK, 2023

Abigail practises in all aspects of the law relating to children and is Head of the Children Law team. She has considerable experience of care proceedings in which she represents local authorities, parents and children. She handles a wide range of cases, including those involving allegations of inflicted injury and serious sexual abuse. She is the author of several articles on family law matters and of the well-received Care Proceedings and Learning Disabled Parents: A Handbook for Family Lawyers (Jordans, 2014, 2nd edition). In 2019 Abigail was appointed as a Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal (Health Education and Social Care Chamber), ticketed to the Mental Health Jurisdiction.



**Lucy Reed KC**

Year of call: 2002 KC, 2023

**“An outstanding advocate.”** LEGAL 500, 2023

Lucy specialises solely in Children Act cases, dealing with complex care work and contentious private law matters. She is described by peers as formidable in dealing with complex children public law cases. She is Chair of The Transparency Project and has been appointed as the legal blogger for The Transparency Implementation Group. Lucy is the author of ‘The Family Court without a Lawyer – A Handbook for Litigants in Person’ (4th edition 2022, Bath Publishing) and co-author of ‘Transparency in the family courts: Publicity and privacy in practice’ (2018, Bloomsbury Press). She has recently completed vulnerable witness training via the Western Circuit and FLBA, and is an accredited facilitator for FLBA Vulnerable Witness Training. Lucy has been blogging about family law matters since 2007 at [www.pinktape.co.uk](http://www.pinktape.co.uk).

# SPEAKERS

Ranked in Tier 1 for Family Law in The Legal 500



**Julia Belyavin**

Year of call: 2003

**“Julia is determined and calm in equal measure, and very reassuring with clients. She is a powerful advocate in children matters.”** CHAMBERS UK, 2023

Julia specialises in children law, both public law and private law cases. Her public law practice focuses on complex care cases. Recent instructions have included cases where the principle allegations were sexual abuse and/or inflicted injuries, as well as issues of neglect and addiction. She has appeared before Magistrates, District & Circuit Judges, High Judges and the Court of Appeal.



**Glen Pritchard**

Call: 2022

Glen joined our Family & Divorce team in 2022 following a successful career as a solicitor working for a Local Authority where he focussed on children law, representing them in a range of hearing from contested interim removal applications to Deprivation of Liberty hearings in the High Court. Since joining the team, Glen has built on his local authority experience whilst also developing his practice to representing parents and children, both directly and via their court-appointed Children's Guardians. This has included having the conduct of fact-finding hearings and assisting Leading Counsel in more complex matters, in all levels of the Court. Forced Marriage and Adoption proceedings have also featured in his practice since joining St John's, and this is something Glen is more than happy to advise on.



**Mark Sloman**

Aspire Social Work

Mark is the Director of Aspire Social Work and oversees all of its services and operations. He has been a qualified social worker for over 20 years, is joint trained in child protection and mental health services. He is an Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) and continues to work in frontline statutory services, mainly in the depths of night! Mark has been an expert witness to Family Courts across the UK for over 15 years. His primary professional interest and expertise is in assessments of parents within Proceedings where intellectual impairment or parental mental health are a feature. He also is an HMCTS appointed Intermediary. Mark has developed a strong reputation in working with the most complex cases and being able to engage parents in a compassionate, sensitive and meaningful manner. At the core of Mark's vision for Aspire Social Work is a determination to ensure our services are delivered with kindness, compassion and empathy.

# SPEAKERS

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**David Nicholson**  
DNA Legal

David is the Director of DNA Legal, who delivers high-quality forensic evidence to the legal sector across the UK. As the experts called to help with the 2017 landmark high court case *Re: H (A Child - Hairstrand Testing)* [2017] EWF 64 the DNA Legal principles are what, when applied, ensure the integrity of testing throughout the industry. In his talk, he will be discussing advances in toxicology testing and how to challenge the expert evidence.



**James Evans**  
OurFamilyWizard

James is the Head of UK Professional Education at OurFamilyWizard. Having previously worked as a teacher, James joined the Family Law community over 4 years ago to introduce family law practitioners around the country to OurFamilyWizard. James works with Courts, Chambers, Firms, CAFCASS, Mediators, Organisations and Charities to help parents with their communication. James is a member of the East Sussex Resolution committee, the Family Dispute Solutions Group, the Family Law Language Project, The Parents Promise Alliance, The Family Mediation Week committee and is the chair of Support Through Court's Family Ambassadors Board. James was shortlisted for the Innovation Award in Mediation in 2021 and again in 2022, as well as being shortlisted for Resolution's Innovation Champion Award. OurFamilyWizard were also shortlisted for Family Law Innovation of the Year at the National Family Law Awards in 2022.

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