Esther Lieu



Year of Call: 2011
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Finance

Esther has a busy practice in financial remedies (from pre-nuptial and separation agreements through to contested final hearings, appeals and enforcement), including applications brought under ToLATA and Schedule 1. She is a forceful negotiator at an FDR and balances the costs of further of litigation against the overarching aim of achieving the best outcome for her client. In particular she has experience of the following:

- Applications brought under ToLATA including equitable accounting claims
- Maintenance applications (brought under MCA 1973, Schedule 1 CA 1989)
- Interveners and third-party interests
- Non-matrimonial property
- Conduct cases
- Variation and enforcement applications
- Applications for financial relief following overseas divorce (MFPA 1984)
- Applications for injunctive relief
- Appeals

Notable cases

H v H (2023 – 2024)

Acted for W in a contested final hearing in which the parties continued to cohabit for 12 years post Decree Absolute. Successfully obtained findings that a Separation Agreement was not binding and three properties in H's sole name were matrimonial property. Costs awarded.

Acted for W in successfully defending an application for permission to appeal: permission refused on all Grounds, costs awarded.

Acted for W in enforcement application, costs awarded.

R-R v M v L (2023)

Acted for Intervenor responding to a s.37 MCA1973 application made by W in FR proceedings in respect of two dispositions of shares made to the Intervenor. Successfully persuaded the W at FDR to withdraw her application and Intervenor was discharged.

F v F (2023)

Acted for W in case where capital was limited (and held 95% in H name) but H income significant but complicated as employed overseas. Despite children being over 18 and no special circumstances arising, settlement agreed whereby W retained FMH for a further 4 years and received 75% NPS upon sale, plus generous child maintenance for 4 years and spousal maintenance for 8 years.

K v W (2022)

Acted for Claimant in TLATA application in respect of the family home: property was held as Tenants in Common without a Declaration of Trust. Successfully settled at FDR on basis that interest held in equal shares (Defendant initially asserted he held 100% of the interest).

C v C (2022)

Acted for H where there was minimal capital but over £1,000,000 in pension provision. Indication at FDR rejected W's contention that she should be compensated for delayed receipt and her claim for maintenance and favourable settlement achieved.

M v M (2019)

Acted for W where charging orders had been made in respect of the family home and properties owned by the parties (under a company structure) in favour of the husband's former employer from whom he had embezzled funds. The wife had sole care of the parties' two children, and the husband had declared himself bankrupt.

B v A (2019)

Represented the father in an application brought under Schedule 1 CA1989 by the mother for child maintenance to extend beyond the child's 18th birthday on account of special circumstances.. Both applications were successfully opposed following detailed analysis of the Child Support Act 1991.

P v P (2017)

Acted for the Russian wife in protracted proceedings which included successfully obtaining permission to apply for financial relief following an overseas divorce in the Royal Courts of Justice, obtaining injunctive relief against the husband's attempt to dissipate assets, countering the husband's father's claim to a third party interest in the property and achieving a very positive outcome at final hearing.

Recommendations

Esther is a calm and composed presence in even the most high-stakes financial proceedings. A real asset on complex financial remedy cases, she consistently delivers high-quality advice.'

The `methodical` Esther Lieu is well-versed in advising on TOLATA applications and Schedule 1 claims, as well as cases involving pre and post-nuptial agreements and overseas assets.
Legal 500 2026/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit
Esther Lieu is ranked in the **Legal 500 2026** for Family: children and domestic abuse in the Western Circuit

'Esther is able to build an excellent report with clients in extremely difficult circumstances, making them feel well-supported throughout the process. She is compassionate and approachable, as well as clear in her advice, and has excellent client care skills.'
Legal 500 2025/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

"None of this would have been possible without your help and support - I am thrilled with the result and will always be incredibly grateful to you."
Client

"Thank you for everything - for all the practical guidance, sound advice and the perfectionism with which you always drafted the pleadings and documents, all of which brought L to this point."
Client

"I have felt very well supported by you throughout your involvement in this case and could not have been more confident in your representation of me in the court room"
Client

"I just wanted to email to pass on my thanks as Esther has been fantastic and greatly helped with settling the financial case for the client as well a previously settling the children act case for another client as well."
Solicitor

"Esther Lieu was outstanding, she was supportive and explained my options very clearly. She was very understanding and knowledgeable."
Client

Academic qualifications

- College of Law, BPTC (Merit) 2012
- Inner Temple Exhibition Scholar 2011
- College of Law, GDL (Commendation) 2011
- University of London, MA - Human Rights (Merit) 2006
- University of Bristol, BSc – Philosophy and Psychology (2:1) 2005

Professional qualifications & appointments

- ICCA/FLBA's Vulnerable Witness Training

Professional bodies

- Family Law Bar Association (Treasurer, Western Circuit)
- Human Rights Lawyers Association
- Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (previously a Trustee)