

Justin Gray

Call 1993

"He is calm, patient and pays the utmost attention to detail. His work is meticulous in terms of depth and details. He is tenacious in his approach to representing clients" Legal 500

EXPERTISE

Justin is a children law specialist, covering all aspects of public law proceedings, private disputes including relocation and change of school cases, adoption, special guardianship, medical treatment, and surrogacy.

Ranked in Tier 1 of the Legal 500 for family law for many years, Justin offers a first-class advisory and advocacy service, building on knowledge and experience acquired from practice across the North of England and in London. He provides clear, frank and comprehensive assessments of the prospects for a case, detailed advice as to tactics and evidence, and a tenacious approach in court when called for.

Justin has particular experience and interest in the international movement of children, use of the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court, parental alienation, mental health, capacity and Gillick competence, local authority obligations, and deprivation of liberty.

Justin has a renowned expertise in relation to Anglo-Scottish cross-border issues concerning the placement in Scotland of children, particularly looked after children, and vulnerable adults. He has formulated a number of successful solutions to conflicts arising within the interrelationship of English and Scottish law and regulations, published a number of articles, and on occasions acts as an expert witness on the topic in the Family Court. He regularly receives instructions from all over the jurisdiction on these matters, and has access to a wide range of materials and other resources.

He also undertakes cases concerning mental capacity, vulnerable adults, forced marriage applications, and other Court of Protection welfare cases. Justin also receives instructions in relation to judicial review in children matters, particularly relating to their support and protection from local authorities.

Justin regularly accepts instructions on a Direct Access basis for suitable cases, particularly private law children matters.

APPOINTMENTS

- Chairman of the North East Family Law Bar Association 2014-2022
- Bar representative on the Newcastle Courts Family Practitioner's Forum

LECTURES & SEMINARS

Justin is a frequent contributor to Trinity's ongoing programme of family lectures and seminars to groups including local law societies. Topics have included:



Expertise

Family - Public Law & Children

Court of Protection & Adult Care

Family - Finance & Property

Administrative & Public Law

International & Offshore

- Transparency in the family courts
- Removal of children from the jurisdiction
- The role of the court post-proceedings
- Media attendance in family cases
- Implications of looked after child status
- Development of the law relating to non-consensual adoption
- Witness training for social workers
- Drafting techniques in relation to the threshold criteria
- Placements of looked after children in Scotland
- Disclosure of family law documents (to the Bar Standards Board)
- Scottish and English perspectives on the deprivation of liberty of children

EDUCATION

- BA (Hons) University College London 1992
- Inns of Court School of Law 1993

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Practised at the Chambers of Henry Setright QC and Brian Jubb in Gray's Inn from 1994-2002.



Clerking team



Steven Preen
Lead Family Clerk
0191 245 9551



Ken McLafferty
Family & Immigration
Clerk
0191 245 9531



Paula McLure
Family Clerk
0191 245 9530



Chris Gibbin
Clerk
01642 247 569



Fiona Bullock
Direct Access Clerk
01642 247 569

What Others Say

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"Highly experienced and been around a long time. He is incredibly knowledgeable and very good with the judges." "He is very good with clients and has quite a good academic rigour about him." "He demonstrates excellent advocacy skills, including cross-examination"

Family, Chambers & Partners 2024

"An extremely talented advocate"

Legal 500 2024

"Justin is very effective before the court"

Family Law, Chambers UK 2023

"Justin is intellectually rigorous, and his advocacy is measured, fearless and persuasive."

Legal 500 2023

"Justin is extremely approachable, thorough and highly knowledgeable, and provides robust advice and assurances throughout cases." "He is a very well-respected senior junior with a reputation for meticulous preparation and robust advocacy."

Chambers & Partners 2022

"Justin has a first-class mind. His knowledge of children law is second to none. His advice is authoritative. His advocacy is delivered with gravity."

Legal 500 2022

"Justin is a pleasure to work with. He is calm, patient and pays the utmost attention to detail. His work is meticulous in terms of depth and details. He is tenacious in his approach to representing clients; Justin has a fantastic way of making you feel at ease throughout the whole court experience. The advice and guidance he gave on the course of our case was explained in a way we could understand"

Legal 500 2021

"A well-respected advocate who handles the full range of children law. He represents children, parents and local authorities in care proceedings, deprivation of liberty and interim care order applications. He is well acquainted with cases of an international scope. Instructions featuring divided medical opinion also feature in his caseload". "He's thorough, very smart and tenacious. He identifies what needs to be done and does it well." "His work is very detailed and carefully prepared." "He's incredibly knowledgeable, almost like a walking Children's Act, and able to explain things clearly"

Chambers & Partners 2021

"Academically, he's excellent, and immediately up to date with the latest case law." "He is very thorough, intelligent, astute and calm and reassuring to the client"

Chambers & Partners 2020

"Extremely bright with an analytical mind and an eye for detail"

Legal 500 2020

"He is astute to the legal issues and his advocacy is excellent." "Bright and intelligent. He prepares well and is very personable. He is really good with clients."

