

Nathalie Bull

Year of Call: 2004

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Family

Nathalie Bull practices exclusively in family law. Before joining 3PB Nathalie was part of another Midlands-based chambers for 12 years and prior to that worked in a national firm of solicitors as an Advocate.

She has a busy practice and is regularly instructed to attend the Family Court and the High Court concerning private children proceedings and matrimonial finance. Nathalie acts for separated couples, parents, grandparents and children.

Regardless of whether the case is child or finance related, Nathalie steers each case in a progressive manner with a view to concluding the proceedings efficiently at the earliest stage. She prides herself on her high record of agreed settlements reached between the parties in her cases.

Private Law Children, Injunction and Domestic Abuse

Nathalie is frequently instructed in cases involving child arrangement orders, parental responsibility, prohibited steps and specific issues, including relocation applications and change of schools. Many of Nathalie's cases involve allegations of domestic abuse, emotional, physical, sexual and financial abuse. She has a particular interest in complex cases of parental alienation and intractable contact disputes where the child may have suffered psychological harm as a result of the high levels of conflict.

Nathalie appears regularly in urgent hearings, FHDRA's, DRA's, review hearings, direction hearings, fact-finding hearings, final hearings, enforcement hearings and appeals. Nathalie has considerable experience of fact-finding hearings, she prepares extensively, utilises a forensic approach and leaves no stone unturned.

Nathalie is instructed by both applicants and respondents in applications for non-molestation injunctions, occupation orders and committal proceedings.

Nathalie is a regular speaker of the 3PB Family Brunch Seminars, having spoken on the following topics: Enforcement of Child Arrangement Orders, Fact-Finding Hearings, Relocation in Children Act Cases, and Arbitration.

An article written by Nathalie entitled 'Relocation – a practical guide for improving prospects of making or defending applications' was published by the Family Law Journal.

Arbitration

As a qualified Arbitrator in the Children Scheme, Nathalie welcomes instructions in all aspects of children related disputes to act as the Arbitrator, or to represent clients at arbitrations.

Each dispute is unique to the facts and background circumstances of each case. The issues may concern relocation, or how

much time the children should live/spend time with each parent, or may involve a specific issue such as which school the children should attend, whether the children's names should be changed, or what the holiday arrangements should be.

For more information on Arbitration at 3PB please [click here](#).

If you would like to discuss arbitration, please contact [Robert Leonard](#) or [Ian Charlton](#) who will be happy to help you with the process.

Both parties will be required to consent to the arbitration by completing the ARB1CS form, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#). The completed form should then be emailed to the Institute of Family Law Arbitrators (IFLA) to the following email address: info@ifla.org.uk

Cases:

L v S: private law (represented the mother). The mother applied for permission to relocate out of the jurisdiction from the Midlands to Scotland. The father opposed the application on the basis that his time with the 7-year-old child would be significantly reduced and the practicalities involved in the lengthy travel would be difficult and costly. The mother's application to relocate was successful. It was in the child's welfare interests to relocate with her primary carer and her half siblings.

P v F: private law (represented the father). The mother made an application for relocation of the children within the UK. At the two-day final hearing the father successfully opposed the mother's application and an order was made that the children must remain at their current educational establishments and the children must continue to live within the locality.

D v D: private law (represented the father). The mother, a practicing GP, alleged the father had sexually abused the child and abused the mother including: rape, physical abuse, emotional abuse, gaslighting and coercive control. The father denied the mother's allegations and he pursued 63 allegations of physical and emotional abuse against mother. A five day fact-finding hearing took place and resulted in all of the father's allegations being found against the mother and none of the mother's allegations being found against the father. The direct contact between the father and child that had been suspended was then resumed. The mother underwent a psychiatric assessment and therapy. Thereafter, the proceedings concluded in 2023 by way of a shared care arrangement.

B v B: private law (represented the father). The mother sits as a judge in family law. The mother alleged the father had injured their two-year old child. The five-day fact-finding hearing concluded that the father had not injured the child. An expert psychological assessment of the family concluded that the mother had negatively influenced the child about the father. An independent social worker was instructed to re-build the relationship between the father and child after 2.5 years of no contact. Direct contact was then ordered to recommence.

