



# Alice de Coverley

**Year of Call:** 2014

**Email Address:** [alice.decoverley@3pb.co.uk](mailto:alice.decoverley@3pb.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 7583 8055

## Commercial

Alice acts in a wide range of contractual matters. She has particular experience and interest in contractual matters arising in the education and social care sector. In particular, she specialises in breach of contract claims involving independent/private schools, local authorities, and universities. She also acts in claims involving the supply of paid services for disabled people.

She regularly advises education providers, parents, and students on contracts regarding the sale of goods, supply of services, school fees, debt recovery action, enforcement action, agency relationships, misrepresentation, and duress.

She can also advise on the interplay between breach of contract claims and public law matters, such as the relevance of the Equality Act 2010 to independent school disputes. She regularly assists in the drafting of settlement agreements with appropriate confidentiality and indemnity clauses, if so required.

### **Recent examples of cases Alice has been involved in include:**

- Successfully representing parents in claim for breach of contract against their child's independent school
- Successfully obtaining damages for a young person who was mistreated by his independent school and return of school fees for his parents
- Successfully defending universities in applications to strike out claims for disability discrimination and/or breach of contract
- Successfully defending a top university in a £1m breach of contract and negligence claim
- Advising care providers on the recovery of unpaid fees from public authorities.

## Recommendations

A well-regarded junior with expertise covering a wide range of education matters. She is regularly instructed to represent government bodies, schools, universities, families and students, and is experienced in the handling of exclusions and disability discrimination claims.

Strengths: *"Very knowledgeable and passionate. She really helps her clients to understand what the issues are and identifies the legal risks and next steps."* *"She is very approachable, very supportive to parents and very calm and collected in a stressful environment."*

Recent work: Represented Ofsted in several strands of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

**Chambers UK 2021/Education/Up and Coming/London Bar**

*"She is empathetic with clients, strong in her advocacy and formidable in terms of her drafting style."*

*"Very knowledgeable in her field, has excellent communication skills and is an all round great advocate."*

*"Alice is extraordinarily understated and approachable for someone quite so terrifyingly clever. She combines a forensic and encyclopaedic legal mind with a keen eye for strategy and an absolute commitment to her clients, and she has an understated confidence that just allows you to relax. It was clear from the start that we were in Rolls Royce hands - whatever happened, in instructing Alice we'd given our child his absolute best chance. That confidence proved very well placed, as she managed to secure absolutely everything we sought. She achieved a complex EOTAS package for him, which are rarely granted. It's the only area with SEN Tribunals where the parent is unlikely to succeed - yet Alice did, with bells on. She didn't just secure our child a Personal Budget, she achieved a mid 5-figures one, including elements even the SEN Code says should be restricted to exceptional circumstances. We have two disabled children, both of whom are represented by Alice. We wouldn't consider instructing anyone else."*

*"Thank you so much for fighting our corner so hard. [My child] is over the moon. You gave me hope where before I honestly had none."*

*"I spoke with my client last night and wanted to relay to you how pleased she was with yesterday. She could not praise you enough and said that you went above and beyond what she expected."*

*"I thought I would pass on Mr C's comments as to how much he appreciated your time on Friday and he said what a fantastic Barrister that you are. I thought you should know how much he thought of you."*

## Academic qualifications

- City Law School GDL (Commendation)
- City Law School BPTC (Very Competent)
- Durham University BA Hons Theology (2:1)

## Scholarships

- "Just Rights" Human Rights - the Big Voice Mooting Competition Champion, 2013, winning in the final at the Supreme Court
- In 2012 the School Exclusion Project won the Bar Pro Bono Award
- In 2014 the School Exclusion Project was runner up in the Attorney General LawWorks Pro Bono Awards for 'Best Contribution by a Team of Students'.

## Professional qualifications & appointments

- Attorney General's Junior Junior panel
- Editorial Board Member of [Counsel Magazine](#).

## Professional bodies

- Education Law Association (ELAS)
- Personal Injury Bar Association (PIBA)
- [Centre for Women's Justice](#)

## Direct Access

Alice accepts Direct Access instructions for Education Law cases.

Alice is particularly passionate about Education Law. Prior to commencing pupillage, Alice was the Chief Director of The School Exclusion Project for four years. This is an award-winning pro-bono unit dedicated to representing parents of permanently excluded school children.

Alice is instructed to act and advise in relation to a broad range of Education Law matters, including:

- Breach of contract and negligence claims involving education providers
- School Exclusions
- School Admissions
- Appeals to the SEND Tribunal on the content of EHC Plans
- Discrimination (particularly disability discrimination) claims in the FTT and County Court
- Internal academic appeals / Fitness to Practice appeals
- Appeals to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

### **Recent matters which Alice has been involved in include:**

- Advising medical and nursing students in claims under the Equality Act where the University's competency assessment standards conflicted with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- Advising a Higher Education provider on their duties under the Equality Act when a student disclosed a previously unknown disability after examinations had taken place.
- Advising in relation to negligence claims for failure to diagnose learning difficulties.
- Advising in relation to breach of contract claims involving Independent Schools.
- Advising parents of school pupils with disabilities who have been unlawfully permanently excluded.
- Drafting funding applications to the European Human Rights Commission, to support client's cases concerning discrimination in education.
- Drafting submissions to the Health and Conduct Committee/Fitness to Practice Committee.
- Appeals against Termination of Registration.
- Drafting submissions to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Alice has also helped to create a number of [BBC Radio 4](#) programmes about [school exclusions](#).

Whilst Alice was Chief Director of The School Exclusion Project, it featured in the press several times addressing unlawful exclusions – [for instance](#).

She is also a volunteer for the charity Inspiring the Future, which connects young people in state schools and colleges with those from the world of work. She has recently been part of their Inspiring Women campaign, mentoring girls from various schools to raise their aspirations and break down stereotypes.

Alice is happy to provide training in relation to Education Law. Of late she provided training on school admissions appeals to Local Authorities, a talk on disability discrimination to a children's charity and ran a seminar on school exclusions for solicitors. Please get in touch with her clerks should this be something you would wish to organize.