



Olivia Weir

Email: sheffield.clerk@stjohnsbuildings.co.uk

Phone: 0114 273 8951

Year of Call: 1995

“Olivia’s forensic approach is second to none, she is meticulous in all that she does. She has great empathy for the parents she represents leaving no stone unturned to ensure that the best evidence is before the Court. She is kind and personable and yet one of the most tenacious advocates I have ever seen.” **Legal 500 2021**

Olivia accepts instructions on all aspects of family law. Her main specialism is in the area of public law. She acts primarily on behalf of the Local Authority, undertaking cases which involve serious allegations of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect. She has experience in cases involving significant injuries with disputed medical evidence, and often with linked criminal proceedings.

Legal Directory Recommendations

“Recommended for a wide range of family law matters.” **Legal 500 2019**

“A family law specialist.” **Legal 500 2017**

“An expert in public law proceedings including abuse and neglect allegations.” **Legal 500 2016**

“She has a great eye for detail, and pursues her clients’ cases tirelessly.” **Legal 500 2015**

Professional Associations

- Family Law Bar Association Member

EXPERTISE

Family - Children

Notable Cases

- Represented the LA in a case involving allegations that mother's boyfriend had repeatedly raped her 13-year-old daughter. In the criminal proceedings the prosecution decided not to proceed with the charges of rape based on what transpired to be a misinterpretation of the medical evidence. At the end of a contested fact finding hearing within the care proceedings findings were made that the child had been the victim of repeated rapes and that there had been gross failure to protect all children in the family on the part of the mother. Placement order made in respect of youngest child.
- Represented the LA in a case where the youngest child suffered life changing injuries due to non accidental head injuries inflicted by father. Issues on the medical evidence as to whether there had been one or more shaking episodes and whether the child suffered from a pre-existing metabolic condition.
- Represented the LA where there were allegations that the father, a number of years previously whilst a teenager, had sexually abused his younger relatives. Disclosures were made some years after the alleged events. Issues in respect of the reliability of the evidence of the child witnesses and their recall of events in respect of historic allegations.
- Represented the LA in a case involving chronic neglect where the parents had differing degrees of learning difficulties. The court did not authorise removal of the children at the interim stage. At final hearing care orders with a plan of removal of the children from parents' care, together with placement orders, were made.
- Junior counsel for the LA in cases involving infant fatalities. Involved medical evidence from a range of disciplines and linked criminal proceedings.
- Represented the LA in a case involving numerous allegations of physical, sexual and emotional abuse of suspect child and another 15-year-old child (living with the family) by mother's partner. Allegations spanning a number of years with further allegations of physical abuse and failure to protect both children on part of mother. Concurrent criminal proceedings in respect of physical abuse of the 15-year-old. Extensive disclosure including from previous social services involvement with 15-year-old and her family. Dealing with child witness.
- Represented father in care proceedings involving his eighth child. Previous seven children removed from his care during two different sets of proceedings. During course of second set of proceedings allegations made by father's sister of rape by him approximately 10 years previously. Not pursued by police. Subsequently oldest child aged 10 made allegations of historic sexual abuse of her and another sibling by father and mother. Given new baby, the LA pursued a finding of fact hearing. Voluminous disclosure, detailed cross referencing from social services records. Lengthy cross examination of child witness. No findings of sexual abuse made.
- Represented father of 12-month-old who suffered subdural, retinal and lumbar haemorrhages. Issue of causation and timing. Cross examination of medical experts. Grandparents found to be perpetrators. Legal argument as to whether threshold crossed.

- Represented mother of three-year-old who suffered life threatening injuries including split liver, rib fractures and subdural haemorrhage. Additional undisclosed medical evidence in respect of further injuries coming to light during course of hearing. Mother exonerated from pool of perpetrators. Mother in late stages of pregnancy during finding of fact hearing. When second child born the court held that she could retain care.