

Children Public and Private Law Conference

Half day is £50 + VAT and a full day is £95 + VAT



St John's
CHAMBERS



Tuesday, 19th November



9.00am – 5.00pm



We The Curious, Bristol

**CPD:
5.5 hours**

Our Family Law **Children's** team will be hosting a full day **public** and **private law** conference on Tuesday, 19th November at We the Curious in Bristol which will be split into two sessions. There will be a crossover of topics before and after lunch to ensure we provide you with everything you need to assist you with your day-to-day practice.

We look forward to welcoming our keynote speaker, award winning BBC Correspondent / Reporter **Sanchia Berg, who has a special interest in the family Courts.**

Lisa Harker, Director of **Nuffield Family Justice Observatory** also joins us with her unique take on the family justice system.

The conference will provide the latest procedural, case law and legislative updates from our experienced lawyers and is recommended to all busy family law practitioners.

Topics include:

- Children private and public law case update
- The intersection between coercive control and parental alienation
- Head injury pilot
- Covert recordings in family proceedings
- Working in the dark? What data can tell us about the family justice system, and what it can't
- Parents with learning disabilities in care proceedings: key knowledge and its application
- Transparency in the family court
- Recent case law on drug and alcohol testing

Sponsored by

 **AttoLife**

Private Children – morning session

“ St John’s Chambers is one of the leading sets on the Western Circuit for public and private child law work.”

The Legal 500, 2024

Lisa Harker, Director at Nuffield Family Justice Observatory will be speaking after lunch at 1.40pm. If you have registered for the morning session only you can still come along to listen to Lisa after lunch.

9.00 – 9.25am	Registration and refreshments
9.25 – 9.35am	Welcome by Chair Ryan Morgan, Head of Children’s team
9:35 – 10:05am	Children private law case update Georgina Swinglehurst and Harriet Dudbridge, Barristers
10:05 – 10:50am	The intersection between coercive control and parental alienation Sarah Phillimore and Sophie Smith-Holland, Barristers Sarah and Sophie will update you on the law regarding both coercive control and parental alienation in private law children cases, discuss the inevitable intersection of the two concepts and how best to approach findings of fact.
10.50 – 11.00am	OurFamilyWizard Alicia Farran, Legal Associate, OurFamilyWizard Alicia will be outlining the newest features and functionalities within the OurFamilyWizard platform. Alicia will also give a brief overview of the current risks to be aware of when communicating online and how OurFamilyWizard can safeguard against this.
11.00 – 11.15am	Refreshments
11.15 – 11.45am	Head injury pilot – what we know and how it will impact on care proceedings Ryan Morgan, Head of Children’s team
11.45 – 12.15pm	Covert recordings in family proceedings Vivien Croly, Barrister
12.15 – 12.45pm	Keynote speech Sanchia Berg, Correspondent, BBC News
12.45 – 1.40pm	Lunch

Public Children – afternoon session

Keynote speaker is BBC News Correspondent, Sanchia Berg who will be speaking before lunch at 12.15pm. If you have registered for the afternoon session only you can still come along to listen to the keynote speaker and stay for lunch.

12.45 – 1.40pm	Lunch
1.40 – 2.10pm	Working in the dark? What data can tell us about the family justice system, and what it can't Lisa Harker, Director, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory
2.10 – 2.40pm	Parents with learning disabilities in care proceedings: key knowledge and its application Diana Panizzon-Pineda, Barrister Diana will offer a review of important authorities and guidance in relation to some of the most vulnerable parents involved in care proceedings, with a particular focus on implications for day-to-day practice.
2.40 – 3.10pm	Transparency in the family court Lucy Reed KC, Barrister and Chair of The Transparency Project Lucy will bring you up to speed on all things transparency, including the Reporting Pilot (coming soon to a court near you), and the newly published judgment publication guidance. Lucy will also give you tips what to do if a reporter attends your hearing or your client wants to tell their story.
3.10 – 3.25pm	Refreshments
3.25 – 4.05pm	Children public law case update Asha Groves, Barrister
4.05 – 4.35pm	Recent case law on drug and alcohol testing Julia Belyavin, Barrister Julia will outline the legal framework in relation to drug and alcohol testing, and examine recent decisions in relation to hair strand testing.
4.35 – 5.00pm	Alcohol testing for family law proceedings Sharnette Ashiru, Toxicologist, AttoLife This presentation will explore in detail, advanced methods for measuring alcohol consumption via hair and blood testing. Attendees will learn of the strengths and weaknesses of the various tests and how they can provide valuable insights into drinking patterns over time, particularly in legal contexts such as family law and court-ordered sobriety monitoring.
5.00pm	Closed for questions – followed by drinks and canapes

Barristers

“

A lengthy roster of silks and juniors with invaluable expertise in a wide range of family and matrimonial matters. Chambers has good quality and experienced counsel available to deal with all aspects of cases and all levels of complexity.”

