



# Vanessa Meachin QC

**Year of Call:** 1990

**Year of Silk:** 2018

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## Overview

Vanessa Meachin QC is a family law specialist and has developed a practice in which she enjoys the considerable mix of care, adoption, matrimonial finance and private law children act applications. In recent years she has coupled her family law practice with a developing interest in court of protection work. She appears frequently in complex and sensitive cases involving children in private and public law areas in the Family Division and Family Court. She represents parents, children and local authorities.

In Vanessa's financial remedies practice, her cases routinely involve substantial assets, corporate assets and issues relating to land and foreign property. She also deals with cases involving financial provision for the family on death and financial provision for children.

## Recommendations

Prominent family law specialist whose practice spans matrimonial finance, care, adoption and private children work. Her cases often concern serious allegations including non-accidental injuries and fabricated illnesses.

Strengths: "She has great attention to detail, a lovely manner with clients and she's very good on her feet and is very clear, measured and unflappable." "She's very forensic and cool-minded." "She'll ensure that no stone is left unturned while also being the nicest barrister you'll come across."

**Chambers UK 2022**/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Midlands Bar

**Chambers UK 2022**/Family/Children/Midlands Bar

Her cases often concern serious allegations including human trafficking and physical or sexual abuse.

Strengths: "Simply superb. Measured, calm, very personable and responsive. She works with you as a team and is flexible and always on hand to contact for advice." "Vanessa's ability to analyse a case and its central issues is outstanding. She has an excellent rapport with clients."

**Chambers UK 2021**/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Midlands Bar

**Chambers UK 2021**/Family/Children/Midlands Bar

Strengths: "She's a well-prepared and robust advocate, who is very client-friendly and skilled at cross-examination." "She has a great client manner and is a sought-after advocate."

**Chambers UK 2020**/Family/Matrimonial/Midlands Bar

"She is brilliant. She is great with clients and her real skill is that although she has the most complex cases she is able to distil matters down and make it simple for the judge." "She is known for her careful and detailed preparation. A confident and experienced advocate."

**Chambers UK 2019**/Family/Matrimonial/Midlands Bar

Recent cases have concerned serious allegations of physical and sexual abuse, as well as the death of a child.

Strengths: "A well-prepared and robust advocate, who is very client-friendly and skilled at cross-examination. Her star is in the ascendancy." "Equally excellent at matrimonial finance and child care work."

**Chambers UK 2018**/Family/Matrimonial/Midlands Bar

Strengths: "Absolutely excellent, her preparation is second to none and her advocacy is excellent." "Forensic, detailed and good with clients."

**Chambers UK 2017**/Family/Matrimonial/Midlands Bar

'Continually gives a first class service to clients.'

**Chambers UK 2016**/Family/Matrimonial/Midlands Bar

'hailed for her committed and dogged approach and clients are particularly pleased to find a barrister who fights their corner with such vigour. Her practice encompasses care, matrimonial finance and private law children act applications'

**Chambers UK 2013**/Family/Matrimonial/Midlands Bar

'draws praise as an excellent and knowledgeable barrister who is really good with clients and court staff. Her broad experience allows her to undertake work relating to child care and adoption as well as matrimonial finance'

**Chambers UK 2012**/Family/Matrimonial/Midlands Bar

'She specialises in high net worth ancillary relief and has particular experience in cases involving business assets' and 'her knowledge, experience and gravitas puts clients at ease'

**Chambers UK 2011**/Family/Matrimonial/Midlands Bar

'Vanessa is a stellar advocate with an unerring ability to distill the most complex of cases into an easily digested, straightforward, and persuasive narrative.'

**Legal 500 2022**/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading Silks/Midlands Circuit

'Vanessa is a stellar advocate with an unerring ability to distill the most complex of cases into an easily digested, straightforward, and persuasive narrative.'

**Legal 500 2022**/Child Law (public and private)/Leading Silks/Midlands Circuit

'A brilliant advocate whose knowledge and application of the law is first-class.'

**Legal 500 2021**/Child Law (Public and Private)/Leading Silks

**Legal 500 2021**/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading Silks

'An outstanding advocate who provides awe-inspiring written work.'

**Legal 500 2020**/Family and children/Leading Silks

'A stellar advocate.'

**Legal 500 2018/19**/Family and children/Leading Juniors (Vanessa Meachin took silk in 2018)

'An unyielding and concise litigator.'

**Legal 500 2017**/Family and children/Leading Junior

'Her practice spans care, adoption, finance and private law children cases'

**Legal 500 2016**/Family and children/Leading Junior

'The "client-friendly" Vanessa Meachin has an "encyclopaedic knowledge of the law"'

**Legal 500 2013**

'a strong advocate who also has a keen eye for settlement opportunities'

**Legal 500 2012**

'...sensible approach often assists settlement but she is prepared for a contest if necessary'

**Legal 500 2011**

'Vanessa Meachin consistently delivers quality advice and representation in a personable but business-like manner'

**Legal 500 2010**

'A well-prepared and robust advocate, very client friendly and skilled at cross examination', 'she does everything in family law and handles it brilliantly'

**Thomson Reuters Report 2017**

## Academic qualifications

- LLB (Hons)

## Professional qualifications & appointments

- Recorder (2009) - South Eastern Circuit

## Professional bodies

- Association of Lawyers for Children
- Family Law Association
- Legal Committee member of British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering.

