

Joanne Brown KC

Experience

Year of Call: 1990

Year of Silk: 2024

Practice Areas

- Public Children Law



Education

LLB (Hons)

Profile

Jo works solely in public law appearing in the Family Court, Family Division and Court of Appeal conducting serious public law cases concerning infant fatality, poisoning, factitious and induced illness, non-accidental injury, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Jo represents children, parents (and other family members or intervenors), and local authorities.

Jo's rapid forensic analysis, incisive advocacy, and sensitive but robust witness handling in situations of high conflict is fundamental to her ability to protect and advance her client's interests and ensure the best outcomes in care proceedings. Her recent cases include:

- Led a junior colleague in the High Court against three silks representing an intervenor, pro bono, in care proceedings at a four-week fact-finding hearing where the intervenor faced allegations of poisoning a severely disabled child with salt. The intervenor was entirely exonerated from any harm suffered by the child.
- Represented the mother as junior counsel in an infant fatality in a complex medical case in the High Court where one twin had died and, acting alone in the subsequent hearings relating to the media applications to report the names of the parents and the deceased child in the ongoing murder trial.
- Represented a sixteen year old child who required an interpreter and an intermediary in care proceedings where allegations of sexual abuse had been made against them by their younger sibling. A narrative was agreed without either child having to give evidence and for threshold findings to be made without findings being made against the child.
- Appeared for the child in the Court of Appeal in conjoined appeals relating to s20 accommodation.
- Represented the child in care proceedings with a preliminary argument on jurisdiction, a fact-finding

determination as a discrete issue at the final hearing before the hearing on welfare. Factually complex as the mother had injured the child in a psychotic episode, and there were cross-allegations of domestic abuse and substance misuse. The competing placement options were with the father in England, with paternal family in England, or with the mother and maternal grandparents with permission to permanently remove from the jurisdiction.

- Led a junior barrister against two silks. Acting for infant child who had sustained serious head injuries. Complex medical evidence re child's prematurity.
- Appeared for the child in the Court of Appeal in appeal against findings of fact.
- Represented local authority in care proceedings with a complex background of NAI, domestic and emotional abuse where the mother had prevented contact to father and made false allegations that he had inflicted injury to child. Successfully implemented a case strategy seeking findings of NAI against mother and partner, findings against mother relating to the false allegations and, after assessment, the child was placed with father.
- Represented grandparent against whom allegations of sexual abuse were made in care proceedings. Successfully challenged the investigation identifying multiple breaches of the ABE guidelines and good practice and no findings were made.
- Represented local authority in care proceedings with legal and procedural complexities where the parents were deaf and the children were hearing requiring BSL interpreters and deaf relays.
- Represented mother of infant who had been injured where mother and former partner were in the pool of potential perpetrators. Cross examination of the partner elicited an admission that he had inflicted the injury and child was rehabilitated to mother.
- Led junior colleague representing two younger children against four silks where one child had made allegations of sexual abuse against an older subject child who was separately represented.
- Represented teenage girl who was alleging sexual abuse by three family members - one deceased and two young men. Cultural issues in relation to the family background were relevant to the findings sought and sensitive cross examination was required. Findings were made.
- Representing father accused of sexual abuse and infecting his child with gonorrhoea. Complex medical evidence relating to the incubation and transmission of disease.

Reported cases

Re A (a child) [2011] EWHC 517

Westminster City Council v M, F & H [2017] EWHC 518

Westminster City Council v H [2017] EWHC 1221

Kent County Council v A, M & Ors (Hair strand testing) [2017] EWFC B104

Memberships

FLBA

ALC

Cases

05/01/2023	Re S (A Child) and Re W (A Child) (s 20 Accommodation)	Deirdre Fottrell KC Joanne Brown KC	[2023] EWCA Civ 1
16/12/2022	A, Re (A Child : Findings of Fact) (2022)	Michael Gration KC Joanne Brown KC	[2022] EWCA Civ 1652
20/08/2013	S (A Child) [2013]	Joanne Brown KC	[2013] EWCA Civ 1073
19/01/2012	Re M (A Child) (2012)	Joanne Brown KC	[2012] 2 FLR 121; [2012] Fam Law 511; [2012] EWCA Civ 165
19/01/2012	Re M (A Child) (2012)	Jo Delahunty KC Joanne Brown KC	[2012] EWCA Civ 165: [2012] 2 FLR 121 : [2012] Fam Law 511
10/03/2011	Re A (A Child) [2011]	Joanne Brown KC Rob Littlewood	[2011] EWHC 517 (Fam)
14/10/2005	Re C (Abduction: Residence and Contact)	Joanne Brown KC	[2006] 2 FLR 277
11/04/2005	Re E (Children) (2005)	Joanne Brown KC	[2005] EWCA Civ 690