



## Penelope Stanistreet

Email: [clerk@stjohnsbuildings.co.uk](mailto:clerk@stjohnsbuildings.co.uk)

Phone: 0114 273 8951

Year of Call: 1993

Specialist child law expert who typically acts for Children's Guardians and local authorities. She regularly advises on challenging cases involving highly complex medical evidence, often drawing on her background in criminal as well as family law. She is also noted for her expertise in children relocation and sexual abuse cases.

Strengths: "Penelope is client-focused and highly supportive in the most difficult of circumstances." "Her professionalism and expertise are exceptional." "Penelope is very experienced in care work and she is totally reliable when dealing with complex cases. She is empathetic with clients and communicates well with those who are often going through challenging court proceedings. She is also always prompt with her paperwork and is a good communicator." **Chambers UK Bar 2023**

"A first-class advocate, who is always well-prepared and on top of her brief. She is a good communicator, attentive, approachable and focused." **Legal 500 2023**

Pennie read Classical Civilisation at Nottingham University before undertaking the conversion course in Law at City University in 1992. She was called to the Bar by the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn in 1993 having undertaken the BVC at the Inns of Court school of law. Penne practises in all areas of law involving children. Penne delivers training, both personally and through Chambers, to solicitors and Local Authorities on aspects of public law.

## Memberships

- Family Law Bar Association – committee member NE circuit FLBA
- South Yorkshire Medico Legal Society
- South Yorkshire Family Justice Board

- Chair of the LFJB Public Law Sub group
- Committee member South Yorkshire Family Court Forum

## Legal Directory Recommendations

Strengths: *“She makes information easily accessible to clients and explains everything, allowing her to garner the respect of all parties.” “She is extremely efficient, easy to get hold of and liaises directly with me when there are any issues.”* **Chambers UK Bar 2022**

*“Recommended expert.”* **Legal 500 2022**

Strengths: *“She’s very approachable and very good with parents, particularly those with learning difficulties.” “I find her attention to detail and legal knowledge exceptional.”* **Chambers UK Bar 2021**

*“Pennie is quite frankly a fantastic barrister. She is committed to her respective clients and will always go the extra mile. She was my first port of call in a recent case where permission to appeal was sought in respect of an interim decision. She is approachable, friendly, extremely knowledgeable and clearly committed to the profession. She would be my first choice if given as an option to instruct. I cannot praise her enough.”* **Legal 500 2021**

*“She is able to easily sort the wheat from the chaff and deals with and addresses the issues that are relevant, rather than becoming bogged down and distracted in sundry side-issues.”* **Chambers UK Bar 2020**

*“Recommended for cases involving complex medical evidence.”* **Legal 500 2019**

*“An excellent advocate who knows the law and provides clear advice. She is well respected at court by the lawyers and by the judges. Her drafting is excellent and she is a whizz with technology.”* **Chambers & Partners 2019**

Strengths: *“I highly recommend Pennie. She is extremely knowledgeable, compassionate and straightforward.” “She is my go-to for children cases. She is down to earth and approachable, and has a very constructive manner with clients.” “She is outstanding and will really go that extra mile.”* **Chambers & Partners 2018**

*“Very experienced in cases with international elements.”* **Legal 500 2017**

Strengths: *“An oracle, she is absolutely the person you’ll go to with any query.” “Down-to-earth, tenacious and always fights clients’ corners effectively.”* **Chambers & Partners 2017**

*“A clear advocate, who brings compassion and understanding to the job.”* **Legal 500 2016**

*“Specialist family law expert who represents local authorities and parents across all elements of Children Act applications. She is noted for her expertise in cases involving complex medical evidence and non-accidental injuries”*

Strengths: *“She is hard-working, compassionate and outcome-focused.” “She is very thorough, very well prepared and very good with distressed and difficult clients. She relates very well to people.”*

## Chambers & Partners 2016

Focuses on all proceedings within children law, particularly cases that involve contentious medical evidence. She represents a diverse client base, and receives instructions from local authorities, guardians and parents.”