Re CD [2021] EWFC 112: care proceedings (represented the father) – Junior counsel led by Queen's Counsel, appearing at the Court of Appeal on an appeal concerning public interest immunity brought by Warwickshire Police. Junior counsel at the fact-finding hearing before a section 9 Judge. The local authority unsuccessfully sought findings that the father had deliberately inflicted three fractures to his 4 month old baby. A number of expert witnesses from different fields of expertise were cross examined. The Court found that the father had unintentionally caused the fractures through his careless handling. The child was returned to the care of her parents. [This is a reported case which is available to view on Bailii.](#)

T v T: private law (represented the father). Following allegations raised by the parties 11-year-old daughter to the school staff and to the police, the Mother alleged that the Father had physically assaulted their daughter. At the fact-finding hearing the Judge concluded that the Father had not harmed his daughter in any way and the court found that the child had actually lied to a number of professionals about the untruthful allegation. Direct contact was ordered to resume forthwith.

E-I v E-I: private law (represented the father). International case with the father residing in Bahrain, the mother and children living in England and the witnesses residing in America. At the fact-finding hearing the mother pursued findings against the father of coercive control and domestic abuse. The Court did not find any of the disputed allegations proven. The mother had stopped all contact between the father and children without any justification.

K v K: private law (represented the mother). The father was a practicing GP. Both parties made a number of allegations

against each other. At the fact finding hearing the Court made findings of domestic abuse and violence perpetrated by the father against the mother in the presence of the child. No findings were made against the mother. The father's contact with the child was to remain supervised pending completion of a Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Programme.

H v S: private law (represented the father). The father had obtained a 'spend time with' CAO in previous proceedings after the mother had made unfounded allegations against the father and his partner. One month after the final hearing, the mother raised further allegations and failed to comply with the CAO. Father issued an enforcement application, a guardian was appointed, the court made cost orders and penal notices. The father ultimately issued a committal application and a 'live with' application. At the final hearing the father was granted a 'live with' order and the court ordered very limited supervised time to be spent with the mother. The father's solicitor described this case as one of the worst types of implacable hostility cases that she had encountered in her career.

H v G: private law (represented the mother). A complex Children Act matter involving a number of issues. One interesting issue concerned the maternal family's Jehovah Witness belief. The father felt the child was being indoctrinated by unhealthy religious views and as a result he sought a PSO to limit the time that the extended maternal family spent with the child on a supervised basis. On behalf of the mother it was argued that such an order would be religiously discriminative. The Court refused to limit the maternal family's time with the child.

K v B: private law, represented the father at a fact finding hearing. The father was accused of 7 allegations, which included rapes, baby shaking, domestic abuse and controlling behaviour. No findings were made against the father.

K v L: parental alienation (represented the father) – the mother refused any form of contact despite a child arrangement order being in place. A Guardian was appointed to consider a change of residence. Enforcement proceedings were brought which the mother failed to engage in. A committal order was made against the mother, suspended on the condition that she engages in the proceedings and with all orders. The mother only then complied with the child arrangement order. A cost order was made against the mother.

S v S: private law (represented the mother) – following her diagnosis of cancer and the breakdown of her marriage, the mother resorted to alcoholism, which led to her children being removed from her care and her contact being limited to supervised. After some time, the mother's physical and mental health improved and she was able to evidence her sustained abstinence from alcohol through alcohol tests and the fitting of a SCRAM bracelet. The case resulted in an agreed order of shared care, in accordance with the wishes of the children and the mother.

H v S, H: private law (represented the paternal grandmother) – the grandmother applied for a child arrangement order in order to spend time with her granddaughter. As a result of suffering from mental health difficulties, the father was unable to spend time with his daughter. The grandmother's application was successful.

P v C: parental alienation (represented the father) – the mother refused any form of contact and alleged serious sexual abuse perpetrated by the father against the toddler. At the fact finding hearing the mother was found to have concocted the allegations in an attempt to cut the father out of the child's life. A Guardian was instructed to consider a change of residence. Contact recommenced, the mother engaged with and complied with the child arrangement order.

C v N: private law (represented the mother). At a fact finding hearing the Court found that the father had deliberately started a fire in his bedroom with the intention of killing himself and his two children. The Court made a 'barring order' under s.91(14) Children Act 1989 to prevent the father from making applications under s.8 of the Children Act 1989 for a term of 7 years, together with a non-molestation injunction for a term of 7 years.

S v S: parental alienation (represented the father) – the mother was incapable of positively promoting contact between the children and their father. A Guardian was instructed and recommended a change of residence. The children were ordered to live with their father.

Finance

Nathalie is frequently instructed in financial remedy proceedings, from interim applications, FDAs and FDRs through to final hearings and appeals.

Many of Nathalie's cases involve complexities such as international property portfolios, multi-million pound assets, non-disclosure of assets, dissipation of assets, the acquisition of pre-marital or post-separation assets, and health complexities impacting on earning capacities.

Nathalie's strong negotiation skills result in the vast majority of her cases settling with Consent Orders, which often results in her lay clients avoiding significant legal costs. When attending final hearings, Nathalie strives to achieve the best possible outcome for her lay clients by utilising a forensic and persuasive approach.

