

Clarissa Wigoder

'Clarissa is intelligent, personable and persuasive. She provides realistic and pragmatic advice.'

Legal 500, 2025

'Clarissa has an outstanding knowledge of all aspects of children work and has a particular talent for complex cases. She is extremely intelligent, passionate and has the confidence and expertise of a barrister many years her senior.'

Instructing Solicitor, 2022



Experience

Year of Call: 2019

Practice Areas

- Court of Protection - Vulnerable Adult
- International Children Law
- Private Children Law
- Public Children Law

Education

University of Oxford: Experimental Psychology, BA (First Class Honours)

Harvard University: Human Development, Psychology and Child Advocacy, M.Ed

City Law School: Graduate Diploma in Law and Bar Professional Training Course

Profile

Clarissa is a specialist children barrister with a busy practice across public, private and international children law. Clarissa is known for her meticulous preparation, empathetic and pragmatic advice, and confident and clear advocacy.

She is regularly led in high profile cases, as well as appearing in complex matters as sole counsel. Clarissa was shortlisted for "Family Law Young Barrister of the Year" in the 2022 LexisNexis Family Law Awards and is ranked as a Rising Star in the 2025 edition of Legal 500.

In her spare time, Clarissa enjoys reading, live music, and trying out new recipes.

Private Children Law

Clarissa represents parents (and occasionally grandparents) at all stages of private children proceedings including fact finding hearings involving complex allegations, including allegations of serious domestic abuse, substance misuse, and intractable hostility to contact. She has experience across all areas of private children law, including applications for child arrangements orders, domestic and international relocation, prohibited steps orders and other injunctive relief, and disputes as to the medical treatment of children. Clarissa also has experience in cases involving same sex parents, non-traditional family structures, and applications for declarations of parentage, and expertise in the particular issues that arise in these cases.

Clarissa appeared as junior counsel in the seminal case Re H-N And Others (Children) (Domestic Abuse: Finding of Fact Hearings) [2021] EWCA Civ 448 in which the Court of Appeal reviewed the approach of the family court to domestic abuse in private proceedings for the first time in 20 years.

Clarissa is known for her sensitive and pragmatic approach, and ability to cut through highly contentious disputes.

Public Children Law

Clarissa represents local authorities, parents and children at all stages of care proceedings including those involving allegations of domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse, and non-accidental injuries to children. In addition to representing clients at Interim Care Order hearings, Case Management Hearings, Issues Resolution Hearings, fact finding hearings and final hearings (including applications for special guardianship, care and placement orders), Clarissa has experience of applications for deprivation of liberty of a minor and applications to the High Court for passport orders and port alerts under the inherent jurisdiction in cases with an international element.

With her academic background in psychology and neuroscience, she is able to provide a forensic approach to challenging medical issues. She recently appeared as junior counsel for a local authority in a 22-day fact finding hearing involving allegations of non-accidental injury to a child with unusual injuries and a highly complex medical presentation.

Clarissa is regularly led in high profile cases, including cases in which the law has been developed or clarified in relation to:

- The court's approach to a care plan of adoption vs long term fostering for young children: Re D-S (A Child: Adoption or Fostering) [2024] EWCA Civ 948
- Jurisdiction when a child is wrongfully removed during the course of care proceedings: London Borough of Haringey v T (1996 Hague Convention Art 7) [2024] EWFC 151
- Applications to revoke a placement order: Re N (Children: Revocation of Placement Orders) [2023] EWCA Civ 1352

She has assisted in training expert witnesses at the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

International Children Law

Clarissa is building a practice across the spectrum of international children law. She has experience of applications for summary return under the 1980 Hague Convention and under the inherent jurisdiction, and applications by parents for permission to relocate abroad with a child.

Clarissa has been instructed as junior counsel in a range of international cases: she was recently led by Chris Hames KC, defending an application to relocate to Hong Kong; by Jacqueline Renton pursuing an application to relocate to Italy; and by Michael Gratton KC seeking a summary return to the USA under

the 1980 Hague Convention.

Court of Protection

Clarissa has experience of applications to the Court of Protection for deputyship, in disputes as to capacity in relation to both issues of welfare and property and financial affairs and in cases where the Official Solicitor has been instructed to represent a vulnerable party.

Publications/ Training

The Law on interim removal - where are we now? Clarissa Wigoder and Mani Basi, Jan [2022] Fam Law

Businesses on divorce: how does the sharing principle apply? Nicholas Fairbank and Clarissa Wigoder, June [2020] Fam Law

Memberships

The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn

Family Law Bar Association

Women in Family Law

Directories

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Cases

19/09/2024	Court of Appeal in Re D-S (A Child: Adoption or Fostering)	Deirdre Fottrell KC Clarissa Wigoder	[2024] EWCA Civ 948
07/08/2024	Re D-S (A Child: Adoption or Fostering)	Deirdre Fottrell KC Clarissa Wigoder	[2024] EWCA Civ 948
28/06/2024	London Borough of Haringey v T (1996 Hague Convention Art 7)	Henry Setright KC Christopher Hames KC Mark Jarman KC Charlotte Georges Clarissa Wigoder	[2024] EWFC 151
17/11/2023	Re N (Children: Revocation of Placement Orders)	Rex Howling KC Clarissa Wigoder	[2023] EWCA Civ 1352
19/08/2022	Re: X (Children)	Teertha Gupta KC Christopher Hames KC Jacqueline Renton Clarissa Wigoder	[2022] EWCA Civ 1167

30/03/2021	Re H-N and Others (Children) (Domestic Abuse: Finding of fact hearings)	Christopher Hames KC Charlotte Baker Jo Delahunty KC Chris Barnes Charles Hale KC Adele Cameron-Douglas Rebecca Foulkes Miriam Best Teertha Gupta KC Matthew Persson Clarissa Wigoder Mark Jarman KC Michael Gratton KC Barbara Mills KC Joy Brereton KC Emma Spruce	[2021] EWCA Civ 448
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