“*She is a tough cookie in a very pleasant way. She is nice to be against in court.*” “*She is a solid and consistent advocate.*” **Chambers & Partners 2015**

## EXPERTISE

### Family - Children

### Private law

Pennie has many years of experience of representing parents and children in disputes about where children should live and how they should spend time with the other parent. This includes finding of fact hearings when allegations are made by one or other party, complex work arrangements, differing needs of different children (including special needs and disability) and all of the complexities that make up modern life. Pennie was involved in research about cases in which one parent was seeking to relocate and has a particular interest in cases of “implacable hostility”.

### Public law

Pennie represents Local Authorities, parents and children in all aspects of public law where the state is seeking to intervene in family life. This includes cases where children have died or been seriously injured, there has been over medicalization or factitious illness, sexual abuse, neglect and failing to protect. Pennie frequently deals with expert medical witnesses both in injury and neglect cases as well as psychologists and psychiatrists. Pennie has also significant experience in dealing with cases with an international element including the use of the Tipstaff, wardship, children being placed with family members abroad, allegations of child trafficking, rape and under-age marriage.

## Cases

**Re A, B and C (Adoption: Notification of Fathers and Relatives) [2020] EWCA CIV 41 (29 January 2020):** Led by Frances Heaton KC. Acted for the local authority in Case C. The judgment gives guidance on the issue of notification to the father or relatives in cases where the mother wishes to relinquish the child for adoption but has concealed her pregnancy and does not wish the father and/or family to be informed of the child's existence. The judgment has been published on Bailii and the case has been covered on Family Law Week and the Suespiciousminds blog.

**Re AZ (Children) (Relocation to Poland) (2016) EWFC 8:** Successfully represented a mother who had applied to permanently relocate to Poland with her child. The mother suffered from mental ill

health. The judgment is published here.

**H v A Local Authority (2015):** Representing mother in successful application to revoke placement order. Local authority had instructed leading counsel to oppose the application by mother which was also potentially the subject of an appeal to the Court of Appeal.

**B v SCC (2015):** The first case in Sheffield of a family member making an application for a contact who had been adopted some time ago. Pro bono.

**F v Local Authority A and Local Authority B (2015):** Representing local authority in re-hearing following successful appeal by family. Significant mental health issues, children very disturbed, complex plans.

**A Local Authority v B & M & R (2015):** Representing a parent in a finding of fact hearing and welfare hearing. Injuries alleged but following cross-examination of both medical and factual witnesses no finding made in relation to actual injury. Child subject to rehabilitation plan following welfare hearing in spite of initial opposition from the local authority.

**SCC v M, P and M (2015):** Representing Local Authority in finding of fact hearing including previous allegations and acquittal in criminal court. Risk assessment and issues of jurisdiction (EU and non EU).

**Re A (a child) (2013) EWCA Civ 1104:** Long running private law dispute. Very high profile case when before the Court of Appeal.

**A Local Authority v R and A (RCJ 2014):** Missing children, involves wardship, publicity orders and other Tipstaff orders.

**A Local Authority v A and A (High Court 2014):** Public law case involving serious allegations of underage sex, removal of the child from the jurisdiction and serious findings of fact. Also issues of long term placement away from the care of parents who are EU nationals.

**LW (A child) (2014) EWFC B96 & 97:** Represented a father in a finding of fact hearing where allegations of serious acquired brain injury were made. Cross-examination of a number of medical experts required including a paediatric neuro-radiologist, ophthalmologist and paediatrician regarding both timing and mechanism of injury. There was a concurrent police investigation.

**A Local Authority v B and B (2013):** Represented a mother in proceedings in which her youngest child had died from very serious head injuries. Involved extensive medical evidence and a concurrent police investigation and Crown Court trial. Lead by Jane Crowley KC.

**Re FS (2013):** Pennie represented the child in a case involving indecent images and the grooming and abuse of a child connected to the family. There was technical evidence regarding the use of social media and the internet and 1000s of messages. Connected criminal investigation.