



# Mavis Amonoo-Acquah

Call: 2013

Mavis' practice encompasses all areas of Family Law – in particular Private children, International children, Surrogacy/modern families, and Public children. Mavis' practice includes a significant amount of High Court work and she has appeared in the Court of Appeal as a junior to leading Silks.

As an advocate, Mavis is tenacious, persuasive and maintains an authoritative presence in the courtroom. The air of calm Mavis conveys in court, and the rapport she quickly establishes with each client, always helps to put her clients at ease – even during the most emotionally charged cases.

Her meticulous preparation coupled with her robust written and oral advocacy, regularly achieves positive outcomes. With each case, Mavis seeks to provide considered and realistic advice as early as possible within proceedings, to ensure the strongest possible position can be advanced for every client.

Mavis is often invited to present training or attend as a speaker at Surrogacy Law seminars or conferences, thus making her an increasingly recognised practitioner in this area of law. Mavis also regularly gives legal talks on topics within in her other practice areas, and has been commissioned to write case analyses for Lexis PSL on leading judgments.

Prior to her career at the Bar, Mavis assisted with UNICEF and UN-commissioned research projects on International Children Law at the Coram Children's Legal Centre. In addition, her experience as an advocate began with successfully conducting cases as a volunteer advocate with the Free Representation Unit, School Exclusions Project and Philadelphia Employment Advocacy Project.

Mavis is passionate about widening access to the legal profession and is regularly invited to speak in schools and at careers conferences as part of social mobility programmes.

## London

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## Private Law Children

Mavis has considerable experience in Private Law work including applications for Child Arrangement Orders, Prohibited Steps Orders, Special Guardianship Orders and Specific Issue Orders. Her work in this area often involves highly contentious disputes where issues of parental alienation, significant harm and allegations of domestic abuse arise. Mavis has also acted in proceedings dealing with both international and internal relocation.

## International Children Law

Mavis is regularly instructed in international children law proceedings before the Family Division of the High Court. Mavis' wide experience in this area includes Hague and non-Hague abduction proceedings, international relocation, proceedings involving stranded spouses, the recognition and enforcement of orders, wardship and jurisdictional disputes, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

### Notable International Children Law cases

- **R v M & Ors (Hague Convention; Withdrawal of Application and Art. 16 (Parental Responsibility) [2024] EWHC 720 (Fam)**  
Application by step-father for return of children to New Zealand. Leave given to withdraw application.
- **KH v MB [2023] EWHC 3194 (Fam)**  
Child's return ordered under the *parens patriae* jurisdiction.
- **WJV v SR [2021] EWHC 2303 (Fam)**

## Surrogacy & Modern Families

As a Pegasus Scholar, Mavis undertook a period of secondment working for Vorzimer Masserman – a leading Fertility Law Firm in Los Angeles, where she advised the firm's UK clients on issues pertaining to UK Surrogacy Law and obtaining Parental Orders. She thus has a thorough working knowledge of both UK Surrogacy Law and Californian Surrogacy Law.

Mavis has a particular interest in modern family arrangements and Fertility Law. She has experience of cases involving residence disputes arising from informal surrogacy arrangements, applications seeking declarations of parentage following fertility treatment, and obtaining parental orders after both internal and international surrogacy arrangements.

Mavis is able to provide advice to both solicitors and direct access clients at different stages of the surrogacy arrangement

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and court process. Alongside this, Mavis is often invited to present training or attend as a speaker at Surrogacy Law seminars or conferences, thus making her an increasingly recognised practitioner in this area of law.

Mavis has a keen interest in Surrogacy Law reform; she has published two articles on this subject matter, spoken at conferences and co-drafted the Bar Council's response to the Law Commission's 2019 Consultation Paper.

Mavis appeared in the leading case of *Re C*, the first case to consider the implications of s54(6) HFEA 2008.

## Notable Surrogacy & Modern Families cases

- **Re: Z (Surrogacy: Step-parent Adoption) [2024] EWFC 20**

This is a ground-breaking case – the first of its kind in dealing with a contested application for a step-parent adoption order from a non-biological parent to secure legal parentage of a child born after a traditional surrogacy arrangement.

- **C (Surrogacy: Consent) [2023] EWCA Civ 16**

An appeal examining the principle of consent in surrogacy cases.

## Public Law Children

Within care proceedings, Mavis acts for parents, guardians, grandparents and Local Authorities and has particular experience representing vulnerable parties. Within her practice, Mavis has been instructed on a wide spectrum of matters, including cases which involve serious physical harm and NAI, sexual abuse, mental health issues, chronic neglect, applications for leave to oppose adoption orders and jurisdiction disputes.

## Notable Public Law Children cases

- **GK & Anor v EE & Anor [2023] EWCOP 49**

This was a case before MacDonald J, wherein the parents of a non-binary young person who was accommodated by the Local Authority, sought orders under both the Inherent Jurisdiction of the High Court and the Court of Protection.

The orders sought were to prevent the young person from undergoing any gender affirming medical treatment.

The application was opposed by the young person and the Local Authority, and was eventually dismissed by the court.

- **A (Children) (Pool of Perpetrators), Re [2022] EWCA Civ 1348**

The correct approach in uncertain perpetrator cases.

Mavis's analysis of the case can be read [here](#).

- **W, X, Y and Z (children : welfare) [2020] EWFC 29**

## Direct Access

Mavis is qualified to accept instructions directly from members of the public under the Direct Access Scheme, and regularly does so for appropriate cases.

## Appointments

- Inner Temple EDI Committee
- School Governor

## Publications

- Free and unconditional consent to a parental order (Re C (a child) (surrogacy: consent) (2023 – Lexis PSL)
- The correct approach in uncertain perpetrator cases (Re A (children) (pool of perpetrators)) (2022 – Lexis PSL)
- Surrogacy and legal parentage: let intentionality prevail. 2-part series, Jordans Family Law (2019)
- Placement and adoption: if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well, Family Law Week (2015)

## Memberships

- Child Abduction Lawyers Association
- Bar Council Law Reform Committee
- The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple

## Education

- University of Cambridge (Christ's College), M.A. Law
- University of Pennsylvania Law School (USA), Masters in Law (LLM)

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## Prizes

- Highly Commended – Family Law Junior Barrister of the Year – LexisNexis Family Law Awards 2024
- Shortlisted – Family Law Case of the Year: [Z \(Surrogacy: Step-parent Adoption\)](#), [Re \[2024\] EWFC 20](#) – LexisNexis Family Law Awards 2024
- Shortlisted – Family Law Case of the Year: [Re C](#), [Re \(Surrogacy: Consent\) \[2023\] EWCA Civ 16](#) – LexisNexis Family Law Awards 2023
- Pegasus Scholarship, Inner Temple (2018)
- Major Exhibition Award, Inner Temple (2012)
- Michael Hodge Scholarship, Inner Temple (2012)
- Dean’s Scholarship & Potts Scholarship, University of Pennsylvania Law School (2011)

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