

Charlotte Hadfield

Year of Call: 1999
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Education

Charlotte is passionate about education and enjoys a wide and varied practice covering the full spectrum of education law and related regulatory law. She is regularly instructed on behalf of parents, young people, students, schools, academies, HE providers, local authorities, universities and Early Years and Child Care providers/practitioners.

Her work includes:

- SEND appeals (including National Trial cases)
- Discrimination (including disability discrimination) claims in the FTT and County Court
- Judicial review, including decisions relating to SEN provision under EHC Plans, education otherwise than at school, continuing healthcare assessments, social care assessments, unlawful exclusions
- Governance issues in academies and free schools
- School/parent relationships, including parent bans, internal complaints, protection from harassment
- Admissions (lawfulness of admissions arrangements, compatibility of admissions arrangements with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act)
- Exclusion appeals
- Legal action in respect of Ofsted and CQC reports (schools, care providers)
- Appeals against cancellation of registration by Ofsted (Early Years and Child Care providers)
- Contractual and tortious claims against education providers
- Safeguarding, DBA (formerly CRB) issues
- Internal academic appeals and fitness to practice hearings
- NCTL proceedings (see also Charlotte's Public and Regulatory profile)
- Disputes relating to school

Charlotte regularly provides training on education law to a variety of different audiences, including LEAs, solicitors, university student advisors, lay panel members and parents.

Reported cases

- AY, R (On the Application Of) v Vale of Glamorgan County Borough County [2025] EWCA Civ 671, 2025] WLR(D) 297
- London Borough of Camden v KT [2023] UKUT 225 (AAC), [2023] UKUT 225 (AAC)
- Swalcliffe Park School, R (On the Application Of) v Workingham Borough Council & Anor [2023] EWHC 1451 (Admin)
- BA, R (on the application of) v Nottinghamshire CC [2021] EWHC 1348 (Admin)

- D, R (on the application of) v Hampshire County Council [2020] EWHC 2916 (Admin) ([2020] EWHC 2916 (Admin), [2021] ELR 78
- Nottinghamshire County Council v SF And GD (Rev 1) [2020] EWCA Civ 226 (03 March 2020) (2020) 23 CCL Rep 241, [2020] ELR 361
- DJ, R (on the application of) v Welsh Ministers & Anor [2018] WLR (D) 646
- DS, R (on the application of) v Wolverhampton City Council [2017] EWHC 1660 (Admin), [2017] ACD 99, [2017] ELR 630, [2017] EWHC 1660 (Admin)
- SN v Nottinghamshire County Council [2014] UKUT 002 (AAC)
- Oxfordshire County Council v JL (2010) EWHC 798 (Admin)

Mental Capacity/Court of Protection

Charlotte accepts instructions to appear in the Court of Protection and is well versed in Court of Protection practice and procedure. She is experienced in anticipating and addressing points about capacity that may arise in education, health and care proceedings outside of the Court of Protection, e.g. in relation to young persons in appeals before SENDIST.

Articles

Charlotte Hadfield provides a summary on Government guidance on vulnerable children published today (22 March). Children w/EHCPs will *not* automatically receive a school place - their eligibility will be subject to risk assessment. Required reading for SEND professionals.

View Article

3PB Barristers are proud to announce the launch of the first book on the law on school exclusions since 2002, co-authored by Charlotte Hadfield and Alice de Coverley.

View Article

Recommendations

Charlotte Hadfield is head of the education team and is well-known for her handling of SEN cases. She often acts for her clients in SEND tribunals at the First-tier and Upper levels, and regularly receives instructions for judicial review claims. Her varied client list includes schools and academies, local authorities, parents and children.
Strengths: "Charlotte is a supportive, collaborative and sensible advocate. She is so calm and exactly what clients need."
"Charlotte exudes decorum, is relatable and really knows her stuff."
"Charlotte always knows how best to approach difficult cases, adopting a pragmatic and reasonable approach."

Chambers UK 2025/Education/London Bar

Strengths: *"Charlotte is extremely intelligent and strong at understanding the key issues and drafting on procedural issues."*
"Charlotte understands the requirements of the client and has been successful in strike-out applications."
"There is very little Charlotte doesn't know and can't turn her mind to. She's excellent on details and makes sure that the tribunal can see a case holistically rather than just as a series of individual decisions."
"She is a very calming influence for witnesses, incredibly knowledgeable about the process, the advice is comprehensive and pragmatic, and she always wants the best for clients."

Chambers UK 2024/Education/London Bar

Strengths: *"Charlotte achieves excellent results whilst maintaining a reassuring presence for clients."*
"Charlotte has a remarkable ability to speedily get to the heart of the issue with confidence."
"The support Charlotte provides is invaluable. Her responsiveness in time-pressured situations is vital."

Chambers UK 2023/Education/London Bar

Strengths: *"Always very good, very reliable and really quick to understand the issues." "She is hugely experienced and a safe pair of hands for the most complex SEND appeals."*
Recent work: Acted for the claimant in D v Hampshire County Council, a judicial review of the council's decision not to make alternative provision for D's education after a consultant psychiatrist had signed D off as unfit to attend school due to his anxiety.

Chambers UK 2022/Education/London Bar

Strengths: "*She really fights her client's corner and delivers very comprehensive legal arguments." "She has a very broad knowledge base - there isn't an area of education law that she isn't an expert on.*"

Chambers UK 2021/Education/London Bar

Strengths: "*She's able to grasp a case very quickly and is extremely good in conversation with clients." "She is an exceptional barrister in the area of SEN law. Her expertise means that she is able to secure positive outcomes for young people and their families which change their lives for the better. She is also an excellent advocate.*"
Recent work: Instructed in R (ota DJ and BW) v The Welsh Ministers, Career Wales and Cardiff City Council, an application for a judicial review of the Ministers' refusal to carry out an assessment of DJ's education needs.

Chambers UK 2020/Education/London Bar

'Charlotte is the stand out junior in Education law. She has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the law and is a most persuasive advocate. She is the go to for any matter relating to special educational needs and destined to be a Silk.

Legal 500 2025/Education/Leading Individual/London Bar

Charlotte Hadfield is noted for her expertise acting in claims concerning student and parent matters, including disability discrimination claims and SEND Tribunal appeals.

'Charlotte is extremely knowledgeable, clam under pressure, and a sophisticated advocate. Her expertise in special educational needs matters is unrivalled, and she is greatly respected by peers and the judiciary alike.'

Legal 500 2024/Education/Leading Individual/London Bar

Team head Charlotte Hadfield appeared in a case clarifying the statutory expectation for a local authority regarding an EHCP. In another matter

'Charlotte is extremely bright, and can handle the most complex cases with ease. '

Legal 500 2023/Education/Leading Individual/London Bar

''*Charlotte is approachable and extremely helpful in both a practical and advisory capacity, using her wealth of knowledge and experience to provide thorough and clear advice.*''

Legal 500 2022/Education/Leading Individual/London Bar

`*Her vast knowledge of education law is invaluable. She is excellent in tribunal appeals, thinking quickly on her feet and her advices are really detailed.'*

Legal 500 2021/Education/Leading Individual

'*A go-to barrister in the area of education law.'*

Legal 500 2020/Education/Leading Individual

`*A well respected counsel.'*

Legal 500 2018/19/Education/Leading Individual

`*A diplomatic advocate with great interpersonal skills.*'

Legal 500 2017/Education/Leading Individual

Academic qualifications

- LLB (Hons)
- LLM, London School of Economics

Professional qualifications & appointments

- Accredited Mediation Advocate