Private Remote FDR Hearings

Nathalie is available for private FDR hearings and Early Neutral Evaluations. For more information on private remote FDR hearings please [click here](#).

Cases:

M v M: finance proceedings (represented the husband). Complex three-day final hearing. The sole asset was the unregistered family home which had been built on land registered in the wife's name. The property was landlocked, with a ransom strip around the property and access to the highway was by way of a revocable licence. The evidence of the SJE property valuer was challenged. The Court found the wife and her family to be dishonest having pressured the husband into selling the previous marital home and applying the net equity into the new build, with the intention of preventing him from benefiting from the new property. The Court ordered the property to be sold in order for a lump sum to be paid to the husband.

E v E: finance proceedings (represented the wife). One day hearing before a High Court Judge to determine complex disputed jurisdiction points of law and fact under Brussels II Regulations 2201/2003. The husband accepted the British divorce petition was lodged eight days before the German divorce petition, but the husband argued that the five-month delay in serving the petition meant the German Court was first seised. The wife successfully argued that the British Court was first seised, the wife had not failed to take the required steps, much of the delay was outside of the wife's control, and the husband had failed to serve a translated petition on the wife in breach of the Regulations. At the final hearing H was ordered to pay W a lump sum of £98,000, together with a pension sharing order in W's favour and W retained her own property. W received 73% of the non-pension assets.

S v C: finance proceedings (represented the husband). Complex case involving allegations of hidden assets, dissipation of assets, stolen gold, transferring sums to relatives to hold, mental ill-health and ringfencing of non-matrimonial inheritance and liquidated business assets. The husband achieved a favourable outcome, retaining 62.71% of the liquid assets.

B v B: finance proceedings (represented the wife). The husband had failed to engage in the financial proceedings and disregarded all court orders. The wife successfully argued that adverse inferences should be drawn against the husband. The wife was awarded 84.31% of the total disclosed assets. A costs order was made against the husband.

I v I: finance proceedings (represented the wife at the final hearing and on appeal). Complex case involving properties abroad, hidden assets, hidden income and non-disclosure, resulted in the commissioning of a private detective's report. The Husband was found to be dishonest and adverse inferences were drawn against him. As a result, the Court ordered the FMH to be transferred to the Wife and ordered the sale of the foreign properties, with the sale proceeds being applied to discharge the FMH mortgage. Any remaining sums from the sale proceeds were to be retained by the Husband. The Husband appealed but the Wife successfully defended the appeal.

A v A: finance proceedings (represented the wife at the final hearing). Complex case due to the Husband living in Germany, the Wife living in the UK and the FMH being in an uninhabitable state, having been 'gutted' by the Husband many years prior to the final hearing. The Wife and children had lived in a small, converted garage annex for years. The FMH had not sold due to its state of disrepair. The Wife achieved a favourable outcome of 90% of the FMH net equity.

H v H: financial proceedings (represented the wife at FDR). The wife was the primary carer of the children of the family. The parties both had good income levels, but they had significant debts of c.£126,000 between them, which the wife argued was due to the husband's frivolous and reckless spending. Settlement was reached at FDR by way of sale of the FMH with 65/35 in the wife's favour, plus a 46% share of the husband's pension.

H v I: financial proceedings (represented the wife at final hearing). A complex case involving properties abroad, hidden assets, hidden income and non-disclosure, resulting in the commissioning of a private detective's report to uncover the truth. The husband was found to be dishonest and adverse inferences were drawn against him. As a result, the Court ordered the FMH to be transferred to the wife and ordered the sale of the foreign properties, with the sale proceeds being applied to discharge the FMH mortgage. Any remaining sums from the sale proceeds were to be retained by the husband.

O v O: financial proceedings (represented the husband) – this complex final hearing involved multiple properties, allegations of fraud, disposal of assets and hidden assets abroad.

R v T: divorce (represented the husband) – the parties had a civil ceremony with the intention of having a religious ceremony two months later. They had planned to consummate their marriage after their religious ceremony. Unfortunately the parties separated before the religious ceremony had taken place. As the marriage had not been consummated the husband applied to annul the marriage under s.12 Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 on the basis of 'wilful refusal'. The factually similar case authority of *A v J (Nullity Proceedings)* [1989] 1 FLR 110 was referenced. The wife consented to the husband's application, however the husband was unable to bring himself to apply for Decree Nisi in order to bring the marriage to an end. The husband applied for the dismissal of his nullity application, the wife opposed this application. The Court allowed the husband's application on the basis that the husband could not be forced to apply for Decree Nisi.

