

## Martha Holmes

Call: 2003

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Specialises in:

- Public Law Children
- Private Law Children
- Child Abduction
- Direct Access
- Mediation



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*‘I would absolutely recommend Martha Holmes to anyone seeking an excellent Family Law barrister – she works with integrity, passion and professionalism.’*

DIRECT ACCESS CLIENT

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Martha is an experienced child law specialist, covering both public and private law. She represents parents, Local Authorities and Guardians at all levels of court and undertakes Direct Access work. For the first five years of practice, she also undertook criminal work and feels that the cross examination and witness handling techniques she learnt then gave her a good grounding for her family work; she has further trained as a mediator and collaborative lawyer and so brings strong client handling and negotiation skills to her cases.

### Public Law Children

Martha has experience representing Local Authorities, parents, Guardians and separately represented children and has particular experience in the following areas:

- Non Accidental injuries, including shaken baby cases and multiple fractures.
- Fictitious illness and injury.
- Serious sexual abuse, including representation of alleged perpetrators.
- Representing parents with learning difficulties and cases involving the Official Solicitor.
- Representing parents with mental health difficulties.
- PII applications and disclosure from criminal proceedings into care proceedings.
- Neglect and substance misuse.
- Domestic violence.
- Representation of grandparents seeking contact/residence in the context of care proceedings.
- Adoption and placement orders and post final hearing contact applications.

## **Private Law Children**

Martha is an experienced private law specialist and has particular expertise in the following areas:

- Cases involving suspected parental alienation or intractable hostility to contact (representing both the hostile parent and the parent seeking contact).
- Fact finding hearings involving serious domestic violence and sexual abuse.
- Cases where the Local authority is involved or which become care proceedings.
- Shared care.
- Applications to change name, specific issue orders in respect of schooling.
- Mediation at court to resolve issues involving a litigant in person.
- Leave to remove from the jurisdiction and internal relocation.
- Non-Molestation injunctions and occupation orders.

J (A Child) [2012] EWCA Civ 1231

Martha successfully appealed a decision made by a Circuit Judge who restricted her cross-examination of a litigant-in-person mother in a long running contact and residence dispute where she represented the father. Martha was praised for her handling of the situation at first instance:

*'Ms Holmes is to be congratulated for doing her duty, politely but firmly standing her ground and telling the Recorder plainly that his ruling was preventing her putting her client's case. It is a pity that the Recorder did not, even at that point, see any reason to change his mind.'* (per Munby LJ at para.35)

## **Child Abduction**

Martha undertakes Child Abduction work. Examples of her experience include:

- Successfully preventing the return of a child to Malta following a contested hearing on the basis of the child's objections, together with allegations of extreme domestic abuse.
- Representing a 'stranded spouse' seeking return to the UK from Pakistan.
- Representing the CAFCASS Guardian in a case where the children's objections were crucial to the outcome.

## **Direct Access**

Martha has been qualified as a Direct access barrister since 2014 and accepts Direct Access instructions. Examples of cases she has undertaken on this basis include:

- Representing parents in difficult and intractable contact disputes.
- Representing a father seeking a change of residence.
- Representing a client at a fact finding and final hearing relating to allegations of abuse.
- Undertaking an appeal in relation to an application to internationally relocate.

## **Mediation**

Martha qualified as a mediator in 2007 and is happy to undertake mediation in all aspects of her work.

*'I was most impressed with Martha's adroit handling of a tricky final hearing on a recent care case of mine. She dealt with the matter in an utterly professional and pragmatic manner...I will definitely instruct her again and would have no hesitation in recommending her to others in this field of work.'*

LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDCARE LAWYER

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## REPUTATION & AWARDS

'Upon my first meeting with Martha I knew I had found someone who really understood my case and could therefore represent me; I found Martha to be professional, clear and pragmatic... I would absolutely recommend Martha Holmes to anyone seeking an excellent Family Law barrister - she works with integrity, passion and professionalism.'

Direct Access client

## Awards and Scholarships

Inner Temple Major Scholar, Duke of Edinburgh Entrance Award (Inner Temple)

## Education

Clare College, Cambridge, History MA

Birmingham University, PGDL

Inns of Court School of Law, BVC

## Professional Memberships

FLBA

## Languages

Conversational French

## Lectures

Martha regularly undertakes seminars and lectures on a range of child law topics.

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