

1GC | Family Law

Jyoti Wood

Year of Call: 2016



Practice Overview

Jyoti specialises in Family law, Public and Administrative and Human Rights law. Her family practice encompasses all areas of Family law with a particular focus on children and cases involving domestic abuse. Jyoti has appeared at all levels up to the Court of Appeal.

Her practise has included four cases of particular importance: *M v M* [2025], where the High Court allowed an appeal against a Family Court Final Order permitting the relocation of 3 young children: the appeal turned on complex issues relating to parental mental health; *Lill v Secretary of State for Justice* [2024] EWHC 3192, a landmark statutory interpretation case in a 'special court' convened by the Court of Appeal; *GM v GF* [2022] EWFC 84 concerning allegations of sexual abuse of a child by the father and *DPP v Barreto* [2019] EWHC 2044 which prompted legislative change.

In April 2025 Jyoti was shortlisted for 'Junior Pro Bono Barrister of the Year' at the 2025 Pro Bono Bar Awards.

Jyoti received the Bar Council's International Professional and Legal Development grant in 2022 to speak at the International Conference of Family Law held by the ISFL in Tobago, focusing on the intersection between family and immigration law in England and Wales.

Jyoti co-authored a stakeholder report on the UK's human rights compliance for the UN's Universal Periodic Review which has been cited 11 times in the Human Rights Council. Jyoti's portion of the report focussed on the rights of children in the Criminal Justice System.

Children (Private Law)

Jyoti's children law practise includes applications for both internal and external relocation, child arrangements disputes involving allegations of violence, sexual abuse, drug or alcohol misuse, parental alienation, intractable contact disputes and child abduction.

Jyoti has significant experience acting in cases where one or both parties have mental health conditions including where intermediaries have been appointed by the court. Jyoti has exceptional client care skills and particular experience with vulnerable clients.

GF v GM [2022] EWFC 85 involved allegations of sexual abuse of a child by the father and cross-allegations made by the father, supported by the local authority, that the mother had fabricated the allegations and coached the child. In her Judgment the Judge remarked that "Ms Wood did a first-rate job on the mother's behalf at challenging and scrutinising the evidence in her cross-examination and

submissions". No findings were made against Jyoti's client.

MT v ET concerned a vulnerable child with significant developmental and health difficulties. Jyoti was instructed because of her particular expertise in cases concerning serious domestic violence and her trauma-informed approach to clients who are recovering from abuse. After extensive legal argument the court was persuaded to hold a fact-finding hearing, despite this having previously been ruled out. The court allowed a series of incidents spanning eight years amounting to coercive and controlling behaviour to be tested in support of her client's allegations. Jyoti also succeeded in persuading the court to direct expert psychological and psychiatric assessments of the father to inform an assessment of risk. This case was highly unusual involving a child with complex needs, a father with very serious mental health concerns and a mother who had suffered long-standing domestic abuse.

In SKH v VH, Jyoti acted pro bono for a mother who, the court found, had been subject to serious sexual, physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her child's father. Jyoti acted for the mother throughout proceedings, including at a fact-finding hearing where findings of physical, verbal and psychological abuse were made against the Applicant father, as well as findings of rape and sexual assault. At Final hearing an independent social worker was cross-examined and ultimately supported an order for no contact between the father and child, in line with Jyoti's client's position.

In VK v PK which ran from 2022-2025, Jyoti's client overturned findings of fact in relation to coercive and controlling behaviour made by Family Court. This appeal to the High Court necessitated consideration of the ambit of the Family Court's powers to make findings outside the scope of a Scott Schedule taking account of the parties' fair trial rights under Article 6 ECHR. All findings of fact were overturned and the matter remitted to the lower court. At Final hearing, Jyoti's cross-examination of the mother and CAFCASS resulted in the court making the orders sought by her client.

In the 2024-2025 case of CH v SA, all of Jyoti's client's allegations were established including sexual abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour and multiple episodes of physical violence. The case involved the evidence of six witnesses of fact, expert medical evidence, extensive police disclosure and thousands of text messages between the parties.

In the 2024 case of MH v CH, Jyoti acted for the father in highly contentious Children Act proceedings. Despite the children growing up with their parents sharing their care equally, after the parents' separation the mother maintained that the father was not safe to be around the children. There was a gap of nearly a year where the mother did not allow any contact between the father and children at all. Jyoti managed to secure a reinstatement of contact at an early hearing in proceedings while social services prepared reports into the family, despite robust opposition from the mother and social services. In her reports the independent social worker was immensely critical of the father and suggested a reduction in his time with his children. Under cross-examination for several hours by Jyoti at Final hearing the ISW conceded that her reports were deficient, inadequately reasoned and failed to consider several factors germane to the issues before the court. The court declined to follow the ISW's recommendations and found that the concerns raised by Jyoti on the father's behalf were fatal to the ISW's analysis. The court made an order for shared care.

Children (Public Law)

Jyoti accepts instruction in public law matters on behalf of parents, grandparents, local authorities and guardians in cases involving physical or sexual abuse, neglect, fabricated illness and drug misuse.

