

Victoria Clifford

Family



Year of Call: 2002

Email Clerks: family@no5.com

Public law children:

Victoria is instructed by local authorities, parents, relatives, guardians and children, at all stages of proceedings. She regularly appears on cases before judges of the High Court.

She conducts fact-finding hearings with complex issues including allegations of causing a child's death, inflicted injuries such as brain injury and multiple fractures, starvation, suffocation, child trafficking, child sexual exploitation, factitious or fabricated illness, domestic abuse, emotional harm and chronic neglect. She has a wealth of experience in cross-examining medical experts and other professionals.

Victoria has extensive experience of cases with allegations of sexual abuse, including inter-familial abuse. She has represented child victims and child perpetrators and children that have given evidence in proceedings. She is adept at conducting Re W and ground rules hearings and the special considerations that relate to children giving evidence.

Victoria is used to dealing with cases where there are concurrent criminal proceedings and issues of disclosure and PII.

She has represented teenage and vulnerable parents who have physical and/or learning disabilities. In representing a child without capacity she addressed issues of deprivation of liberty for that child.

Victoria has successfully completed the FLBA Advocacy and the Vulnerable training.

Victoria is skilled in making legal arguments on designated local authority and dealing with applications to revoke care and placement orders and those under s.38(6) and s.34 of the Children Act 1989.

Of note, following a trial she succeeded in demonstrating that her client had caused the child's injuries accidentally leading to the care proceedings being dismissed by the Court - something quite uncommon. Also significant, Victoria represented a client who, following adverse findings being made at a finding of fact hearing, admitted shaking her baby causing extensive brain damage and went on to secure the rehabilitation of the children back to her care.

Private law children:

Victoria has developed a strong reputation in dealing with private law disputes, from advice before proceedings to enforcement of court orders.

She conducts complex multi-day fact-finding hearings involving allegations of domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse (including rape and incest), arson, emotional abuse and parental alienation.

Victoria is accomplished in presenting legal arguments on implacable hostility, children giving evidence and where the court is considering a transfer of living arrangements.

She advises and represents parties on specific issue applications relating to medical, religious or educational issues.

Victoria is aware of the special issues raised by complex and long-running private law litigation and is regularly instructed by parents and guardians in cases where the children are joined as a party and there are multiple experts. She has appeared in the Court of Appeal on one such case described by Lady Justice Black as difficult and unusual.

International children:

Victoria has a particular interest in Children Act work with an international element. Victoria's practice includes cases with applications for removal from the jurisdiction, temporary and permanent.

Victoria represents parties in child abduction cases with Hague Convention and Brussels IIR considerations and also cases concerning the recognition and enforcement of foreign orders.

She has succeeded in legal arguments on habitual residence and has attended the High Court to obtain orders under its inherent jurisdiction, sometimes at short notice.

Other:

Victoria prides herself in being approachable to lay and professional clients and opponents. She is known for taking a robust but common sense approach. She prioritises client care and thorough preparation.

Victoria has a passion for all sports. Having hung up her boxing gloves she has returned to play rugby and now captains the 1st XV ladies team at Bournville RFC and coaches the minis and juniors.

Recommendations

"Victoria has attention to detail and is a fierce advocate." "If you need someone on your side Victoria will fight your corner, always, to the end."

Chambers UK 2023

“Victoria is a fearless advocate. She gives sound advice and is without exception always well prepared. She is excellent at cross-examination and intelligently reads the court. She is very well respected by judges and by opposing advocates. She works tirelessly on her cases, always going the extra mile to either negotiate out-of-court concessions or to persuade the court of the sense in her position.”

Legal 500 2023

She is a fearless advocate with a robust approach. She is excellent with clients and solicitors and does not shy away from giving realistic advice.

Legal 500 2022

“She’s very good and very well regarded. She’s good at engaging with the solicitor and the client, and I appreciate the extra work that she puts in.”

Chambers UK 2022

“She is very good with clients, thorough and passionate. She advocates very strongly.”

Chambers UK 2021

“Formidable during cross-examination, with an eye for detail that ensures no stone is left unturned.”

Legal 500 2021

“She has always without doubt been excellent. She’s meticulous, she’s enthusiastic and I have excellent confidence in her preparation. She is absolutely dependable and on top of her game throughout the case.”

Chambers UK 2020

“Has a good grasp of the facts and is extremely thorough in preparation.”

Legal 500 2020

Notable Cases

A Local Authority v AB and Others [2019] EWFC 75

Re B (A Child) [2017] EWCA Civ 1579

Re S (Child Abduction: Joinder of sibling: Child’s Objections) [2016] EWHC 1227 (Fam)

Re P (Findings of Fact) [2014] EWCA Civ 89

Awards

The Legal 500 UK Award 2020 Regional Bar: Junior of the year

Gray’s Inn Scholarship in 2002

Memberships

Member of the FLBA

Association of Lawyers for Children

Midland Circuit

Gray's Inn

Qualifications

LLB (Hons)

Qualified to accept instructions through Public Access