

Sara Chalk
(2018) Barrister

Specialist Areas

Public Law Children: Care Proceedings and Adoption

Private Law Children: Residence and Contact

Out of Court Solutions (NCDR)



PUPILLAGE
SUPERVISOR
TRAINING

Who is Sara Chalk?

Sara has been working in the legal sector for over 15 years and has practiced in family law for over 11 years. Sara transferred to the Bar in 2018 from her role as a Legal Executive Advocate working in private practice. Before being called to the Bar, Sara worked in private practice for 15 years dealing with a range of matters including conveyancing, wills and probate, crime and family matters. In addition to working in private practice, Sara has worked in-house for a Local Authority undertaking litigation and advocacy relating to public law children matters. As a result of her work in private practice, Sara has an in-depth knowledge of the various stages of proceedings and pre-proceedings and applies this knowledge to her current practice. Sara has spent the last 11 years specialising in family matters which is something she really enjoys and this is the key focus of her practice. Sara is well known on the Western Circuit and receives regular instructions from local solicitors.

Sara has extensive experience of dealing with vulnerable clients and is known for her conscientiousness, empathy and work ethic. Since transferring to the bar in 2018 Sara's practice has continued to develop and expand and she has dealt with a number of complex cases including:

- A 5 day fact finding hearing regarding allegations of interfamilial child sex abuse
- Representing a child through her Children's Guardian at the Court of Appeal
- Representing a parent in a 6 day finding of fact hearing regarding allegations of non-accidental injury including two skull fractures and an arm fracture
- Representing a parent in the High Court in a case regarding a child's death
- Representing a child through her 16.4 Children's Guardian on a 6 day finding of fact hearing regarding allegations of non-accidental injury (multiple bruising)

Representing a child through her Children's Guardian on a 10 day finding of fact hearing in the High Court regarding allegations of non-accidental injury (this was a re-hearing of a previous fact finding hearing following an appeal)

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No.18 Chambers is a distinguished set of barristers based in Southampton, recognised for its strong reputation and presence across the South Coast of England. Our expertise cover a range of practice areas, including Family Law (Care Proceedings and Adoption, Private Law Children, Matrimonial Finance), Employment, Chancery and Commercial Law, Property Disputes, together with Dispute Resolution and Mediation. Our members are committed to delivering expert legal advice and representation to clients nationwide, offering extensive experience in handling both complex and sensitive matters.



Legal Expertise

For more information or to get in touch with Sara please contact the clerks room who will be happy to assist you.

Public Law Children: Care Proceedings and Adoption

In her role in private practice, Sara has vast knowledge and experience of representing parents, family members (including intervenors), the Local Authority and Children's Guardian in public law children matters from the pre-proceedings phase right through to final hearing. Sara has particular experience of dealing with parents with learning difficulties. Sara has continued to expand her practice since transferring to the bar and represents parties in the following matters:

- Emergency contested applications where a Local Authority seeks the removal of a child – Emergency Protection and Interim Care Orders.
- Placement Order and Adoption Proceedings.
- Applications under s34(4) s38(6) Children Act 1989.
- Cases concerning domestic violence where sexual, physical or emotional abuse is alleged.
- Cases including allegations of non-accidental injuries including infant death, multiple fractures and multiple bruising
- Cases concerning alleged fabricated or induced illness
- Cases concerning alleged neglect including chronic neglect
- Cases concerning vulnerable parents or children including those with Special Educational Needs, cognitive impairment or capacity issues
- Cases where drug and alcohol abuse or mental health concerns are a significant issue including matters before the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC)
- Special Guardianship and Wardship applications.
- Recovery Orders
- Secure Accommodation Orders.

Sara continues to accept instructions from all parties involved in public law care proceedings. Since transferring to the Bar, Sara has been involved in complex Finding of Fact hearings relating to allegations of non-accidental injury and sexual abuse. In November 2019 Sara represented a child through their Children's Guardian at the Court of Appeal and continued to represent the child and Children's Guardian at 10 day re-hearing of the Fact finding where she was led by Queen's Counsel.



