

Catherine Purdy

Year of Call: 1997
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Overview

Catherine Purdy is a specialist family and personal injury barrister. She undertakes the full range of family law, including public and private law, domestic violence and family finance issues.

As a care and adoption barrister, Catherine has a broad experience of providing advice and representation to clients in a wide range of matters involving disputes about children's living arrangements, contact, relocation (within the jurisdiction and abroad), schooling, change of surname, parental responsibility and other prohibited steps and specific issue orders. She appears in cases involving allegations of domestic violence and other types of abuse, where injunctions or occupation orders are sought.

Catherine also regularly represents clients in care proceedings, accepting instructions to act on behalf of local authorities, parents, and children (including when separately represented), grandparents, prospective special guardians and intervenors. Catherine has considerable experience in representing parties with a broad range of disabilities or other vulnerabilities.

She has a broad experience of providing advice and representation to clients in a wide range of financial remedy cases: matters involving financial disputes between people who are, or have been, married, in a civil partnership, or unmarried parents.

As a personal injury barrister, Catherine has a broad experience of providing advice and representation to clients in a wide range of personal injury cases. She acts for claimants and defendants, appearing in fast and multi-track cases at all stages, from drafting pleadings, early directions and interlocutory applications, through to final hearings, where both liability and quantum may be in issue.

Catherine's clients have included individuals of all ages who have experienced both physical and psychological injuries.

Recommendations

" Your kind and friendly nature, combined with your commitment to upholding the most professional of standards, meant that I trusted you instantly, and knew that I was in good hands, as I learned to rely on your help with the most important thing in my life, my children. I will never be able to adequately express how grateful I am for all you did, but hope you do know that your advice, help, time and care will forever be recognised. Thank you for working so hard and putting in such long hours and thank you for all you have done for me - you ensured my truth was heard and listened to and helped make sure my gorgeous babies came home to me (albeit eventually!)." **Lay client**

Academic qualifications

- BA (Oxon)
- BVC, VC (ICSL)

Professional bodies

- Family Law Bar Association (FLBA)
- Personal Injury Bar Association (PIBA)
- Member of the Western Circuit

Expertise

Family

Catherine Purdy undertakes work in all areas of family law including Children (both Public and Private Law) and Finance.

Public Law Children

Catherine Purdy routinely appears in complex public children matters representing all parties: local authorities, children (both through their Guardian and when separately represented), parents, wider family members, including grandparents, intervenors and prospective special guardians.

Catherine deals with cases at all levels, from EPO and ICO/Case Management, through to IRH, Fact-Findings, Final Hearings and appeals. Previous cases have involved:

- Emergency contested hearing (Emergency Protection Orders and Interim Care Orders)
- s38(6) applications including applications for residential assessment
- s91(14) orders
- Cross-examination of experts
- Applications for care orders
- Applications for discharge of care orders
- Special Guardianship orders
- Placement applications
- Separate fact-finding hearings
- Composite fact-finding and welfare final hearings
- Allegations of significant harm relating to non-accidental injuries; sexual abuse (including rape and incest); domestic abuse; emotional and psychological abuse; poisoning; substance addiction; chronic neglect; and mental health difficulties
- Resolutions and similar assessments and programmes
- Jurisdictional issues, including uncertainties as to a party's immigration status
- Parties (including children) with physical disabilities, conditions and limitations

Catherine has represented clients with disabilities and other vulnerabilities including physical and sensory limitations, learning disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and where English is not their first language. Occasionally, she has been instructed by the Official Solicitor.

Private Law Children, Injunction and Domestic Abuse

Catherine's experience in private law proceedings extends from first (sometimes emergency) first hearings, though to final hearings. She is instructed on behalf of parents, wider family members and children (through their appointed Guardian). Applications and issues which have arisen include

- Applications for child arrangements orders including specific issue order and prohibited steps orders
- Applications for Non-molestation injunctions and orders and Occupation Orders
- Applications between same sex couples
- Fact-finding hearings where there are allegations of domestic abuse (including sexual abuse and coercive and/or controlling behaviour)

- Allegations of drug and/or alcohol misuse
- Concerns about mental health difficulties
- Removal from the jurisdiction
- Relocation within the jurisdiction
- Implacable hostility and parental alienation
- Applications to instruct experts
- Cross-examination of experts
- Cases where s7, or s37 reports are ordered, or where there is other involvement by the local authority
- Questions around the immigration status of a party
- Whether an order under s91(14) of the Children Act 1989 should be made

Notable cases

Fact-finding hearing representing a parent facing allegations of inflicting a fracture to a baby only a few weeks old. Finding that fracture was caused accidentally by a 3rd party.

