



Justine Ramsden

Call: 2010

Justine joined Harcourt in 2011 following successful completion of pupillage. She is a committed family law specialist, focusing primarily on the law relating to children.

Justine is known for establishing strong and trusting relationships with her solicitors and is tireless in her pursuit of the best outcome for every client she represents. She prepares her cases thoroughly, leaving no stone unturned. She fights her clients' corner robustly, while always ensuring she gives honest and realistic advice.

Her extensive knowledge about child protection procedures and statutory guidance has enabled her to achieve excellent results in several difficult cases where she has dismantled key evidence from professionals to protect her clients' interests.

Applications made under the Family Law Act 1996 are a key part of Justine's practice and she has experience in both *ex parte* and contested hearings. She recognises that these cases are often highly distressing for the clients, whether they are seeking the protection of the court or challenging the allegations made against them.

Justine is skilled at quickly identifying the key issues the court needs to determine so she can advise her clients and help them to identify what evidence is required to strengthen their case.

In cases such as these, where her clients are frightened, Justine argues robustly on their behalf, determined to do all she can to ensure their safety.

Public Law Children

Justine is regularly instructed on behalf of parents, local authorities, children's guardians, interveners and prospective adopters. She appears in cases involving allegations of non-accidental injuries, suspected fabricated or induced illness (FI) mental health conditions, domestic violence, physical abuse, drug and alcohol difficulties, longstanding neglect and _____

London

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emotional harm.

Justine has also acted as junior counsel in a case involving serious injury and death of a child, and in a complex case concerning historic sexual abuse allegations.

She is frequently instructed to represent parents facing the prospect of their children being adopted. She has a proven record of successfully persuading the Court to place children with their parents or family members against the recommendations of professionals and/or the local authority.

Her ability to communicate and build rapport means she is regularly instructed to represent vulnerable clients. Justine has good knowledge of the law and guidance for cases where one or both parents have learning disabilities.

“Justine has a great combination of intellect, attention to detail and persistence, with a practical and focused approach. Her style of working with professionals is extremely collaborative with a thorough and detailed approach. She is also effortlessly able to relate to lay clients and resolve their legal issues effectively and sensitively. Above all, Justine is approachable, responsive and calm under pressure, always an absolute pleasure to work with.”

Solicitor

Notable Public Law Children cases

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

In November 2018, Justine appeared 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.

- **Coventry City Council**

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.

Private Law Children

Justine has a strong private law children practice and has represented parents, children through their rule 16.4 court appointed guardians as well as other family members. She has experience in private law fact-finding hearings, including those concerning alleged sexual abuse, domestic violence and parental alienation.

Justine appreciates the need to consider the wider issues in these cases and the importance of establishing exactly what the client seeks to achieve and understanding the case from their perspective.

“Justine is a very personable, engaging and open individual who put us at ease straight away whilst instilling confidence in us in her ability to represent us very professionally. She demonstrates a genuine personal warmth and interest in her

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clients which is allied with a great degree of steel when negotiating on their behalf. We felt that Justine was personally involved with us, and invested in us, and she was clearly delighted with the smiles on our faces at the result she had achieved for us. We could not recommend her more highly.”

Client

Publications

- [Article](#) for Lexis Nexis on Post-adoption contact under section 51A of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (1 April 2019)

Memberships

- Family Law Bar Association
- Lincoln's Inn

Education

- Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice (Bar) (Outstanding), College of Law, London (2010)
- Graduate Diploma in Law (Distinction), College of Law, London (2009)
- MA in Philosophy, Politics & Economics, Worcester College, University of Oxford (2008)

Prizes

- Buchanan Prize (2010)
- Wolfson Scholarship (2010)
- Sarah Wadham Bursary (2009)
- Sir Thomas More Bursary (2009)
- Hardwicke Entrance Scholarship (2008)

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