Legal Expertise Continued

For more information or to get in touch with Sara please contact the clerks room who will be happy to assist you.

Private Law Children: Residence and Contact

Private Law Children: Contact and Residence Disputes Under the Children Act 1989

Sara has represented parents and Children's Guardians in cases relating to issues of contact and residence disputes including cases where there have been allegations of sexual, physical and emotional abuse and cases involving allegations of parental alienation. Sara has represented Applicants and Respondents in cases involving applications for Child Arrangements Orders, Specific Issues Orders and Prohibited Steps Orders. Sara understands the sensitivity of these matters and has dealt with cases where one or more party has become implacably hostile. Sara works to achieve a fair and workable resolution keeping the child's best interests at the forefront of the case.

Domestic Violence & Injunctions

Sara has represented both Applicants and Respondents on matters concerning applications for injunctive orders, non-molestation and Occupation orders. Sara has experience of dealing with cases involving allegations of physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Out of Court Solutions (NCDR)

Private FDR

Single Joint Advices/Early Neutral Evaluation

Round Table Meetings/Joint Conferences

Merits, Advice, Drafting And Support Package



Professional Info

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Qualifications

Chartered Institute of Legal Executives - LEVEL 3 & 6 Certificate & Professional Diploma in Law and Practice

CILEX Family Proceedings Advocacy Skills Course – Extended Rights of Audience

Membership

Lincolns Inn



Cases of Note

For more information or to get in touch with Sara please contact the clerks room who will be happy to assist you.

Sara Chalk, a barrister at No.18 Chambers, is known for her strong expertise in family law, particularly in complex care proceedings and private children matters. She regularly acts for local authorities, parents, and children's guardians in cases involving serious allegations and sensitive issues. With over 15 years of experience, she is praised for her thorough preparation, clear advocacy, and calm, authoritative presence in court. Her work often involves high-stakes decisions concerning child welfare and safeguarding.

Re S (A Child) & L (A Child) [2024] EWFC 108 (B)

Re N (A Child) [2019] EWCA Civ 1997 (19 November 2019)



Reviews

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Sara is a brilliant advocate. She is always well-prepared and puts the clients at ease at their very first meeting - Legal 500

Sara has been a meticulous and organised advocate during sensitive family proceedings. She has been clear and thorough in her preparation, given expert advice and helped to steer and navigate our journey in the most child focused and sensitive way. We are extremely grateful for her help and support and would thoroughly recommend her to other families. - Client

Sara's broad range of experience puts her in a unique position of being able to tackle issues from a range of angles. She is an excellent advocate who identifies with the needs of her clients and always goes the extra mile for them - Jennie Swaby – Eric Robinsons

Instructing Sara was a real turnaround moment for a complex international case I had. She quickly grasped the issues, provided practical solutions and went the extra mile to ensure she was able to stay on the case, which was a great relief to me and the client as we were keen not to lose her! - Solicitor - Local Authority

Sara has excellent judgement. She is fearless, tenacious and eloquent. She leaves no stone unturned and as such her lay clients feel that every effort has been made on their behalf. recommended for advising on both financial remedy and care proceedings' (Tier 1) - Legal 500

An outstanding advocate, who quickly identifies the core issues. Easily gets to grip with complex arguments. A brilliant advocate who goes above and beyond for clients. - Samantha Jeanes – Abels Solicitors

Sara is a very strong advocate, always thoroughly prepared and able to tease out the relevant information and ask the difficult questions. She is also well-liked and particularly adept at giving difficult advice to vulnerable clients. - Legal 500

Sara is a meticulously prepared advocate. She has a knack of identifying the key areas of focus in case and exploring with witnesses those points to further her client's case. She has commendable client care skills, immediately putting clients at ease with her personable and warm manner. - Sarra Gravestock - Biscoe's