



Karl Rowley KC

Call: 1994 / Silk: 2013

Karl is a specialist in the law relating to children. He represents parents, children and local authorities in public law proceedings, having appeared at all levels of court. He is a very experienced appellate lawyer, appearing in the Court of Appeal several times each year.

A full list of his reported cases can be found [here](#).

Public Law Children

- Karl represents local authorities, parents and extended families, and children (whether directly or by their Guardians) in the public law arena. He has appeared at all levels up to and including the Supreme Court and regularly represents parties in the Court of Appeal. He has a particular interest in cases involving complex medical evidence, including NAHI; alleged bone disease; child death; and purported poisonings. His experience covers applications such as for contact by former parents after the death of adopters; those involving foreign adoption; care cases with international elements; inherent jurisdiction cases concerning proposed medical treatment of minors; and applications to restrict publicity. In private law proceedings Karl's practice has included multifaceted residence applications involving sexual abuse or homicide, protracted contact cases, international relocation, and cases concerning children with special needs. His public authority work has seen him advise and represent clients in the care standards tribunal. He was successful in resisting the first ever appeal to be heard in the Upper Tribunal, Administrative Appeals Chamber. He has advised various local authorities in respect of OFSTED assessments and reports. He has been instructed on behalf of nurseries and individual childcare professionals. He has conducted cases for applicants and defendants in judicial review proceedings. His theological background gives him a particular understanding of religious issues as they arise in family proceedings.

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Notable Public Law Children cases

- **F & B (Fact-Finding: Gonorrhoea) [2025] EWCA Civ 340**

Care proceedings. Appeal by local authority against finding the child had contracted gonorrhoea as result of fomite transmission.

- **T (Fresh Evidence on Appeal) [2024] EWCA Civ 1384**

Application by Father for permission to appeal against care and placement orders, on the basis that he has since been given a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder.

- **W & Ors (Implementation of Adoption Plan Pending Appeal) [2024] EWCA Civ 837**

The Court of Appeal has outlined guidance on placement timings, after finding that a local authority's decision to proceed with a farewell visit while a father's application for permission to appeal was pending was "plainly wrong" and "contrary to the children's interests".

- **BR & Ors, Re (Transparency Order: Finding of Fact Hearing) [2023] EWFC 9**

- **Re F and G (Children) (Sexual Abuse Allegations) [2022] EWCA Civ 1002**

Led James Cleary for the lead respondent in the Court of Appeal against findings of fact that the appellant sexually abused a small child. The appeal against the recorder's findings was dismissed whilst the lower court's reasons were delivered with economy, they were sufficient as to substance.

- **Re G (Child Post-Mortem Report: Delays) [2022] EWFC 55**

Judgment by the President of the Family Division to highlight the unsatisfactory delays in the provision of post-mortem reports in suspected child homicide cases, and to describe possible alternative ways for the Family Court to proceed.

- **North Yorkshire CC v C [2021] EWHC 746 (Fam)**

Represented a local authority where two NHS Trusts were refusing to admit a 15-year-old girl who had been twice assessed as urgently requiring admission in a secure mental health unit.

- **Re H-D-H (Children) (Fact-Finding) [2021] EWCA Civ 1192**

Seminal case as to court's approach to the question of whether to hold a fact-finding hearing.

- **Re C (Children) (Revocation of Placement Orders) [2020] EWCA Civ 1598**

Appeared for the children and successfully defended the Judge's decision on appeal.

- **Re A (Children) (Remote Hearing: Care & Placement Orders) [2020] EWCA Civ 583**

Succeeded for appellant father in a case which gave guidance as to the approach of courts hearing cases during the viral pandemic.

- **Re T (Jurisdiction: BIIR: Cyprus) [2020] EWFC 37**

Successfully argued that a person could not retain habitual residence in a country which they had left under a deportation order and to which they could not lawfully return.

- **Re AA (Children) & 25 others [2019] EWFC 64**

Karl led 2 counsel for the lead local authority in the largest public law family case that has been litigated.

- **Re C (A Child) [2019] EWCA Civ 1777**

Appeared for the appellant in the Court of Appeal and was successful in arguing that the first instance decision should be overturned.

- **A Local Authority v (1) A Mother (2) A Father (3) A, B, C, D & E (by their Children's Guardian) [2018] EWHC 1841 (Fam)**

Appeared for father accused of holding radical views; local authority withdrew proceedings part way into hearing.

- **Re M (Children) [2018] EWCA Civ 607**

Appeal in high-profile case representing a mother seeking the admission of fresh evidence not sanctioned by the court.

- **M v (1) St Helens Borough Council (2) F (3) C (A Child) [2018] EWFC 1**

Appeared for the mother in reopened proceedings where an infant had suffered 26 fractures.

- **Re T (A Child: Adoption or Special Guardianship) sub nom T (A Child by his Guardian) v Wirral Borough Council [2017] EWCA Civ 1797**

Represented child in finely-balanced adoption/SGO case where different orders had been made in respect of siblings in the same placement.

- **Re H-C (Finding of Fact: Rehearing) [2016] EWFC 48**

Rehearing of case following Court of Appeal overturning findings against client. Local authority failed to establish case at retrial of smothering and other alleged injury against him.

- **Re Z (A Child: Egyptian fostering & UK adoption) [2016] EWFC 48**

Represented child fostered abroad and brought to UK. Carer applied to adopt here; Egypt sought child's return. Child adopted.

- **Re K (Children) [2016] EWHC 1606 (Fam)**

Representing a mother accused of support for ISIS: local authority withdrew its application for care orders as no evidence of radicalisation of children.

- **Re Y (Children) (No 3) [2016] EWHC 503 (Fam)**

Appeared for a mother accused of attempting to take her children to Syria; President of Family Division did not make the finding sought by the local authority and the applications were dismissed.

- **Re H-C (Children) [2016] EWCA Civ 136**

Acted for the appellants in the Court of Appeal. The Court overturned a finding of fact that a person caused a child's death and went on to give guidance as to the use of a finding of a lie in family cases.

- **Wigan Borough Council v Fisher & Ors (Rev 1) [2015] EWFC 34 (21 April 2015)**

A fact finding hearing in respect of the death of a baby who had been shaken.

Private Law Children

In private law proceedings Karl's practice has included multifaceted residence applications involving sexual abuse or homicide, protracted contact cases, international relocation, and cases concerning children with special needs.

He has been instructed on behalf of nurseries and individual childcare professionals. He has conducted cases for applicants and defendants in judicial review proceedings. His theological background gives him a particular understanding of religious issues as they arise in family proceedings.

Appointments

- Recorder (Crime) (2012)
- Recorder (Civil & Family) (2009)

Memberships

- FLBA
- BAAF

Education

- Inns of Court School of Law
- Diploma in Law, Staffordshire University
- MA in Philosophy & Theology, Oriel College, Oxford

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