



Sara McIlroy

Call: 2008

Sara is known for providing direct, practical, and pragmatic advice to clients and for seeking to enable an early resolution to cases where possible. She is a skilled negotiator with a thorough understanding of the complexities of modern family life. Clients have described Sara as well prepared and as having a much-needed empathy in sensitive cases.

Outside of Chambers work, Sara is studying for a PhD at the University of Exeter where she is examining procedures of justice in private law proceedings for litigants in person. She is also a member of the Women's Aid Board of Trustees. From 2015 – 2018 Sara served as the Parents and Families' Representative on the Family Justice Council.

Private Law Children

Sara is regularly instructed in all types of private law matters and has particular expertise in matters involving issues of domestic abuse, alleged parental alienation and intractable contact disputes. Sara regularly works with international and military families and understands the pressures faced by such families going through the family court. Sara is well regarded by clients for helping with sensitive disputes and works with vulnerable parties.

Notable Private Law Children cases

- **C v B**

Sara acted for the respondent over a number of years in this ongoing intractable contact dispute. This highly sensitive matter included allegations of coercive control and child abuse, as well as issues concerning the mental health of one of the parents.

- **D v S**

Sara acted for the respondent in this long running matter which included applications in respect of a child's _____

London

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schooling and residence. The case started when a child was withheld at the end of a usual contact time and later included issues of abduction and emotional abuse

International Family Law

Sara has experience of dealing with cases with an international dimension where parents are seeking to relocate to another jurisdiction or opposing an application to permanently remove a child from this jurisdiction.

Notable International Family Law cases

- **H v H**

Sara acted for the applicant in an application in the High Court for leave to remove to Kuwait following previous abduction proceedings. This case included allegations one of the parents had been associated with terrorist groups in the Middle East and that the child may have been exposed to extremist ideas after periods abroad.

Family Finance

Sara advises and acts in all areas of matrimonial finance, including cases involving assets held outside of the jurisdiction, business valuations, pension disputes, dissipation of assets and trust assets. Sara is adept at dealing with cases where the finances are genuinely limited or have become so due to the action of another party. Sara has experience in cases involving third party interests and has acted on behalf of interveners

Notable Family Finance cases

- **J v J**

Sara represented the applicant in complex financial remedy proceedings where there are allegations of improper disposal of assets and fraudulent behaviour by the respondent. A complicating feature of this case was the respondent's fluctuating capacity to litigate, which at times has resulted in Court of Protection proceedings.

- **T v A**

Sara acted for the applicant in this application for enforcement and later variation and capitalisation of previous financial award after the respondent had swiftly left the jurisdiction leaving little trace of himself and finances. Sara worked with the client through multiple applications until the respondent was located and the finances secured.

Appointments

- Board of Trustees, Women's Aid
- Parents and Families' Representative on the Family Justice Council (2015-2018)

Memberships

- Family Law Bar Association
- The Denning Society

Education

- Bar Vocational Course, BPP Law School
- Graduate Diploma in Law, BPP Law School
- MA (Hons) Politics, Philosophy & Economics, Oxford University

Prizes

- Lord Denning Scholar, Lincoln's Inn (2007)
- The Many Prize, Oxford University (2003)

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