

# 1GC | Family Law

## Matthew Fletcher

Year of Call: 2003



## Practice Overview

Matt is a children's law specialist and practises in Administrative Law and in the Court of Protection. He has appeared in all levels of court save for the Supreme Court. His practice spans all aspects of private law children's proceedings with a interest in international and immigration issues. His public law practice specialises in the most serious cases often with complex international, jurisdictional or factual issues. He acts for and against local authorities in Administrative Court matters and in the Court of Protection on behalf of the Official Solicitor, family members and for the local authority. He is recommended in Chambers and Partners, is an advocacy trainer for Lincoln's Inn and has written widely on family law matters.

## Children (public law)

Matt's public law practice covers all aspects of care proceedings and adoption. He has acted for local authorities, parents, family members and children's guardians in the complete range of Part IV proceedings. He has appeared in numerous lengthy fact-finding and final hearings lasting many weeks. He has represented in factitious induced illness cases, sexual abuse, inflicted injury, murder of one parent by another, wardship proceedings in public law, abduction during proceedings, gang and honour based violence, complex medical cases and cases involving significant disclosure issues.

He has broad experience of cases involving vulnerable witnesses, acting through the Official Solicitor and the use of Special Advocates.

Matt has enjoyed recent success acting for family members intervening in care proceedings and successfully arguing for children to be placed in their care in the face of local authority and guardian opposition.

## Notable cases include:

*Re R* (Closed Material Procedure: Special Advocates: Funding) [2017] EWHC 1793 (Fam):  
<http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed178807>

*Re K and D* (Wardship Without Notice Return Order) [2017] EWHC 153 Fam  
<http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed176144>

*Local Authority X v HI & Ors* [2016] EWHC 1123  
<http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed160926>

## Children (private law)

Matt frequently acts for parents in section 8 and section 14 Children Act 1989 applications. He has a broad experience in cases of contested jurisdiction, leave to remove, parental alienation and highly conflictual private law disputes. Matt also has experience of international and domestic adoption and High Court declarations.

### Notable cases include:

*Re M (A Child)* 2014 EWCA Civ 1755

## Judicial review & administrative law

Matt had for many years a mixed family and immigration practice but since 2010 has specialised purely in family law. However with this background and experience he is able to advise parents, children and local authorities on their rights and remedies where the Family Court cannot assist.

Advice and representation in this care includes, challenging the local authority as to their failure to provide an autistic child with an appropriate placement, advising and representing on section 20 issues and fostering allowances, challenges to local authority failure to provide travel to school, failure by a local authority to provide appropriate therapeutic input to a family.

### Notable cases include:

*R (C) v Buckinghamshire County Council* [2014] EWHC 4072 (Admin)

*R (on the application of Aruliraivan) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2009] EWHC 30 (Admin)

## International family law

Matt undertook pupillage and the early years of his career with a group of renowned child abduction practitioners. He continues to act for parents involved in Hague Convention and Brussell IIR proceedings representing applicants and defenders in the Family Division. He also acts in international adoption cases and the international movement of children to *inter alia* Italy, Georgia, Alabama, California and Texas (US), Australia, Germany, Columbia, Finland and France.

### Reported cases include:

*Re K and D (Wardship Without Notice Return Order)* [2017] EWHC 153 Fam  
<http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed176144>

## Court of Protection

Matt has been developing his Court of Protection practice and has acted for the OS, Local Authority and family members in challenges to DoLS and welfare cases.

## Domestic violence & injunctions

Matt accepts instructions in relation to all forms of injunctive relief relating to Domestic Violence, Children Law, the Court of Protection and the Administrative Court where it interrelates with Matts core practice.

## Education

LLB (Hons) LSE University of London  
BVC, BPP  
Tancred Studentship, Lincoln's Inn  
Hardwicke Entrance Award, Lincoln's Inn  
Robinson Scholarship, Lincoln's Inn

## Appointments

Lincoln's Inn Advocacy Trainer  
Trustee Childhood First  
Recorder (Family Law), South Eastern Circuit (2019)

## Awards

Nominee Young Barrister of the Year, 2006 Legal Aid Lawyer Awards

## Memberships & Associations

[Family Law Bar Association](#)

[Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn](#)

[Association of Lawyers for Children](#)

[Court of Protection Bar Association](#)

Publications

LexisNexis "*Are Children's Services Departments in Danger of Privatisation*" (31<sup>st</sup> May 2016)

Co-Author BPTC Handbook Chapter on Private Law Proceedings (2015)

LexisNexis "*Accessing the Family Tree: Disclosure of Adoption Records*" (September 2014)

LexisNexis Commentary on Government Proposals to permit children to remain with their foster carers until 21 (November 2013)

Seminars

LexisNexis Multiple Webinars on Family Law Issues

## Training

Regular training to Local Authority and private practice solicitors including the use of assessments, section 20 accommodation and challenges thereto, vulnerable witnesses, complex care proceedings.

## Personal Interests

Rugby and Pub Quiz Fan