

Stephen Wildblood KC

Year of Call: 1980
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Overview

Stephen Wildblood KC was called to the Bar at the age of 21, having graduated in law from Sheffield University. He practised as a specialist family barrister for 27 years with a well-established family team in Bristol, as both junior and then, from 1999, in silk.

Stephen began sitting as a part-time judge at the age of 37 and was then appointed as a Deputy High Court Judge in 2004. In 2007 he took a full-time appointment to the Circuit bench. From 2013, he sat as a Circuit Judge in Devon and Cornwall, hearing family, civil and criminal cases.

In 2013 Stephen was appointed as the Designated Family Judge for Bristol and the surrounding counties; in that role, he heard all types of family cases, in particular those concerning Financial Remedies, ToLATA, Private Law Children and Public Law Care. He also supported and pioneered many initiatives to help litigants in person.

Through his associate membership of chambers, Stephen will be acting as a Private FDR Judge, an early neutral evaluator. He is a qualified children law and financial remedies arbitrator with the Institute of Family Law Arbitrators (IFLA). Stephen is a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb) and welcomes instructions to act as the arbitrator or to represent clients at arbitrations. He is also keen to support chambers in offering training, conferences and other events.

He is now working with the highly respected consultant clinical psychologist, Dr Freda Gardner, offering non court-based assistance to families who might otherwise find themselves involved in Family Court proceedings. He firmly believes that all types of family litigation should be a last resort and that people, and organisations such as local authorities, should be assisted to find solutions through alternative means such as mediation and, if mediation does not resolve matters, arbitration. Their work will support families, local authorities and other services, at the earliest possible stage, to create a structured agreement on how the family will move forward, without the need for disruptive and sometimes elongated Court proceedings.

Stephen wrote his first legal textbook at the age of 34, and since then has contributed to over 20 legal textbooks on Family Law, from Care and Children to Co-habitation and ToLATA. He was a Family Course Tutor at the Judicial College from 2010 to 2018, and remains a Faculty Tutor at the Judicial College, where he has taught since 2019. In November 2022 he was awarded an Honorary doctorate in Law by UWE.

He is frequently requested to talk and lecture around the UK, has been instrumental in organising thought provoking debates and conferences on family law issues, and has written plays and novels, highlighting the wider social circumstances of people who find themselves involved in family law litigation.

ADR/NCDR

Through his associate membership of chambers, Stephen acts as a Private FDR Judge, an early neutral evaluator and as an Arbitrator to hear both Financial Remedies and Children matters.

He works with the highly respected consultant clinical psychologist, Dr Freda Gardner, offering non court-based assistance to families who might otherwise find themselves involved in Family Court proceedings. He firmly believes that all types of family litigation should be a last resort and that people, and organisations such as local authorities, should be assisted to find solutions through alternative means such as mediation and, if mediation does not resolve matters, arbitration. Their work supports families, local authorities and other services, at the earliest possible stage, to create a structured agreement on how the family will move forward, without the need for disruptive and sometimes elongated Court proceedings.

Academic qualifications

- LLB Hons, Sheffield University

Professional qualifications & appointments

- Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws, UWE

Professional bodies

- Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb)
- Institute of Family Law Arbitrators (IFLA)
- Family Bar Association
- Honourable Society of Inner Temple