

Fiona Walker

Call 1998

"A powerful advocate"
Legal 500

EXPERTISE

Family

Fiona practises exclusively in the field of family law. Within this area she has developed a high-profile practice specialising in the following:

Public law children

Fiona is instructed by most Local Authorities in the region to act predominantly in the County Court and the High Court. In addition she has a busy practice representing family members and also Children's Guardians. She has a wealth of experience dealing with vulnerable adults, those from ethnic minorities and adolescents who themselves are parents. In this regard Fiona has been involved in a number of cases involving special measures and particular consideration of children giving evidence. Her practice involves cases of serious non-accidental injury, fabricated/induced illness, sexual abuse/rape, forced drug ingestion in children, cases of chronic neglect and child abduction. Fiona has acted for those represented by the Official Solicitor and is developing a practice in the Court of Protection.

Adoption

Fiona receives instructions in respect of all aspects of adoption and particularly those with a foreign element.

Private law

Most of the cases Fiona is instructed to appear in have a complex element to them. She acts for all parties in the County Court and High Court. She has a particular interest in Special Guardianship, Parental Responsibility and Domestic Violence. Fiona is experienced in representing the child as a separate party in the proceedings.

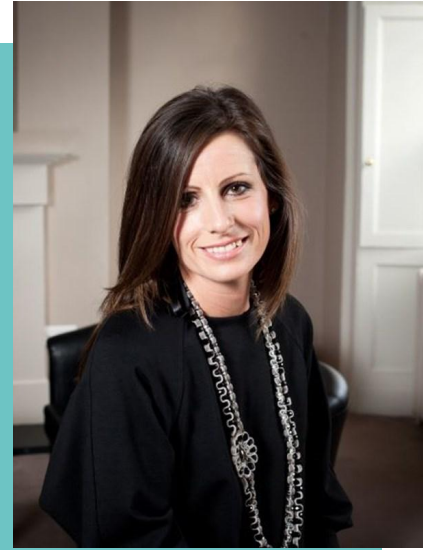
Removal from the Jurisdiction

Fiona is well versed in all cases of this nature having appeared in the County Court, High Court and Court of Appeal in such cases. She has acted for those seeking to remove and also those seeking to resist a removal with equal success.

APPOINTMENTS

Recorder (Family) , Northern Circuit since 2020

MEMBERSHIPS



Expertise

Family - Public Law & Children

Family - Finance & Property

- Family Law Bar Association
- North Eastern Circuit

LECTURES & SEMINARS

Drawing on her experience in both public and private law children cases Fiona has delivered a number of CPD accredited seminars and workshops to solicitors on a large scale and of a smaller nature. Furthermore, she continues to conduct social work training as to conduct of care proceedings and court etiquette.

EDUCATION & AWARDS

- LLB Hatfield College, Durham.
- Winner of Northumbria University Bar Mooting Competition 1998
- Foster Wheeler Bursary 1994 – 1997.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to her heavy court practice Fiona a pupil supervisor. Outside of work she has a busy family life and has a particular interest in musical theatre herself performing as a leading lady at the region's major theatres.

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



Erin May
Family & Court of
Protection Clerk
0191 245 9590



Chris Gibbin
Clerk
01642 247 569



Fiona Bullock
Direct Access Clerk
01642 247 569

What Others Say

66

"A really good advocate. She is very polished and very experienced." "Hard-working, diligent, well respected and a solid barrister." "Fiona is efficient. She presents very well and her written work is excellent"

Family, Chambers & Partners 2024

"Fiona is highly skilled and always well prepared. I would not hesitate to recommend her on a complex case." "Fiona is always incredibly well prepared and is a brilliant advocate"

Family Law, Chambers UK 2023

"She is just brilliant at handling difficult clients and always remains calm and relaxed. Fiona has the ability to explain difficult legal terminology in very easy terms, which is tremendous in cases concerning children with learning disabilities." "She is very able and always well prepared"

Chambers & Partners 2022

"A specialist in family law"

Legal 500 2019

"She is experienced in all aspects of adoption proceedings"

Legal 500 2017

"A powerful advocate"

Legal 500 2016

"Effective, and a joy to watch"

Legal 500 2015

Notable Cases

Care Proceedings

- Representing four children in proceedings, one of which made allegations of sexual abuse perpetrated by the father for over a decade. Fiona was led in respect of consideration of *Re W (Children) (Abuse: Oral Evidence)* [2010] 1 FLR 1485 and whether the child ought to give oral evidence and what special measures could be put in place. The case was complex in that it also involved non-English speaking parties and the cultural implications for the family in light of allegations being made and found.
- Representation of a Local Authority in the High Court in an application for a child who appeared to have been abducted from Portugal and the mother was a minor herself at the time. The case also involved the legality or otherwise of a change of name.
- Representation in the Wardship proceedings in the High Court of a parent accused of abducting a child to the Philippines.
- In an application for a care order in the High Court Fiona was led in relation to allegations against the parent client of serious physical, sexual and forced drug abuse of the children of the family in addition to chronic neglect. Special measures were adopted for a number of witnesses due to risks to their safety.
- Representation of parent who was also a grandparent to the respective children in a 16 day long case focusing on neglect and the what can amount to threshold in respect a failure by a Local Authority to assist a family.
- Representation of a Local Authority when the father of the child posed such a risk to the children there was no way other than adoption that they could be protected whilst he was at large.
- Representation of a Local Authority in respect of a severely ill child in hospital where the mother was found to be inducing the illness.

Adoption

- *Re C (Foreign Adoption: Natural Mother's Consent: Service)* [2006] 1 FLR 318
Representing the child in a High Court case considering the effect of a foreign adoption order, dispensing with the consent of the

natural parent who had previously given consent in Papua New Guinea and who could not now be traced, and the making of an adoption order in favour of a separated couple.

- Representation of a Local Authority in respect of an application by prospective parents seeking to adopt a child from Pakistan.
- Representation of a Local Authority in respect of an adolescent who was a parent and the need for a care order when it was claimed her “family” had an adoption order from the Czech Republic.

Private Law

- A case determining whether a residence order ought to be made to a natural parent or the person who had always brought up the child and whether they are the psychological parent.
- A 10 day case involving a litigant in person and serious allegations of domestic violence and control.
- Representing a parent of a child resisting the child being made aware of the non-resident parent’s religion.
- Change of residence as between parents in an intractably hostile contact dispute.

Parental Responsibility

- Successfully acting for a mother in care proceedings when there was found to be extremely serious domestic violence and sexual abuse such that an application was made to strip the father of his parental responsibility in respect of the child.
- Acting for a mother in private law proceedings successfully resisting an application by the father for parental responsibility on the basis that there was no attachment, motivation was seriously in doubt due to serious and prolonged domestic violence and control which continued after the relationship had ended along with severe sexual abuse to the mother and thus commitment could not be demonstrated by simply applying through the courts.

Removal from the Jurisdiction

- Re B (Children) [2005] EWCA Civ 643
Successfully resisting an appeal in the Court of Appeal in contact and residence proceedings where the mother sought to remove the children to the Netherlands and the father in turn sought to relocate them to Dubai.
- Successfully acting for a parent seeking to remove a child from the jurisdiction to Russia (a non-Hague convention country) in case running in excess of 2 weeks.
- Successfully acting for 2 parents in the High Court seeking to resist the application of the mother to remove the children permanently to the USA. This involved a review of all recent case law on the matter.