



Valerie Sterling

LLB (Hons), University of Manchester

Year of Call: 1981 – Gray's Inn

Area of Practice:

Family:

- Children
- Money

Valerie Sterling was called to the Bar in 1981 and is a family law practitioner specialising in children and money cases. She has a busy public law practice encompassing all aspects of care work, especially adoption, and she frequently acts on behalf of parents in contested finding of fact hearings.

Valerie is recommended as being 'excellent in children's cases' in the 2010 edition of 'The Legal 500'. She has extensive experience of acting in fact-finding hearings in public and private law concerning non-accidental injury, domestic violence and all aspects of child abuse. She is currently acting in a Court of Protection case involving an adult female with Down's Syndrome who was allegedly at risk of a forced marriage abroad.

Valerie is also currently being led in an appeal to the Court of Appeal regarding Article 6 rights in a case concerning a historical finding of fact of sexual harm against a parent who, at the material time, was a litigant in person.

Valerie's money practice includes high-value cases concerning family businesses, farmland and professional practitioners in the world of law, academia, medicine and sport. She has recent experience of a contested ancillary relief case involving a foreign pre-nuptial agreement and its relation to 'Radmacher'.

Recent cases of importance include

- Re H Court of Appeal Thorpe and Elias LJJ and Coleridge LJ [2009] (care and adoption case);

- Re H Court of Appeal Thorpe, Thomas and Wall LJJ [2007] 2 FLR 317, (in which Valerie acted on behalf of a father who successfully resisted an American mother's application to re-locate to the US with the British-born child of the relationship);
- Re K (non-accidental injuries, perpetrator, new evidence) [2005] 1 FLR 285 Court of Appeal Wall and Neuberger LJJ. Successful re-opening of care case after fact-finding hearing and disposal hearings - mother appealed against care orders and freeing orders, requesting that the court take into consideration her fresh evidence.

Articles in 'Family Law': 'DNA, Paternity Deceit and Reliability of the Birth Certificate as a Historical Document', August 2009; 'More contact for Breast-feeding mothers', April 2005.

Care Work:

Valerie has a great deal of experience in complicated and sensitive child care cases involving serious child abuse particularly in which there is a range of medical expert evidence. She has experience of being led in the High Court in a two week case involving non accidental head injury to a five day old baby.

She also has particular expertise and understanding of cases involving a religious and cultural dimension; and cases in which clients are assisted by an interpreter.

Valerie also has an appreciation of cases involving mental health issues and has acted on behalf of the Official Solicitor.

Publications

Local Government Lawyer Website - www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk:

Article: A history of violence (a study of two recent cases about fact finding hearings): 25.11.2010

Article on 'Perpetrators, anticipatory rulings and other issues' - Part Two: Review of key cases in 2009 concerning children and care: 12.1.2010

Article on Fact-finding cases and placing for adoption: a two part review of key cases in 2009 concerning children and care. Part One - 15.12.09

Article on media representatives attending family hearings: 23.11.09

Family Law:

'DNA, Paternity Deceit and Reliability of the Birth Certificate as a Historical Document': August 2009 Volume 39 p 701

'More Contact for Breast Feeding Mothers': April 2005 Volume 35 p 308

Justice of the Peace (Weekly Journal dedicated to Magisterial and Local Government Law: Butterworths)

Review of 'Being Seen and Heard' an educational video looking at the needs of children and young people whose parents have a mental illness Volume 169 Number 4 January 22 2005 p 59

Two Book Reviews - 'Special Bulletin of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002: Implications for Family Lawyers' and 'Working with the Child Care Protocol' Volume 168 May 8 2004 p 359

Book Review of 'Surviving Violent Crime & The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority - A Guide for Progress & Living Well' Volume 167 Number 36 September 6 2003 p 675

Book Review of Child Abuse 3rd Edition Volume 167 14 June 2003 p 456;

Book Review of Funding Family Proceedings (Special Bulletin) Volume 167 Number 18 May 3 2003 p 335;

Book Review of Children Act Private Law Proceedings: A Handbook Volume 167 Number 14 April 5 2003 p 256

Article: Update on Separate Representation for Children in Private Law Proceedings: Volume 167 Number 11 March 2003 p 187

Article: Cohabitees and Financial Obligations: Volume 166 Number 24 June 15 2002 p 462

Article: White v White Analysis and Update of Recent Cases: Volume 166 Number 18 May 4 2002 p 346

Article: White v White Analysis and Update of Recent Cases: Volume 166 Number 10 March 9 2002 p 184

Article: Separate Representation for Children in Private Law Proceedings Volume 165 Number 48 December 1 2001 p 939

Article: Occupation Orders and the Family Law Act 1996 Volume 165 Number 33 August 18 2001 p 644

Article: Effect of Domestic Violence on Contact Volume 165 Number 31 August 4 2001 p 599

Article: Non-accidental Injury - Child Care Law and Procedure Volume 163 Number 51 December 18 1999 p 1004

Article: Section 202, Housing Act 1996: Homelessness, Local Authorities and the New Right of Appeal Volume 163 Number 48 November 27 1999 p 947;

Article: The Introduction of the Housing Act 1996 section 152: Antisocial Behaviour and Local Authority Injunctions Volume 163 Number 33 August 14 1999 p 643