Fact-finding hearing representing a parent facing allegations of inflicting a fracture to a baby's skull. Client exonerated.

Fact-finding hearing representing a parent facing allegations of inflicting injuries to a small baby, including biting. Included consideration of expert dental expert's report.

3-week fact-finding hearing, led by Claire Wills-Goldingham, KC, representing a parent facing allegations of causing injuries (including vertebral fractures, a subdural haematoma and retinal haemorrhages) in a toddler with OI. Oral evidence from multiple paediatric specialists. No findings of non-accidental injury made.

Welfare hearing to determine living and other arrangements for children born at a time the adults were in a same sex relationship. Included examination of definitions and applicability of the law relating to parental responsibility to a non-biological child and the circumstances of conception.

Representation of a first-time parent historically diagnosed with EUPD but identified, in the course of proceedings, as being neurodivergent (and not suffering with EUPD). Baby returned home to the parent's care.

Finance

Catherine represents clients at all stages of proceedings, from early advice and drafting documents prior to issuing proceedings, to early hearings, directions, FDR, final hearings and appeals. She has undertaken arbitration work and advised on tactics and settlements during ongoing cases.

Catherine represents clients in cases where there are disputes about property, continuing maintenance or other financial provision, such as applications for payments of school fees, or for a variation of previous orders. She also acts in cases brought under the Trust of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996 (ToLATA) and under Schedule 1 of the Children Act 1989.

Previous cases have involved:

- issues/allegations of money having been provided by wider family members
- property and assets in other jurisdictions
- addiction/gambling
- concealment of funds
- dishonesty of various types

- inheritance (actual or prospective)
- division of pensions
- parties with particular vulnerabilities
- provision for children with particular needs

Personal Injury

Catherine Purdy has represented clients at all stages of proceedings, from early advice and drafting documents prior to issuing proceedings, to early hearings, interim applications, CCMC hearings and trials. She has drafted questions to experts and provided advice, including on tactics, offers and settlements, during ongoing cases.

Catherine represents clients of all ages in claims brought in the context of Employers' Liability (health and safety), Occupiers' Liability and Landlord and Tenant Act liability, road traffic accidents and Highways Act cases. She has experience of ENE and other negotiated settlements away from the courtroom.

Previous cases have involved:

- all types of injuries, including amputations, complex pain and psychiatric/psychological injuries
- multiple experts
- specialist equipment and other occupational therapy needs
- loss of earnings and pension claims
- accommodation claims
- liability only trials
- quantum only assessments
- covert surveillance
- allegations of fundamental dishonesty

Notable cases

Represented the Claimant in a claim brought against a hotel for injuries sustained when a sash window fell, crushing the Claimant's finger. Liability was disputed until shortly before trial. Settlement achieved by negotiation at £75,000.

Represented the Claimant in a claim arising against a Highway Authority for injuries sustained when a cyclist fell after encountering a pot hole. The Claimant suffered a significant knee injury and exacerbations and complications to pre-existing ME/CFS. Total damages of nearly £650,000 negotiated by way of settlement.

Represented the Claimant in a claim arising from an injury at work in which the elderly claimant sustained multiple injuries, including the loss of a leg. Settlement achieved by negotiation at £1million

Represented the Claimant in a claim arising from an injury at work in which the claimant sustained multiple injuries (including internal injuries) having been crushed by a heavy vehicle. Settlement achieved by negotiation at £1.3m

Represented the Defendant in a claim in excess of £1million. Included questions to, and cross-examination of expert witnesses. At trial, the Claimant was award approximately £7,000: less than the Defendant's Part 36 Offer.

Represented the Defendant in a claim brought under the Landlord and Tenant Act for injuries sustained when a sliding door injured the tenant. Liability was disputed. After a 3-day trial, the Defendant was found to be not liable for the Claimant's injuries.

Represented the Defendant in a claim brought alleging injuries arising from 'hot tub lung'. Liability was disputed. The

Claimant discontinued the claim the week before the 3-day trial was due to begin.

Articles

Catherine Purdy reviews remote hearings.

View Article