Chambers UK, 2024

Voted ‘Regional Family Law Chambers of the Year’ at Family Law Awards 2024.



Lucy Reed KC

Year of call: 2002

KC: 2023

“Lucy is a supremely excellent advocate who prepares thoroughly and takes control of the court room. She is a confident, authoritative and highly skilled advocate who ensures she covers every aspect of the case in detail.”

THE LEGAL 500, 2025

Lucy is a family law specialist and has practised in family law throughout her professional career. Her practice now spans all areas of children work. She often acts in complex, multi-party or high conflict intractable private law disputes. In public law children cases she acts for parents, children, local authorities, extended family and media. Lucy is the author of *The Family Court without a Lawyer – A Handbook for Litigants in Person* (4th edn 2023), the Co-author of *Transparency in the Family Courts – Publicity and Privacy in Practice* (2nd edn 2024) and Co-author of the *Dictionary of Public Law Children* (2024). She is the Chair of educational charity The Transparency Project and legal blogger. Lucy sits as a Recorder, and is a member of the Transparency Implementation Group and FLBA National Committee.



Sarah Phillimore

Year of call: 1994

“Sarah was brilliant in court, lovely with the client, had the ear of the Judge, and worked collaboratively with me which is something I find is so important when working with Counsel.”

Sharon Mahmood Director, Brigstow Family Law

Sarah was called to the Bar in 1994 and since 1999 has worked as a specialist family lawyer in Chambers in London and Bristol. She specialises in all aspects of children law and Court of Protection work. Sarah has extensive experience in public law proceedings and the use of the inherent jurisdiction. She represents local authorities, parents, and children. Sarah has recently recorded a podcast on parental alienation to alienating behaviours through our Family Law Pod.

Barristers



Julia Belyavin
Year of call: 2003

"Julia is extremely knowledgeable and well prepared.' She is very methodical and her advocacy is brilliant.' 'Julia is a very calm advocate, but she gets out of the witness exactly what she needs.' 'She is very pragmatic and very down to earth. She is a really great lawyer'." Chambers UK, 2024

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. Her private law practice focuses on more complex matters, including allegations of significant domestic abuse, alienation and child abduction.



Asha Groves
Year of call: 2013

"Very prepared, willing to go the extra mile to reach a conclusion for the client, persistent, a confident advocate. Asha has a lovely manner with clients and explains things very clearly throughout the hearing." THE LEGAL 500

Asha practises in all aspects of the law relating to children. She is experienced in complex private and public child law cases involving the full range of issues including allegations of physical and sexual abuse, inflicted injuries, intractable contact disputes, alienating behaviours and cases with an international element. Asha often represents vulnerable parties with cognitive difficulties including through the Official Solicitor and those who require the assistance of an intermediary. She has completed the FLBA Vulnerable Witness Training. Asha is recognised for her thorough preparation, confidence, empathy and assertiveness. Both clients and solicitors feel that she has a real understanding of their needs and how she can work together with them to help achieve their goals in court. Asha has recently recorded a podcast on parental alienation to alienating behaviours through our Family Law Pod.



Sophie Smith-Holland
Year of call: 2015

"Sophie is always thoroughly prepared. She has an eye for detail and robustly represents clients in court. Her advice is always clear and concise." THE LEGAL 500, 2025

Sophie is regularly instructed for all types of hearings, including FHDRAs, DRAs, directions hearings, fact-finding hearings and final hearings. Sophie has particular experience of representing parties in cases involving serious allegations and concerns in respect of domestic abuse (including coercive control), mental health, substance misuse, parental alienation and implacable hostility. Sophie is also regularly instructed in concurrent proceedings under Part IV Family Law Act 1996 concerning applications for occupation orders and non-molestation orders. Sophie has experience of cases concerning jurisdictional issues and international elements, including applications to remove children from the jurisdiction and child abduction.

Barristers



Harriet Dudbridge

Year of call: 2015

Harriet is a specialist family law barrister with an extensive practice in children private law. She is regularly instructed in a variety of hearings from FHDRA's to finding of fact and final hearings. Harriet has also represented clients in FLA 1996 proceedings, obtaining non-molestation orders at contested hearings and also dealing with cross undertakings where appropriate. She has acted in 7-day hearing involving allegations of serious parental alienation, contested expert evidence and consequent transfer of residence. Harriet has also been instructed in cases with international elements including hearings to remove the child from the jurisdiction permanently.



Ryan Morgan
Head of Children

Year of call: 2017

"Ryan is a very hands-on and experienced barrister. His drafting skills are impeccable, and his advocacy is one of his many strengths."

