



Moira Ashton-Walsh

Year of Call 2000

Moira was called to the Bar in 2000 and has worked within Children Act matters for 16 years. She has developed a reputation for sensitive yet robust representation of clients throughout the spectrum of both Private and Public Law matters.

Practice Areas

Family

Direct Access

Summary

Coming from a psychology background (practicing as an assistant psychologist in Medical and Neuropsychology), Moira is often briefed on behalf of children or parents that are extremely vulnerable, or in cases having detailed expert evidence.

Moira has frequently acted on the instructions of the Official Solicitor and also often on behalf of the child through the Children's Guardian.

She is sought out by professional clients for her deeply considered approach to clients and for the time taken to listen to them and to articulate their concerns acutely in her advocacy and drafting – giving insightful, robust and realistic advice.

Moira is an experienced negotiator and takes a measured and calm approach to disputes between lay parties. Her cross examination is focused and determined. She has appeared in the Court of Appeal and High Court in cases involving non-accidental death of a child and rape of a child. Her cases often present with challenges over alcohol, drug and mental health issues.

Moira practices as a Family barrister and Mediator and is also Direct Access Accredited. She is frequently sought out and trusted in entrenched private law disputes where a fresh and robust approach is required.

Private Law

Contact, residence, finding of fact, same sex relationship, children disputes and cases of suspected parental alienation.

Public Law

Allegations of serious sexual, physical and emotional abuse of children and cases of neglect; cases involving expert psychiatric and medical evidence, representation of extremely vulnerable parents.

Reported Cases

In a very sensitive child abuse case, Ms Ashton-Walsh (acting for the mother) has been successful in securing findings of sexual abuse against the Father amidst a backdrop of serious failings from both the Police and two Local Authorities.

Ms Ashton-Walsh acted for the father in a case with complex family dynamics; one mother suffered serious mental health issues, the other mother was learning disabled and father was a physically disabled Schedule 1 offender. Three years prior to proceedings, the Local Authority had approved paternal family placements of the children, despite one of the approved carers also being a Schedule 1 offender having offended sexually against a child in his own family. The Local Authority case management was heavily criticised, including their failure to undertake a robust risk assessment of the child's previous carers and their failure to even produce a risk assessment of the child's new proposed carers until the final day of evidence.

Additional Information

Outside of the Bar Moira trains and competes her three event horses to International one star level and competed for UK in 2013.

References and Recommendations

“Moira’s energy and commitment to cases is unsurpassed. The energy and enthusiasm which she brings to her cases combined with her technical knowledge provide invaluable representation for our clients. When selecting Barristers, for cases I have no hesitation in promoting Moira to clients.” James Belderbos, Belderbos Solicitors

“Moira is an extremely hard working, knowledgeable and meticulous barrister. She is approachable, sensible and always impeccably prepared, therefore instilling enormous confidence in her clients and instructing solicitors alike. Moira is also a forceful, persuasive and utterly fearless advocate. She is an asset in any children case and an absolute delight to instruct.” Lisa-Marie Leanders, Nelsons Law

clear | compelling | approachable



Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2022 – Family: Children Ranked Band 3

An expert in Private law Children Act cases. She regularly acts in cases involving challenging issues such as alienation and relocation, and in complex and long-running contact matters.

“The amount of work she puts in and the confidence she inspires in the clients are very good. She holds her own against counsel from London.”

“She has a no-nonsense approach to achieving the best for her lay client in a courteous, calm and measured way.”

Legal 500 2022 – Child Law (Public and Private) Ranked: Tier 2

‘She is very thorough and engaging. She is very articulate and a highly persuasive advocate who fights fearlessly for her lay client but is also very skilled at negotiation.’

“Moira Ashton Walsh is my first port of call for any Children Act matter. There is always a sense of relief when Moira becomes part of the team. Moira’s input into the case management is invaluable, her knowledge of the law is outstanding and her presence in court is quite formidable. Throw into that extremely gracious client care skills and you have quite easily the top barrister in the field.” Daniel Williams, Morgan & Co Solicitors