# Expertise

## Family

Vanessa was called in 1990. She is a family law specialist and has developed a practice in which she enjoys the considerable mix of care, adoption, family finance and private law children act applications. She has appeared in the Court of Appeal at regular intervals in her career. Since 2009 she has been a Recorder on the South Eastern Circuit (Family and Civil). She is a pupil supervisor and regular speaker at seminars. She is a member of ALC, CoramBaaf and FLBA. She is an affiliate member of Resolution. She accepts instructions under direct access.

### Recent cases:

- X County Council -and- BE(1) AD (2) CD (BY HER CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN) (3) [2021] EWFC 112
- Lancashire County Council -v- M (1) F (2) and C (3 By his Children's Guardian) [2020] EWFC 43
- W (A Child) [2019] EWCA Civ 1966
- RE B (A Child) (Post-Adoption Contact) [2019] EWCA Civ 29
- Re M (Children) (Suspected Trafficking - Competent Authority) [2017] EWFC 56
- Re D + Ors (Children) 2017 EWFC B87
- Re C (a child) [2016] EWFC B110
- Re D (Appeal: Procedure: Evidence) [2015] EWCA Civ 409/ [2016] 1 FLR 249
- Re D [2015] All ER (D) 136
- A local Authority V AB and others [2015] All ER (D) 14
- Re K (Wardship: Publicity) [2014] 1 FLR 548
- Re K (Wardship: Publicity) (No 2) [2013] EWHC 3748 (Fam)/[2014] 2 FLR 310
- A Local Authority v X and a Child [2013] EWHC 3274 (Fam)/ [2014] 2 FLR 123
- Re K (A child: Therapy) [2013] All ER (D) 367
- Re W (a child) (removal at birth: contact) [2013] All ER (D) 254
- Birmingham City Council v AG and A [2009] EWHC 3720 (Fam)/[2010] 2 FLR 580
- Re R (Placement order) [2007] EWHC 3031 (Fam) [2008] 1 FLR 1259
- Re B (Appeal: lack of reasons) [2003] EWCA Civ 881/ [2003] 2 FLR 1035
- Re G (Leave to Appeal: Jurisdiction) [1999] 1 FLR 771

## Care and adoption

Vanessa is experienced in complex public law cases under the children and adoption legislation. She has 26 years of experience of appearing for parents, other relatives, local authorities and children. She routinely appears in the High court in relation to cases relating to the death of a child by various mechanisms (including shaking, suffocation, possible consumption of drugs or infection caused by starvation). In other cases, where the child has not died, she has considerable experience of allegations of serious physical abuse (burns, bruising, head injuries, multiple fractures and attempted suffocation) sexual abuse (parent and or sibling), emotional abuse (including allegations of demonic possession), neglect, domestic violence and factitious illness. These cases will routinely involve the cross examination of a number of medical experts from multi disciplines.

She has acted in cases where the welfare of the children has required exploration and assessment of relatives abroad. This has included consideration of jurisdictional issues as between England and Wales and countries such as Iraq, Latvia and Lithuania.

She has acted in such cases involving Human Trafficking and cases involving the use of the Inherent Jurisdiction to enable a child to be securely accommodated in another country.

Her practice has included protective orders for young females encompassing forced marriage, female genital mutilation, declarations that a marriage was unlawful (coercion and rape) and reporting restriction orders.

She has represented parents from differing economic, cultural, social background and ages. Some may have issues such as drug, alcohol dependency, mental health difficulties, language difficulties or a combination of these problems.

## **Finance**

Over the last 28 years Vanessa has accumulated extensive experience in applications arising in financial remedies, Schedule 1 of the Children Act 1989, the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975 and more recently disputes involving civil partners. Her financial remedy work has included applications to set aside consent orders and presenting or opposing appeals. She is required routinely to conduct cases involving parties of medium to high net worth, business accounts, forensic expert reports and pension issues. Some interesting points have included consideration of the implications for a Wife following a foreign divorce, the consequences following a spouse's bankruptcy, an application to enforce maintenance arrears once the Husband's mortgage fraud was identified and the approach to a personal injury award as a resource for the Husband.

Vanessa will often be instructed at an early stage when attempts are being made to resolve the financial aspect of separation, before court proceedings have been issued.

Vanessa has also been instructed to deal with other matters within the parties' dispute including successfully resisting applications to set aside entitlement to decree nisi in two separate cases.

Her clients have been from a wide background including those with physical or mental disability. These have involved instructions being taken from a Deputy acting for the protected party (P) or from the Official Solicitor.

## **Remote FDR Hearing Service**

Vanessa is available for private remote FDR hearings. For more information on private remote FDR hearings please click [here](#).

## **Private law**

Vanessa has wide experience in private law applications, including cases where serious allegations of sexual abuse, physical abuse (against either the partner and or the child) or emotional abuse (against either the partner and or the child) and parental alienation have featured.

These cases have often included other issues such as the local authority becoming involved with the family, consideration of the child or children being separately represented and implacable hostility being shown by one parent to the other post separation. Vanessa has been involved in cases where the court has contemplated and changed the child's living arrangements following a determination that the parent with care has been attempting to alienate the child from the other parent.

Vanessa has also been involved in cases featuring permission for children to travel out of the jurisdiction whether permanently or temporarily. Her cases have involved such varied countries as Kenya, Thailand, Australia and Spain.

## **Articles**

3PB's specialist family law barrister Vanessa Meachin QC reviews the rise of private FDR hearings.

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3PB's specialist family law barrister Vanessa Meachin QC reviews appeals and what to do when it all goes wrong.

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