



Justine Ramsden

Called: 2010



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Practice Profile

Justine was called to the Bar in July 2010 and accepted tenancy at Harcourt Chambers following the successful completion of her pupillage in 2011.

Before studying law, Justine read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Worcester College, Oxford. She completed her Graduate Diploma in Law with Distinction, and obtained an Outstanding in 2010 in the Bar Vocational Course from the College of Law, London.

As a member of Lincoln's Inn Justine has been awarded the following scholarships: Hardwicke Entrance Scholarship (2008), Sir Thomas More Bursary (2009 BVC Award), Sarah Wadham Bursary (2009 BVC Award), Buchanan Prize (2010 BVC Award) and Wolfson Scholarship (2010 Pupillage Award).

PRACTICE

Justine is a family law specialist. She has represented clients in the High Court, County Court and Family Proceedings Court, and has been led in two public law children cases by John Vater QC involving allegations of the serious injury and death of a child.

Justine treats every client as an individual and ensures each of them feels listened to and understood. She understands that not everyone has attended court before, so takes the time to reassure clients and explain what is going to happen at each stage of the process. Justine is particularly good with clients who are vulnerable and those who may be very anxious or distressed.

Justine is very committed to her work and always prepares her cases thoroughly, leaving no stone unturned. She always makes sure her clients feel she is on their side whilst ensuring they receive honest and realistic advice. Justine really cares about her work and always goes the extra mile for those she represents.

Having represented clients who do not use English as their first language, Justine is experienced at conducting conferences and hearings using a translator.

Justine gives talks on current issues and the practical implications of recent case law.

On 27th November 2018, Justine appeared before the Court of Appeal in the first case to reach the Court of Appeal following the implementation of s51A of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. She undertook the case Pro Bono, representing the interests of the Prospective Adopters and successfully defended the birth parents appeal against the court's refusal to make an order for post-adoption contact.



PUBLIC LAW

In public law proceedings Justine acts for local authorities, guardians, parents, grandparents and interveners. She has much experience in cases of this nature representing clients at contested removal hearings, interim hearings and fully contested final hearings. She has also dealt with special guardianship, adoption and revocation of placement orders. Her cases have covered issues such as capacity, mental illness, domestic violence, suspected physical abuse, drug and alcohol problems, neglect and emotional harm.

Justine appeared on behalf of Coventry City Council in the care proceedings arising out of the systematic torture and murder of Daniel Pelka. She was junior to John Vater QC during the fact finding hearing before going on to represent the local authority alone at the disclosure hearing and final hearing.

She is frequently instructed to represent parents facing the prospect of their children being adopted. Justine fights hard for her clients and works tirelessly to ensure all is done to challenge the local authority in such cases. She has won a number of cases such as these, successfully challenging the assessments and conclusions of parenting assessors, experts, social workers and guardians, and revealing the fatal flaws in the local authority's case on each occasion. As a result, she has a proven record of successfully persuading the Court to go against the views of the professionals, with the children instead being returned to their parents' care or placed with family members.

Justine has a good grasp of the law and guidance to be followed in cases where one or both parents have learning disabilities. In a recent case she produced detailed submissions highlighting the failures of the professionals to work with a Father in a way that ensured his disabilities were not preventing him from having an equal opportunity to be a parent. This resulted in the parties changing their position and supporting a further period of assessment, which was then endorsed by the Court.

PRIVATE LAW

Justine has a strong private law children practice. She has undertaken work in a wide range of private law matters representing parents and guardians as well as other family members. Justine has experience in private law fact finding hearings including those concerning alleged sexual abuse, domestic violence and parental alienation.

She appreciates the need to consider the wider issues in these cases and ensures clients feel listened to and are afforded sufficient time to share what they believe is important to their case. Justine prioritises client care and understands the importance of forming a strong and positive relationship with her clients so they can feel confident in her abilities and can trust that any advice given is aimed at securing the best outcome possible.

INJUNCTION PROCEEDINGS

Another key part of Justine's practice is representing clients in injunction proceedings under the Family Law Act 1996. She has experience in both ex parte hearings and contested hearings. Justine understands that clients facing an order forcing them out of their home and clients who are driven to apply for such orders out of fear are often very upset and stressed. She provides a listening ear during the turmoil whilst ensuring her clients know their prospects of success and the options available to them.

Justine has successfully obtained an ex parte occupation order for a client, despite the making of such an order without notice being given is rare. In cases such as these where her clients are frightened, she always argues fiercely for her clients, determined to do all she can to ensure their safety.



MEMBERSHIPS

Family Law Bar Association

SIGNIFICANT CASES

Re B (A Child) (Post-Adoption Contact) [2019] EWCA Civ 29

Justine published an article relating to this case here. Similar Lexis articles can be found at www.lexisnexis.com/uk/lexispsl

Led by John Vater QC in the fact finding hearing concerning Daniel Pelka and his siblings which led to the serious case review in 2013. Subsequently, representing the Local Authority alone at the final hearing which included issues in respect of disclosure and reporting restrictions.