

## Catherine Le Quesne

Called: 1993



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### Practice Overview

Catherine Le Quesne is a very experienced practitioner specialising in representing parents and Guardians in care proceedings.

Catherine has a friendly and approachable manner and is able to establish a rapport easily with her clients; her patience enables her to work with parents who have vulnerabilities such as cognitive difficulties, mental health or addiction problems.

Catherine enjoys the challenge of listening to her clients and adopting arguments tailored to their individual instructions. Catherine has been involved in cases involving physical, emotional and sexual abuse and non-accidental injury; she is a composed advocate with a succinct and precise use of language.

Catherine also represents parents in private law proceedings and accepts instructions under the direct access scheme.

### Degree/University

B.A. Hons ( University of Manchester)

Diploma in Law, City University

### Memberships

Family Law Bar Association

### Areas of Practice

Domestic Violence

Public Children Law

Private Children Law

Residence and Contact Applications

### Languages

Conversational French

### Outside Interests

Theatre, walking and cookery

## Katherine Gittins

Called: 2014



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## Practice Overview

At over 10 years call, Katherine has built a thriving practice specialising in Children Law and Family Law Act application and has appeared in all levels of court including being led in the Court of Appeal. Having honed her advocacy skills in her early years through a mix of criminal, immigration, housing and family law, Katherine's expertise feeds into her cases which often include issues arising from these other areas of law. Katherine is known for her meticulous preparation, straight-forward approach and attentive client care. She has built a loyal base of Solicitors who appreciate her insight and openness and welcomes new instructions. She has a reputation amongst the Bar and judiciary alike as a diligent and trustworthy advocate with sound judgment. In care proceedings, Katherine is routinely instructed to represent Local Authorities, parents and children through their Children's Guardian. This broad base of work is an asset to Katherine who has detailed understanding of local authority operations and resources, the best way to support parents, and the focus on the best interests for the welfare of the children. This allows Katherine to make strategic and well-thought out submissions to advance her client's case and insulate against opposing arguments.

In particular, Katherine deals with cases involving:

vulnerable parents including parents with cognitive or mental health difficulties parents with addiction issues serious domestic abuse including physical and psychological abuse and controlling and coercive behaviour deprivation of liberty placement outside the jurisdiction designation between local authorities interveners such as grandparents

Katherine is frequently instructed in long running cases and multi-day trials and has extensive experience in cross examining expert witnesses. She is in high demand to be retained on cases given her sensitive approach to cases and her ability to be both empathetic but also pragmatic.

In private law proceedings, Katherine often acts in complex cases involving:

fact-finding hearings in serious domestic abuse cases parental alienation high conflict cases which require a rule 16.4 guardian threats of permanent removal from the jurisdiction

Katherine has a keen interest in cases with an international element and in January 2025, gave a joint seminar to solicitors on internal and international relocation.

In 2020, Katherine was recognised in The Times newspaper as "Lawyer of the Week" following a successful appeal to the High Court in the case of *JH v MF* (2020) EWHC 86 Fam which considered how the court deals with cases with allegations of serious sexual abuse and changed how family judges are trained. The matter remained in the High Court for the re-trial where Katherine secured significant findings of domestic abuse.

Katherine also has a background in International and European human rights law. In 2016 she spent 5 months in the UK division of the European Court of Human Rights as a Study Visitor working on cases linked to mass surveillance (*Big Brother Watch and Others v United Kingdom*) and contributing to comparative law studies.

Recently, from September 2023-August 2024, Katherine took a sabbatical from practice to undertake an Advanced Masters in International and European Human Rights Law at Leiden University, Netherlands, where she achieved a "Cum Laude". Her studies have provided expertise in particular in international children law providing an insight into the United Nations Convention of Rights of the Child and international standards.

Katherine's detailed understanding of international human rights law has given her unique insight to human rights issues which arise from article 6 and 8 in many of her cases. More specifically, she has started to build a practice in cases involving human trafficking and victims of modern slavery in a Children Law context. Katherine has recent experience in making detailed submissions relating to habitual residence and the jurisdiction of the court and looks forward to expanding this practice.

Katherine is a valued member of Chambers. She organises marketing events, helps with mini pupillage and is set to become a pupil supervisor in 2026.

## **Reported Cases**

***Tousi v Gaydukova*** [2024] EWCA Civ 203.

***Tousi & Gaydukova*** [2023] EWHC 404 (Fam)

***JH v MF*** (2020) EWHC 86 Fam

***C v D*** [2020] EWFC 83

## **Articles**

LexisNexis case analysis on *JH v MF* ([Link here](#))

*Financial Remedies Journal* "*Tousi v Gaydukova* -Must Parties to a Void Marriage First Seek a Nullity Order before Obtaining an Order for the Transfer of a Tenancy?" [Click Link](#)

*Family Law Week Judgment Summary* *Tousi v Gaydukova* [2024] EWCA Civ 203 [Click Link](#)

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## **Qualifications**

LLM, Leiden University

LLB Law, Keele University

BPTC, BPP University

## **Scholarships**

Peter Duffy Human Rights Award, Lincoln's Inn

Pupillage Award, Lincoln's Inn

## **Memberships**

Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn

Family Law Bar Association

## **Areas of Practice**

Domestic Violence

Public Children Law

Private Children Law

International Family Law

## **Outside interests**

Outside work, Katherine enjoys salsa dancing, long-distance running and kitesurfing.