



## Frances Harris

Call: 2005

Frances has a mixed family law practice. She is well liked by her clients for her reassuring and empathetic manner. She delivers focused advice: with a keen eye for the practical in addition to the legal. Frances will adeptly negotiate a settlement out of court or fight her client's corner with tenacity in court, as required. She enjoys, and is appreciated for, a collaborative and tactical approach to the shaping of cases.

Her cross examination is impressively effective: meticulously prepared with a keen eye for detail and delivered in a gently persistent and persuasive style that finds favour with Judges and gets results.

## Public Law Children

Frances is regularly instructed on behalf of parents, Local Authorities and Children's Guardians and has also represented the Official Solicitor. She has extensive experience in dealing with the full range of public law cases involving sexual abuse, domestic violence, mental health issues, non-accidental injury, over chastisement, chronic neglect and substance abuse and parents with significant learning disabilities. Frances also frequently undertakes adoption work for Local Authorities.

### Notable Public Law Children cases

- **Reading Borough Council v Mother & Ors [2025] EWFC 57 (B)**  
Care proceedings issued following concerns over mother's mental health, physical harm to children and neglect.
- **OCC v D, E and F (supervision order after non-accidental injuries) [2020] EWFC B64 (09 November 2020)**

#### London

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## Private Law Children

Frances undertakes a full range of private law children proceedings for parents and rule 16.4 Guardians. She is pragmatic and sensitive in her approach yet able to deliver robust advice when required, and always has the needs of the child uppermost in her mind. Where possible she seeks to avoid protracted litigation for her clients but has a wealth of experience in long running and entrenched contact and residence disputes. Frances' tenacity and ongoing encouragement has secured many of her clients orders allowing them to spend time with their children where this did not at first appear a likely outcome. Frances is recognised for her deft cross examination skills repeatedly challenging the opposing parent and Cafcass reports with success.

Frances' practice often involves cases which feature domestic abuse, sexual abuse and intractable contact disputes.

## Family Finance

In financial remedy work Frances has wide ranging experience from those where the assets are modest and the challenge is to re-house both parties to those involving considerable assets. She is often instructed where there are children and financial proceedings in parallel and so is able to offer welcomed continuity to the client and reassurance that she has oversight of the case as a whole.

## Direct Access

Frances is qualified to accept instructions directly from members of the public under the Direct Access Scheme in appropriate circumstances.

## Publications

- *'Helen Little and Frances Harris write for LexisNexis on supporting and questioning neurodivergent parties'* – Blog, May 2025
- *'Reflections on the FJC Guidance on Neurodiversity in the Family Justice System'* – Blog April 2025
- *'Frances Harris celebrates Neurodiversity Week by looking at the importance of using the correct labels'* – Blog March 2024
- *'Think Autism!': the importance and impact of early identification of autistic parents and children within public law children proceedings* – [familylaw.co.uk](http://familylaw.co.uk)

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## Memberships

- FLBA

## Education

- PgCert – Autism (distinction), Sheffield Hallam University in conjunction with the National Autistic Society
- Bar Vocational Course, BPP Law School
- Law Conversion, City University
- Classics, Oxford University

## Blog

[Frances Harris celebrates Neurodiversity Week by looking at the importance of using the correct labels.](#)

## Prizes

- Lord Haldane Scholar – Lincoln's Inn
- Lord Denning Scholar – Lincoln's Inn
- Second in the City Mooting Competition 2004

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