

HELEN HARPER

Year called 2002

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OVERVIEW

Helen is an experienced children law specialist. Her practice covers all matters relating to adoption, care proceedings and disputes about children arising within families. She is regularly instructed by parents, extended family members, children (both directly and through their guardians), local authorities and adoption agencies.

PRACTICE AREAS

Adoption
Alternative Families
Children Private
Children Public
International
Genetics

EXPERIENCE

Helen has expertise in:

- Adoption (international and domestic)
- Factually complex public and private children law matters – such as those involving allegations of Non-Accidental Injury (including head injuries, fractures, burns and bruises), Fabricated and Induced Illness (from exaggerating underlying medical conditions to deliberate poisoning) and serious sexual assaults
- Special Guardianship.

In addition to attending court hearings, Helen also undertakes advisory work for solicitors, adoption agencies and individuals.

In addition to many years' experience of independent practice at the Bar, Helen has also undertaken a sabbatical working as an advisory lawyer at the Department for Education. In that role, Helen provided legal advice to policy makers and Ministers regarding a range of matters relating to inter-country adoption (DfE is the Central Authority for the Hague Adoption Convention), domestic adoption (including post adoption contact/information and adoption support), care proceedings and Special Guardianship.

Consequently, Helen has a thorough knowledge of the legal framework in these areas. This understanding, combined with her friendly and approachable manner, her ability to absorb complex factual matters at speed and effective advocacy skills, means that she is able to secure the trust of clients quickly and easily and deliver positive outcomes for them, often in difficult and stressful situations.

As a qualified mediator, Helen understands that where possible, negotiated settlements can often be in a client's best interests as the client will be able to have some direct control over the outcome. However, in those situations where this is not possible, Helen embraces the adversarial court process and is an impressive and persuasive advocate.

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

LLB Law (2001)

Bar Vocational Course (2002)

Family Law Bar Association

Association of Lawyers for Children

CoramBAAF Legal Group

Middle Temple

QUALIFICATIONS AND AWARDS

ARDg qualified mediator

Winston Churchill Fellow