THE LEGAL 500, 2025

Ryan specialises in public and private children law work. He represents local authorities, parents and children in complex proceedings, including cases involving non-accidental injury, fabricated illness, sexual assaults and child death. Ryan is ranked in Chambers UK and The Legal 500 and is described by clients as a very skilled advocate, who always pays attention to detail and is very thorough in his case preparation. He has recently been involved in the re-opening of previous findings, issues in relation to Re G (2022); and the Court determining the cause of death of a child in the absence of a post mortem and evidence of complainant children and vulnerable adults.



Georgina Swinglehurst

Year of call: 2019

"Georgina is wise beyond her years. She is excellent with clients in the most difficult situations and deals with matters sensitively, resulting in great confidence and trust in her representation." THE LEGAL 500, 2025

Georgina is ranked in the Legal 500 as a 'Rising Star (Tier 1)' in the category of children and domestic abuse. She acts on behalf of all parties in private children disputes, including disputes about contact, education, relocation and residence. She has experience in handling cases involving allegations of significant domestic abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour, parental alienation, substance misuse, mental health issues, parental alienation and intractable contact disputes. Georgina also acts for both applicants and respondents within Family Law Act 1996 applications for non-molestation and occupation orders. Georgina's approach to these cases is always client-centric and she strives to ensure that the client feels well-represented and confident when grappling with emotionally difficult situations.

Barristers



Vivien Croly

Year of call:
2019

"Vivien was reassuring and supportive with clear communication and expert knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse and family law. She went above and beyond. Having Vivien in your corner is immensely reassuring." Lay Client, Children Private Law

Vivien has been nominated 'Family Law Young Barrister of the Year' at the Family Law Awards 2024. Vivien appears on behalf of applicants and respondents in all private children law matters at all stages of the process. She is regularly instructed on applications made under section 8 of the Children Act 1989, including child arrangements orders (contact and residence disputes) specific issue orders, prohibited steps orders and where concurrent applications are made under the Family Law Act 1996 for non-molestation orders and occupation orders. Vivien has experience of handling cases involving intractable contact disputes, implacable hostility, parental alienation, relocation, residence, abduction, education, domestic abuse, coercive/controlling behaviour, substance misuse and mental health issues.



Diana M. Panizzon-Pineda

Year of call: 2021

"Diana is absolutely fantastic! She is tenacious, diligent, passionate, but above all very caring to the client and that is very important in our industry!" Partner, KJ Smith Solicitors, Family Law

Diana specialises in all areas of family law relating to children, including both private and public law proceedings. Diana is regularly instructed in protracted and intricate private law matters. She appears across all stages of proceedings, from FHDRAs through to final hearings, as well as at fact findings and enforcement hearings. Diana also has a busy public law practice and represents children, parents, and local authorities. She regularly acts in cases where allegations of neglect, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, mental health issues, and drug/alcohol abuse have been made.

Keynote speaker

Sanchia Berg has been reporting on Family Courts since 2009 when journalists were first allowed to attend hearings. She is a senior BBC Correspondent, for many years based on the Today Programme BBC Radio 4 working on long term and investigative pieces. She reports across BBC News, for the main TV bulletins, BBC Radio and BBC News Online. Before joining Today she was a BBC Foreign Correspondent. She studied English at Oxford, an Open Scholar, and Broadcast Journalism in the US, as a Fulbright Scholar.



Sanchia Berg
Correspondent,
BBC News

Speakers



Lisa Harker

Nuffield Family Justice
Observatory

Lisa's career has combined research, policy, journalism, campaigning and service delivery with a focus on finding ways to improve the lives of the UK's most disadvantaged children. Since April 2019 she has been Director of the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, an organisation seeking to ensure that decisions made about children in the family justice system are informed by data and research. Lisa was previously Chief Executive of The Art Room, Director of Strategy at the NSPCC, led the thinktank the Institute for Public Policy Research, was an advisory to BBC News and held various senior advisory roles within government, including as 'child poverty tsar'. She has first-hand experience of the family justice system as an adoptive parent of two children.



Sharnette Ashiru

AttoLife

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Sharnette is a Forensic Toxicologist specialising in drug and alcohol testing, as an expert witness she has the ability to explain highly complex scientific concepts in a clear and understandable manner. Sharnette has recently published an academic journal article relating to alcohol testing in the legal sector. She is a member of the Society of Hair Testing, The International Association of Forensic Toxicologists and the London Toxicology Group.

Thank you AttoLife for sponsoring this event.



Alicia Farran

OurFamilyWizard

Alicia Farran is a Legal Associate at OurFamilyWizard. Alicia has been part of the Family Law community for over 5 years previously working as a Family Law Paralegal in some of the top Family Law firms in both Birmingham and London. Alicia works with Courts, Chambers, Firms, CAFCASS, Mediators, Organisations and Charities to help parents with their communication.

Thank you OurFamilyWizard for exhibiting at this event.