She also frequently acts on behalf of the police in Family proceedings in the High Court which involve issues of disclosure between Criminal and Family courts, including acting in closed material

proceedings on issues of national security.

Judicial Review & Administrative Law

Jyoti has extensive experience in Public and Administrative cases of significant importance. Jyoti's wide-ranging public law practice has seen her advise and act in applications for Judicial Review, applications for Public Interest Immunity, cases relating to police powers and cases relating to prisoners' rights.

In the 2025 case of *EB v Secretary of State for Justice*, Jyoti, led by Romana Canetti, acted in this factually and legally complicated race discrimination case. The case involved complex public law issues concerning the vicarious liability of prisons in respect of the conduct of their staff and other inmates. Further issues involve the interplay of the Human Rights Act and the Equalities Act, the correct approach to indirect racism and required legal argument on the statute of limitations in race discrimination cases. The case involved thousands of pages of evidence and legal precedent. Romana and Jyoti's client achieved a significant settlement from the Ministry of Justice.

Rex (Lill) v Secretary of State for Justice [2024] EWHC 3192 (Admin) was a landmark case heard by a 'special court' established by the Court of Appeal and the High Court to determine three linked cases to resolve a legally complex issue of statutory construction. Jyoti was instructed as Counsel given her experience in *DPP v Baretto* which also concerned an issue of statutory interpretation and prompted the government to change the law. Mr Lill's case highlighted a conflict in existing case law on the application of s244ZA of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 which the court needed to resolve. Jyoti acted for Mr Lill who brought a claim for Judicial Review against the Secretary of State for Justice. The Crown, the Attorney General and the Ministry of Justice were all represented. Jyoti led submissions for the three linked cases at the hearing before the President of the Kings Bench Division, Mrs Justice Farbey DBE and Mr Justice Swift.

DPP v Barreto [2019] EWHC 2044 – Jyoti represented the Defendant in the High Court against treasury Counsel in a case which defined the law on using a mobile phone while driving and led to changes to the law. She was commended by Lady Justice Thirlwall on her "clear and succinct submissions" in the judgement. The case was widely covered in the national press.

Jyoti has advised and acted in numerous cases for prisoners who have been subject violence or discrimination in prison and has also acted in Judicial Review proceedings relating to the Parole Board's duties to consider the release of prisoners serving Indeterminate Sentences for Public Protection (IPP prisoners).

Jyoti acted as Counsel for the Chief Constable in exceptionally sensitive Public Interest Immunity applications brought on the basis of national security concerns in the Family Division of the High Court. Such matters are legally and factually complex and often involve consideration of the Article 6 Human Rights Act implications on the parties weighed against the public interest concerns of the police.

Jyoti has extensive experience before the First-Tier and Upper Tribunals and the High Court in asylum, deportation and human rights appeals, entry clearance cases and bail applications. Jyoti has experience representing vulnerable clients including victims of torture, victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Jyoti has a particular interest in the rights of children in the Criminal Justice System.

Domestic Abuse & Injunctions

Jyoti has considerable experience acting for both applicants and respondents in injunctive proceedings.

Jyoti regularly deals with multi-day final hearings and has extensive experience dealing with allegations of serious sexual violence between parents, allegations of violence and sexual violence against children, coercive and controlling behaviour and cases involving linked Criminal and Immigration issues.

Jyoti has acted for the Appellant on appeal in a Family Law Act matter where an occupation order made by the Family Court was overturned by the High Court.

Court of Protection

Jyoti has experience of Court of Protection matters involving Health and Welfare with experience handling cases involving the potential deprivation of liberty, administration of medical treatment and the interplay between the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Mental Health Act 2007.

Notable Cases

PP v AB [2025] EWHC 3609 (Fam)

Re A & B (Children) (Private Law Finding of Fact Hearing) [2026] EWFC 100 (B)

Rex (Lill) v Secretary of State for Justice [2024] EWHC 3192 (Admin)

NT v RY [2024] EWFC 213 (B)

GF v GM [2022] EWFC 85

DPP v Barreto [2019] EWHC 2044

What the Directories Say

'Her particular gift is to carry real intellectual authority but to do so lightly and engagingly. She will go to the top of the profession' Leading Junior – Administrative law and human rights, Legal 500, 2026

'Jyoti is an exceptional barrister. Her demeanour is warm and empathetic whilst delivering pragmatic and realistic advice. Her advocacy style is firm, convincing and beautifully delivered. She is not fazed by difficult questions from a judge or challenging cross-examination' Leading Junior – Family: Children and domestic abuse, Legal 500, 2026

Education

BA English Language and Literature, Magdalen College, University of Oxford
GDL City Law School

BPTC, City Law School

Awards

Levitt Scholarship, Lincoln's Inn

Human Rights Lawyers' Association Judicial Review Moot Winner

Lord Denning Scholarship, Lincoln's Inn

Hardwicke Entrance Award, Lincoln's Inn

Bar Counsel International Professional and Legal Development Grant recipient

Pro Bono Junior Barrister of the Year – Shortlisted

Memberships & Associations

Human Rights Lawyers' Association

Family Law Bar Association

Resolution