Chambers & Partners 2019

"Highly recommended for children law cases with international elements"

Legal 500 2019

"A very measured and bright advocate." "He is an absolute master in preparation and he is very reliable"

Chambers & Partners 2018

"Specialises in children law"

Legal 500 2017

"A respected advocate who handles the full range of children law, and has particular specialisms in adoption, surrogacy, forced marriage and international relocation. Also handles cases concerning vulnerable adults and other Court of Protection matters. He has a good brain and is very good on complex technical issues. Great in court, really excellent"

Chambers UK 2017

"He is incredibly thorough and always well prepared – a very effective advocate"

Legal 500 2016

"you get the full package with him"

Chambers & Partners 2016

"His attention to detail is second to none"

Legal 500 2015

"Focuses his practice on children law, although he is also highly respected for his handling of Court of Protection matters involving vulnerable adults. He has succeeded in establishing himself as a proficient child care practitioner and has considerable expertise in cases which feature cross-border aspects. "He is an excellent advocate who gets immediately to the core of an issue"

Chambers & Partners 2015

"Handles a number of significant and sensitive cases, including allegations of sexual abuse, the protection of vulnerable adults, and contested adoption and care proceedings. He is brilliant for the really complex stuff relating to children law, particularly jurisdictional complexities. He's extremely good on his feet"

Chambers & Partners 2014

Notable Cases

R (Anton) v Secretary Of State For The Home Department ; Re Anton [2004] EWHC 2730/2731 (Admin/Fam) [2005] 2 FLR 818

High Court Queen's Bench Division – Decision of Munby J determining the interrelation of family proceedings with UK immigration controls.

Re S; Newcastle City Council v Z [2005] EWHC 1490 (Fam) [2007] 1 FLR 861

High Court Family Division – whether a religious objection of a birth parent can act as a bar to an application to free her child for adoption.

Re F (Interim Care Order) [2007] EWCA Civ 516 [2007] 2 FLR 891

Court of Appeal (led by Eleanor Hamilton QC) – proportionality of response in public law to the level of risk of harm.

Re C

Proceedings concerning detrimental press coverage that a morbidly obese child was receiving from the world's media, and subsequently care proceedings in respect of his weight and the continuing press intrusion.

Re EB [2008] EWHC 1324 (Fam)

High Court Family Division – acting on behalf of a foreign government seeking the return of a foundling abducted to the UK, and considering the relevance of the country of origin's concept of welfare to English family proceedings.

Re T (A Child) [2008] EWCA Civ 1517

High Court Family Division and Court of Appeal – whether a father should be made aware of the birth of his child born to his wife, the mother seeking adoption.

NCC v Z, Y, X (By her Children’s Guardian) and the Government of the Republic of Kenya [2009] EWHC 498 (Fam) [2009] 2 FLR 696

High Court Family Division – disclosure of public law documents to a foreign entity.

Re J (Children) (Care proceedings: threshold criteria) [2013] UKSC 9

Supreme Court (led by Stephen Cobb QC) – appeal from the Court of Appeal in relation to the interpretation of the threshold criteria provisions in Children Act 1989 section 31.

Re S (A Child) [2014] EWHC 4643 (Fam)

Family Division – wardship proceedings to secure return of a child abducted to a European country in view of the reluctance of the destination country to invoke Hague Convention procedures.

R (C) v Northumberland County Council & The Information Commissioner [2015] EWHC (Admin) 2134

Administrative Court (led by Karen Steyn QC) – resisting judicial review of local authority policy as to retention of child protection records.

Re T (A Child) [2015] EWCA Civ 842

Court of Appeal – successful appeal of findings of sexual abuse based on flawed medical evidence.

Re A, B, C, E & F [2017] EWHC 35 (Fam)

(Led by Nicholas Stonor QC) – decision of the President as to the effect of the residual parental responsibility remaining with natural parents following a Scottish permanence order, where the child is to be adopted in England.

Re F (A Child) (Fact-finding appeal) [2019] EWCA 1244

Representing the child on an appeal of a factual determination involving conflicting medical evidence in relation to causation of injuries.

Re F (Children) (2022)

Representing an adoption agency on application to summarily dismiss an adoption application in spite of conflicting expert evidence.

Re Al-F (Children) (2021)

Wardship proceedings to prevent the forced marriage of a teenage girl in a Middle Eastern country, and to successfully procure her return to the UK and have the marriage annulled.

Re M (A Child) (2023)

Representing a father in the second stage of change of school and child arrangements proceedings following serious adverse findings of fact as to domestic abuse that were not accepted, and in the face of a determined Cafcass recommendation of no direct contact; at the outcome hearing the court restored shared child arrangements in an equal footing between both parents.

Re LM [2023] EWCOP 69

Decision at tier 3 relating to the placement of a vulnerable adult in Scotland, and whether her habitual residence had changed during the course of long-running proceedings in the Court of Protection.