B v B: financial proceedings (represented the wife) – the complexities concerned calculating a teacher's final salary pension, the instruction of a pension actuary was required before settlement could be reached.

D v D: financial proceedings (represented the wife) – short marriage without properties or children, settled at FDA, the arguments concerned the possession of valuable wedding jewellery and other gifted items including a brand new Mercedes.

P v P: financial proceedings (represented the husband) – this case involved successful multiple-site estate agency businesses and a large number of properties within and outside the UK. Settlement was agreed between the husband and wife over the ownership of the properties.

L v L: financial proceedings (represented the husband) – long marriage, settled at FDR, larger lump sum agreed in lieu of a pension share.

S v O: financial proceedings (represented the wife) – concerned multiple investment properties and parcels of land. The complexities included the husband's failure to engage in the proceedings, impending possession proceedings and conduct arguments.

Recommendations

'Nathalie prepares submissions extremely well. Her communication is strong with lay clients and solicitors.'

Legal 500 2024/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading juniors/Midlands Circuit

'Nathalie is well-prepared and takes a forensic approach to cases. She is a very calm advocate and a skilled negotiator.'

Legal 500 2024/Family: Children and Domestic Violence/Leading Juniors/Midlands Circuit

'Nathalie is an extremely competent and highly skilled barrister who represents clients in an excellent way leading clients to feel confident that their matter is being expertly handled. She also balances this with empathy and support for clients that are going through very challenging personal situations.'

Legal 500 2023/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading juniors/Midlands Circuit

'Nathalie is always meticulous in her preparation and presentation of the case with documentation being filed on time, without prompting. She is always available to instruct solicitors to discuss matters arising from the case and to talk through options.'

Legal 500 2023/Child Law (Public and Private)/Leading Juniors/Midlands Circuit

'Nathalie is extremely professional at all times. She is well prepared, highly knowledgeable and presents her well reasoned arguments calmly but firmly. She immediately grasps the issues and presents a case plan that can be followed.'

Legal 500 2022/Child Law (Public and Private)/Leading Juniors/Midlands Circuit

Legal 500 2022/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading juniors/Midlands Circuit

"Nathalie's knowledge, skill and ability in court and during all the supporting negotiations were exemplary and it was a comfort to be in such competent hands."

Lay client

"Thank you so much for everything that you have done for me and my daughter. The future outlook for both of us now feels a world apart from what I thought we were facing two years ago. It has been very reassuring to have you represent me in court throughout this process and I could not have expected a better outcome... thank you."

Lay client

"Thank you again for yesterday. It really was an incredible, life changing, result."

Instructing solicitor

"Nathalie worked wonders yesterday and we achieved a great result!"

Instructing solicitor

"Now that the dust has settled and I have taken stock on what was a difficult and emotional few days, I just wanted to wholeheartedly thank you for your brilliant representation on behalf of myself at the final hearing this week. It's a result that I truly believe benefits the children and I just wanted to say a big thank you to you for achieving it. You are a credit to your profession."

Lay client

"Once again, I would like to thank you for all the hard work you have put in over the course of the case, I will never forget what you have done, and I mean it when I say, I really appreciate it."

Lay client

"Nat's performance was exceptional."

"This is a very tough and complex case; she was forensic and clearly put the work in with regards to understanding my case and executed an excellent strategy. I really feel she got my side across in a very articulate way."

Lay client

"I instructed Nathalie on behalf of the father in a case of implacable hostility by the mother and was one of the worst of this type I had encountered in my career. Immediately, Nathalie grasped the detailed history of the case and the issues involved and set out a comprehensive case strategy. Her manner with the client showed empathy for his predicament, whilst explaining the legalities and gained the confidence and trust of the client. Nathalie changed her personal commitments to ensure she could represent him at all hearings. She successfully fought this difficult matter on behalf of a client that could ill afford the case."

"I feel sure that without Nathalie's expertise, the end result of this case would not have been such a happy one for the father. His words were that he could never thank his legal team enough and that he would be grateful for the rest of his life."

"I would have no hesitation in instructing Nathalie on a case in the future and cannot recommend her highly enough"

Instructing solicitor

Academic qualifications

- (2004) Inner Temple
- LLB (HONS) First Class, UWE (Bristol)
- BVC Very Competent, UWE (Bristol)

Scholarships

- (2003) Awarded a Major Exhibition by the Inner Temple on the basis of academic achievement
- (2003) Awarded the Duke of Edinburgh Entrance Scholarship by the Inner Temple

Professional bodies

- Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb)
- Family Law Bar Association
- West Midlands Family Law Bar Association
- Association of Lawyers for Children
- Mentor for the Association of Women Barristers
- Mentor for Her Bar