Kathryn Hughes

Call 2003

Clerks

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Memberships

- FLBA

Family

Kathryn qualified as a Solicitor in 1999. From 1999 to 2003 she worked as a Family Solicitor, managing a caseload of public and private children cases. She gained invaluable experience working directly with clients from the commencement of the proceedings and in the preparation of their cases, particularly drafting of documents. It provided insight, which continues to be of benefit now, as to the practice and pressures on family Solicitors. She developed her advocacy skills and decided that advocacy was what she wanted to focus on.

In 2003 she was successful in applying to transfer to the Bar and has not looked back. Kathryn has developed a busy practice, specialising in children cases, both public and private law.

In public law cases she has represented parents, family members, interveners and children. She is passionate and committed to the representation of her clients in every case. She is determined and will fight hard to ensure the best possible outcome for her client. She is a good communicator and when representing some of the most vulnerable of clients will use such communication skills to make sure they understand the proceedings and can engage successfully.

Kathryn often represents clients with very low IQ, young parents, mental health conditions and those facing the most grave of allegations of harm (sexual, physical and emotional). In addition, her negotiation skills include a level of diplomacy that is often required in reaching a fair settlement on issues in dispute. If there is no scope to settle issues she is not afraid to ensure that those issues are litigated when it is in the best interests of the client to do so.

She has represented many children in cases and has developed trusting working relationships with many Children's Guardians and Solicitors.
Kathryn's experience covers almost any area of work in the public/private children cases. In public cases this includes complex and serious cases involving non-accidental injuries/death, sexual abuse, FII, domestic abuse. In private law this includes 16.4 cases, relocation (internal and out of jurisdiction), intractable contact.

Kathryn is also a qualified Pupil Supervisor.

Cases

Recent/ Current Cases:

- Representing a Mother in application for a Care Order commenced as a result of the 13-year-old child attending at a police station reporting the Mother to have physically assaulted her on a number of occasions. In addition to the findings sought of physical abuse there were allegations of a sexual abuse against one of the Fathers and failure to protect from such abuse by the Mother. The case was heard over 11 days and significant findings were made, although after consideration of expert assessments the younger children remained in her care pursuant to Final care orders.
- Representing a Father who is in the pool of perpetrators for the death of his son (mechanism considered to be a shake) aged 4 months. The medical evidence is complex as is the police investigation which commenced 2 years before the proceedings for the new baby began.
- Currently being led by Darren Howe QC representing a Mother who faces numerous allegations of sexual abuse against 3 of her children and failure to protect in relation to allegations that others have sexually abused them. Complexity in this case centre around the issue of the grave allegations against other individuals and how that evidence is treated in light case management decision to discharge the interveners.
- Representing the children via their Guardian in a case where the Local Authority are pursuing a case that the Father represents a sexual risk as a result of historic allegations of sexual abuse. There are 4 children with different needs and a careful balance is required. This also involved a s.34(4) contested application and an application made by the Local Authority for PII with regard to an ongoing police investigation.
- Representing a Father with regard to allegations of serous non-accidental injury (11 fractures) to his 4 month old daughter.

Notable Cases:

- Led by Micheal Keehan QC prior to his appointment at High Court Judge. The case involved representation of a Father who faced the most extreme sadistic allegations of abuse. It included contested issue as to capacity which involved a number of days of evidence from experts with regard to capacity and the fluctuation.
- Representation of a Father who faced allegations of sexual abuse with regard to a number of his step children which included allegations of inciting the siblings to commit sexual acts upon each other. Led in this case by Karl Rowley QC.
- Representation of a Polish Father where his 7 month old child had sustained a skull fracture, contested medical evidence of paediatric neurosurgeon.
- Successful appeal of a decision to make a placement order on the basis that there had not been proper consideration of a family member.
- Representation of a Slovak Mother, the case involved allegations of sexual abuse made by a child she had previously fostered and issues arose with regard to Article 15 Hague Convention and application by the Local Authority for the return of the child to the UK after the Mother removed the child to Slovakia. After legal argument centred around an analysis of the evidence, the Local Authority withdrew it's application and the Mother continued to care for her child in Slovakia with no further intervention from the State.
- Representation of Mother in proceedings in which her partner and Father of the child faced allegations of causing the death of a previous child in 1994. She had an extremely low IQ, findings were made against the Father and the Mother accepted them and separated from him.
- Numerous appearances in cases listed before High Court Judges as a result of the complexity.
- Representation of the children in a case where the Father faced allegation of historic rape against a family member of the Mother. The findings were made after evidence and a successful application was made on behalf of the children for the Father to leave the family home and engage in expert forensic risk assessment.
- Representation of a Mother facing serious allegations of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, included cross examination of a child witness via video link. Whilst findings were made the Mother, after extensive assessment by both social worker, psychologist and psychiatrist. The proceedings concluded with younger children remaining in her care.
- Numerous cases involving contested Re W applications, medical evidence relating to injuries and sexual abuse, expert assessments of parents/family members.

Recommendations

Tier 4 – Family: children and domestic abuse
The Legal 500, 2026

Tier 3 – Family: children and domestic abuse
The Legal 500, 2025

"Kathryn will never shy away from a fight and will pursue any argument rigorously to try and get the right outcome for the client."
The Legal 500, 2024

'Kathryn is an excellent advocate and an extremely personable and child-focused practitioner. She has an ability to cut through the issues in the case very quickly and identify the core difficulty or area requiring resolution. She is always pragmatic and focused, and her approach is always centred on the needs of the child.'
The Legal 500, 2023

Beyond the Bar

When not practising family law, Kathryn keeps busy as a Mother to four lively children and is a competitive triathlete.