



Gemma Chapman

Year of Call: 2002

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Overview

Renowned for her expertise in family law, Gemma is a leading junior barrister highly esteemed for her exceptional advocacy skills and client care. Specialising in Public Law and Private Law children proceedings, she brings a wealth of experience to her cases, particularly in matters involving neglect, sexual and physical abuse, disputed medical evidence, non-accidental injury, factitious illness, addictions, mental health, limited capacity, and suspected murder.

Recommendations

'Gemma is a bold and fearless advocate. She prepares cases thoroughly and is dogged in pursuit of the necessary disclosure. She has a good knowledge of local judges and exercises judgment effectively in her representations to the court.'

Legal 500 2024/Family: Children and Domestic Violence/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

'Gemma is naturally tenacious; she identifies her objective and she pursues this with vigour. Her work ethic, critical analysis and case preparation is second to none. A bright star.'

Legal 500 2023/Child Law (Public and Private)/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

'A strong, well-prepared, methodical advocate who provides frank, firm advice.'

Legal 500 2022/Child Law (Public and Private)/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

'Builds up fantastic rapport with the client and really gains their trust. Ability to cut to the chase and deliver focused and pragmatic advice, without being dismissive of the client's views. Really puts in the time and genuinely seeks to achieve the best outcome for the client and/or any child involved.'

Legal 500 2021/Child Law (Public and Private)/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

'Utterly dedicated to getting the best for her client.'

Legal 500 2020/Family and children law/Leading juniors

'A formidable and tenacious advocate.'

Legal 500 2018/19/Family and children law/Leading juniors

'A robust advocate, who will fight her clients' corner.'

Legal 500 2017/Family and children law/Leading juniors

'She has focus on public children law proceedings.'

Legal 500 2016/Family and children law/Leading juniors

'Her public law children cases often involve issues of neglect, factitious illnesses and non-accidental injuries'

Legal 500 2015/Family and children law/Leading juniors

'Recommended for public law children cases, and experienced in managing volatile parents.'

'a fearless and robust advocate'

Legal 500 2013

'will fight her client's corner'

Legal 500 2012

Expertise

Family

Care and Adoption:

Gemma has a particular focus on cases concerning children. Her recent cases demonstrate her impressive track record, including successfully representing children in a case where there were allegations of multi generational sexual abuse, successfully defending an intervenor against serious allegations made by a young child and successfully representing children in a case of suspected poisoning. Gemma has represented clients in multiple cases involving allegations of Non Accidental Head Injuries, shaken babies and other significant injuries. Gemma's expertise extends to complex cases such as those involving disputed medical evidence and issues of jurisdiction, where she has consistently delivered top-quality representation.

In addition to her courtroom work, Gemma has handled cases involving applications under the Human Rights Act, serious medical cases, including those that determine the turning off a child's life support machine, demonstrating her commitment to protecting the rights of her clients in public law matters.

With her proactive approach and strategic advocacy, Gemma continues to make significant contributions to the field of family law.

Private Law:

Gemma has established a thriving practice in private children law, primarily focusing on disputes concerning child arrangements and related matters. She is widely recognised for her proficiency in relocation cases, both internationally and domestically, as well as in handling challenging disputes characterised by allegations of domestic abuse and alienating behaviours.

Gemma's reputation in navigating complex family dynamics and advocating for the best interests of children is well-deserved. Her adept handling of intractable disputes reflects her commitment to finding constructive resolutions even in the most challenging circumstances. With a keen understanding of the nuances involved in such cases, Gemma consistently provides expert guidance and representation to her clients, ensuring their needs are effectively addressed.

Reported cases:

- A Council v H & Ors [2023] EWFC 47
- Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole Council v M & Ors [2023] EWFC 140 (B) (18 July 2023)
- Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole Council v O and others, [2023] EWFC 117
- Successfully advising and acting for the mother of a severely disabled child with limited life expectancy where the Local Authority sought to remove the child from her care
- Representing a father accused of sexually abusing a child in his care that was not a child of the family
- Three-month Fact Finding Hearing at the High Court. The case was factually complicated in that the eldest child of the family was found dead but the evidence as to the time and manner of her death was largely inconclusive. The Local Authority sought to persuade Hogg LJ that the child had been dead for up to one week and the family had faked resuscitation. There were also issues around sexual abuse of the other children of the family some of whom suffered from severe learning difficulties. The case was challenging from the outset. In the substantive hearing Gemma was led by Stephen Cobb QC, an experience which taught her a great deal and as a result of which she modified and improved her own style of working
- Representing a father in proceedings where a 6 month old baby had all of her fingernails and toenails removed by force over a period of 5 months. Gemma successfully defended her client against the allegations and the children were rehabilitated to his care

- Successfully representing a Mother in care proceedings where applications were made for HRA injunction and Judicial Review of a decision made by the Local Authority and Drugs Services in respect of a residential placement
- Representing a Mother in care proceedings where the Local Authority sought to remove her child under a full care order. Successful applications were made for a HRA injunction to prevent interim removal
- Representing a Father in care proceedings where there were cross allegations of familial sexual abuse and jurisdictional issues
- Representing the children in wardship proceedings where there had been an attempted abduction of one of the children and allegations of sexual abuse.

Articles

3PB's specialist family law barrister Gemma Chapman provides an update on private law.

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