



## Ginnette Fitzharris

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Year of Call: 1993

Ginnette read Law at Leeds University and was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1993. She practises in family law.

### Memberships

- Family Law Bar Association

### EXPERTISE

#### Family - Children

#### Public Law

#### Local Authority

Ginnette has represented the Local Authority in the Family Proceedings Court, County Court and the High Court including complex cases (without Leading Counsel) with facts concerning:

- Serious non-accidental injuries such as a fractured skull; brain damage; fractured ribs, arms and/or legs
- Sexual abuse – inter familial and otherwise and including many parties
- Chronic neglect, alcohol and or drug abuse
- Serious mental illness/personality disorder on the part of a parent or a child
- Wardship – including (i) where parents/medics cannot agree an End of Life Plan for a child

and (ii) where parents/medics and the LA could not agree long-term care for a seriously ill child

- Foreign jurisdictions
- Secure Accommodation
- Fabricated Illness
- Parents who insist on representing themselves
- Injunctive relief for publishing confidential information and other matters.

Ginnette has also been Junior Counsel in High Court cases concerning serious non-accidental injuries and complex multi-party final hearings.

Ginnette regularly presents seminars and takes part in training days for Local Authorities and Cheshire Police force.

Ginnette regularly advises the Local Authority in conference and drafts documents as and when instructed including Threshold documents and Schedules of Findings.

## The Children's Guardian

Ginnette has represented the Children's Guardian in complex cases including:

- Non-accidental injuries
- Successfully representing the Guardian where there is a serious disagreement between the Local Authority and the Guardian about the final order necessary in proceedings or the final placement of a subject child within proceedings.

## Parents

Ginnette regularly represents parents at all levels of tribunal. She has considerable experience in the following areas:

- Successfully resisting applications to remove children from parents shortly after birth
- Successfully resisting applications to remove children from parents during the interim stages of care proceedings
- Applying for expert assessments including ISW assessments
- Applications to revoke Placement Orders/Care Orders.

Ginnette has successfully represented parents in cases where findings were being sought that they had injured a child in their care non-accidentally.

Ginnette has regularly appeared in contested hearings where cross-examining experts, social workers and guardians is necessary.

She has been Junior Counsel in cases where children have been seriously injured.

Ginnette has represented parents via direct access as well as upon instruction from solicitors.

## Appeals

Ginnette has represented parents upon Appeal to the Court of Appeal successfully and also from the Family Proceedings Court to the County Court.

## Other

Ginnette has been instructed by NYAS and the Official Solicitor in cases with facts and issues more complex than usual.

## Private Law

### Removal from the Jurisdiction

Ginnette is instructed regularly in cases by parties seeking leave to remove their children from the jurisdiction and/or parties who are refusing permission and wish their children to remain in the UK.

She has experience of hearings with the International Liaison Judge in London and cases involving warning the tipstaff and seeking orders for return of the subject child/children.

### Orders to Spend Time with Children

Ginnette has years of experience representing parents entrenched in a bitter battle over their children.

She has also represented Children's Guardians and NYAS within this sphere.

She has a reputation for taking a sensible and calming approach, without ignoring or minimising serious concerns raised by a parent.

Her experience includes cases concerning:

- Implacably hostile parents
- Concealed paternity
- Mental illness
- Drug abuse
- Domestic violence and rape

- Foreign jurisdictions
- Enforcing orders including defending and pursuing committal for breaches.

## Specific Issues

Ginnette has experience of cases concerning education, medical treatment and change of name.

## ADR and Mediation

Ginnette is a trained mediator who has undertaken cases including those where each party is legally represented.

Ginnette is happy to facilitate arrangements to suit the requirements of the parties, including round table mediation.

## Public Access

Ginnette is accredited to receive instructions directly from members of the public through the Public Access Scheme.