



Louise Sapstead

2004

Practice Areas

Family
Family Finance
Public Access
Alternative Dispute Resolution

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GARDEN
SQUARE

Summary

Louise was called to the bar in 2004 and joined chambers upon successful completion of her pupillage the following year.

Whilst initially practicing in all areas of law, Louise has specialised exclusively in family law since 2009. By having a such diverse practice background, Louise has the unique skill to be able to understand and appreciate how the different areas of law can intersect.

Louise has considerable experience of Public Law and Private Law Children Act proceedings with a particular emphasis on complex finding of fact hearings where she acts on behalf of all parties and regularly cross-examines paediatricians, radiologists, psychiatrists, psychologists and other expert witnesses on many issues.

She acts for local authorities, parents and children and is often sought out to represent the most vulnerable of clients, particularly those with serious issues with regards to capacity. Louise has acted for competent children on a number of occasions and has considerable ability to explain complex issues and explore emotional and distressing matters with young people.

References & Recommendations

Legal 500 2023 – Child Law (Public and Private) Ranked: Tier 3

“Louise is an effective communicator and keeps instructing solicitors and clients updated. She has always accommodated hearings, covering on days off, knowing that continuity of counsel is important and very much appreciated by the client and other advocates in the matter. She always remains calm, which is always much appreciated when dealing with a complex matter.”

Legal 500 2022 – Child Law (Public and Private) Ranked: Tier 3

“Louise is very good with the clients. She is extremely knowledgeable, has a lovely approach and provides clear feedback after hearings in a timely way. She is very accommodating.”

Legal 500 2024

Family: Children & Domestic Violence Ranked: Tier 3

Reported Cases

Re X (Secure Accommodation: Lack of Provision) [2023] EWHC 129

Derbyshire County Council v AA & Ors [2022] EWHC 3404

XX, YY and Child H (Rev1) [2022] EWFC 10

Re H and Others (Children) (Fact Finding: Rib Fractures)

Louise led Samuel Coe in a complex six week Fact Finding before Mr Justice Poole representing a competent child.





Professional Experience

CARE:

Louise prides herself on representing all sides in this often contentious and emotional area of family law. This allows her to understand the motivations, strategies and priorities of the 'other side'. She has consequently represented Local Authorities with the same vigour as parents, grandparents, children via their CAFCASS Guardians, intervenors and teenagers.

She has dealt with all levels of hearing and Court. Fact finding hearings have considered serious injuries to children and babies, sexual abuse, significant physical and emotional injury. A more recent case involved the battle raged between two sides of a family following the murder of a parent.

The use of interpreters and intermediaries is increasingly common and Louise is very experienced with tailoring her explanations to the particular needs of a client.

PRIVATE LAW:

This area of law provides a particular kind of challenge to all parties involved. Louise has considerable experience in acting for parents, children and other family members. Increasingly at least one party is representing themselves and Louise believes that dealing with such litigants with respectful but firm challenge is often a successful approach.

As with care proceedings, Louise has acted in a variety of Fact Finding hearings. She was also instructed in a complex High Court case with PII issues warranting an open and closed procedure.

FAMILY FINANCE:

Louise enjoys the different demands required in this area of law.

She has dealt with weighty cases and those involving significant financial conduct and fraud. She is sensitive to the significant emotional issues involved in these types of cases, particularly difficult when the Court pays little heed, as well as the often more challenging cases where assets cannot meet needs.

In addition to acting as an advocate within court proceedings, Louise is also available for instruction for out of court processes such as Private FDRs and Early Neutral Evaluations.