



# Christopher Watson

Year of Call: 2003

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## Introduction

Christopher is an expert in the law relating to children and practices exclusively within that field. He is very well respected both for the quality of his advisory work and courtroom advocacy. He has an excellent reputation for meticulous preparation, sensitive client care and being appropriately robust and pragmatic. He regularly appears before High Court judges and has previously been shortlisted for the "Birmingham Barrister of the Year" award. He is an approved pupil supervisor and treasurer of the Family Law Practice Group.

In 2018, Christopher was appointed as a Recorder, deployed to sit in Family on the Northern Circuit.

### What the Directories Say:

- *"Intelligent, articulate, thoughtful, balanced and clear. He is liked by judges, clients and other advocates, and has an excellent cross-examination style."* and *"Bright, very well prepared and a clever, effective advocate."* – Chambers UK 2019
- "An expert in child law matters." – Legal 500 2019

### Qualifications and Appointments:

- BVC – Nottingham Law School
- LLB (Hons) – University of Dundee

### Articles and Publications

- Solebo C, Watson C, Sidebotham P. Preparing paediatricians for court: evaluation of a court skills training programme. *Child Abuse Review* 2012; 21(2): 131-140. DOI: 10.1002/car.1161

### Memberships:

- Midland Circuit
- Association of Lawyers for Children
- British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering
- Family Law Bar Association

### Notable Cases:

Some of the complex cases Christopher has been instructed in recently are as follows:

- Re X and Z (2017) – represented the local authority in an international American adoption case in the High Court;
- Re S and V (2016) – represented the local authority in an attempted drowning case (successfully achieved findings sought);
- Re J and C (2016) – represented the children in a non-accidental head injury case;
- Re E and N (2016) – represented the father in a sexual abuse case (successfully achieved his removal from the pool of perpetrators);
- Re A and A (2016) – represented the local authority in an alleged fabricated and induced illness case in the High Court;

- Re H (2016) – represented the local authority in a female genital mutilation case in the High Court (successfully achieved order sought);
- Re R (2015) – represented the local authority in a sexual abuse case (successfully achieved findings sought);
- Re D and L (2015) – represented the local authority in a child death case in the High Court (successfully achieved findings sought);
- Re B and D (2015) – represented one of the children in an honour based violence case in the High Court;
- Re B and P (2015) – represented the local authority in a child death case in the High Court (successfully achieved findings sought);
- Re K and Y (2015) – represented the local authority in a child death case in the High Court (successfully achieved findings sought);
- Re F (2014) – represented the father in a non-accidental injury burns case in the High Court (successfully achieved his removal from the pool of perpetrators);
- Re V (2014) – represented the children in an alleged fabricated and induced illness case in the High Court;
- Re L (2014) – represented the mother in a fabricated and induced illness, suffocation and drug poisoning case in the High Court.

#### Reported Cases:

- A Local Authority v A and others [2009] EWHC 1982 (Fam) [2010] 3 FCR 503;
- Re A and B (One Parent Killed by the Other: Guidance) [2011] 1 FLR 783;
- A City Council v T and others [2011] EWHC 1082 (Fam) [2011] All ER (D) 217 (May);
- Re H (a child) [2012] All ER (D) 281 (Oct);
- Re Y (Minors) (Care Proceedings: Genetic Testing) [2013] 2 FLR 249.

## Public Law Care and Adoption

Christopher has vast experience in complex and difficult public law cases and represents all the various parties. He has a detailed knowledge of the children and adoption legislation and associated case law. He has particular expertise in cases involving:

- Child death;
- Non-accidental head injury;
- Other serious forms of physical abuse, including fractures, bruising and burns;
- Attempted drowning;
- Honour based violence;
- Fabricated and induced illness (FII);
- Sexual abuse;
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Adoption, including adoption breakdowns;
- Chronic neglect and drug and alcohol abuse;
- Disclosure and public interest immunity (PII);
- Instructions by the Official Solicitor;
- Human rights issues;
- International children law;
- The inherent jurisdiction of the High Court.

Many of his cases have resulted in lengthy fact finding hearings in the High Court involving thousands of pages of evidence and extensive medical opinion which is often in conflict.

Christopher also conducts matters to appellate court level, including the Court of Appeal. He provides regular public law training to solicitors, local authorities and other professionals involved in this arena. This has included seminar presentations on topics such as threshold, the Public Law Outline, appeals and transparency in the family court. He has also been the lead barrister in delivering a number of court skills workshops.