Elizabeth Isaacs KC MCIArb

Year of Call: 1998 | QC: 2013

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Overview

Elizabeth is the Head of St Ives Chambers, a specialist child law silk and sits as a Family Division Deputy High Court Judge. She has an established national reputation for a compassionate, pragmatic and strategic approach, excellent advocacy and forensic preparation in complex public law cases. Elizabeth has substantial expertise in acting for all parties in complex care, adoption and wardship proceedings and has a detailed knowledge of the legal and social care issues relating to local authority planning and decision making for children.

Practice Areas

Public Law Children

Elizabeth Isaacs KC is a specialist family law silk who has a wealth of experience in all aspects of complex public law proceedings relating to children. She has a strong reputation for excellence in oral and written advocacy and is highly regarded for her compassionate and approachable style when working with vulnerable parties and witnesses, including children. Elizabeth prioritises a collaborative approach with solicitors and juniors and provides clear leadership within the team to deliver the best outcomes for clients. She regularly acts for local authorities, parents, interveners, children and the Official Solicitor in highly sensitive and serious cases.

Particular areas of expertise and interest include –

- Child death
- Serious physical injury
- Allegations of physical, emotional and sexual harm
- Toxicology and poisoning
- Domestic abuse
- Fabricated or Induced Illness and Perplexing Presentations
- Adoption/international placement of children
- Special Guardianship
- DOLS and Court of Protection
- Disclosure and Public Interest Immunity (PII) issues
- Local authority decision-making
- Media/privacy law in family proceedings
- Human rights issues
- Judicial review
- LGBTQ and Modern Family parenting issues

Notable Cases

St Helens BC v M and Others [2022] EWFC 56

Re T (Care Proceedings: Fact-Finding: Genital Injuries) [2021] EWFC 101

Tameside MBC v AM & Ors; Derby City Council v AB & Ors; Lambeth BC v ED & Ors; Manchester CC v LT & Ors [2021] EWHC 2472 (Fam)

Salford City Council v W [2021] 1689 (Fam)

Salford City Council v W [2021] EWHC 61 (Fam)

Re K (Threshold: Cocaine Ingestion: Failure to Give Evidence) [2020] EWHC 2502 (Fam)

Re C (Children) (Covid-19: Representation) [2020] EWCA Civ 734

Re P (Sexual Abuse: Finding of Fact Hearing) [2019] EWFC 27

VBC v AGM [2019] EWFC 64

Re AA (Children) [2019] EWFC 64

Re C (Declaration of Parentage: Written Consent) [2019] EWHC 648 (Fam)

M v W, C & Secretary of State for Health [2019] EWHC 648 (Fam)

Rochdale Borough Council v F & Others [2018] EWHC 2996 (Fam)

Carmarthenshire CC v Y and Others [2017] EWFC 36

Re Z (A Child) (No 2) [2016] EWHC 1191 (Fam)

Re N-S (Children) [2017] EWCA Civ 1121

Re AD, AE, AF, AG & AH (HFEA 2008) [2017] EWHC 1782 (Fam)

Re P-K (Children) [2017] EWCA Civ 965

RE M (A CHILD) sub nom (1) H (2) B v (1) S (2) M (A CHILD BY HER GUARDIAN) [2015] EWFC 36

RE Z (A Child) [2015] EWFC 73

RE F (A CHILD) (International Relocation Cases) sub nom DF v N B-F [2015] EWCA Civ 882

Re X (A Child) (Surrogacy: Time Limit) [2014] EWHC 3135 (Fam)

Re B (A Child) [2014] EWHC B1 (Fam) Re S (A Child) [2013] EWCA Civ 1073

SMBC v RG et al [2013] EWHC 2373 (COP)

Re M (A Child) [2012] EWCA Civ 446

S v Z [2012] EWHC 84 (Fam) Re D O'H (Children) [2011] EWCA Civ 1343

Re L (Duty to the Court of a Psychologist) [2011] EWHC B29 (Fam)

Re C and D (Photographs of Injuries) [2010] EWHC B27(Fam)

Re X, Y and Z (Children) [2010] EWHC B12 (Fam)

Re W (Care: Threshold Criteria) [2007] 2 FLR 98 (CA)

Re B (Appeals: Lack of Reasons) [2003] 2 FLR 1035 (CA)

Private Law Children

Elizabeth Isaacs KC is a specialist family law silk who has a wealth of experience in all aspects of private law proceedings relating to children and is committed to providing an efficient and robust approach within the dynamic and challenging field of private law practice. Elizabeth has a formidable reputation for excellence and is highly regarded for her persuasive oral and written advocacy skills at all levels of court.

She prioritises a collaborative approach with solicitors and clients, providing clear leadership within the team to deliver the best outcomes in the case. Elizabeth regularly acts for parents, interveners, children and the Official Solicitor. Particular areas of expertise and interest include –

- LGBTQ and Modern Families parenting issues
- Children's living and contact arrangements
- Intractable welfare disputes
- Disputes about habitual residence
- Domestic and international relocation
- Disputes about education, religion and medical issues
- Surrogacy and parental order applications
- Special guardianship
- Media/privacy law in family proceedings

Notable Cases

Tameside MBC v AM & Ors; Derby City Council v AB & Ors; Lambeth BC v ED & Ors; Manchester CC v LT & Ors [2021] EWHC 2472 (Fam)

Salford City Council v W [2021] 1689 (Fam)

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Re B (Appeals: Lack of Reasons) [2003] 2 FLR 1035 (CA)

Dispute Resolution

Elizabeth is the Head of St Ives Chambers, and a door tenant at Coram Chambers (London), Unit Chambers (Liverpool) and 18 St Johns Street (Manchester). She is a specialist child law silk, Deputy High Court Judge and Bencher of Lincoln's Inn. She is a qualified Children's Arbitrator registered with the Institute of Family Law Arbitrators. She has a national reputation for a strategic and collaborative approach, excellent advocacy, forensic preparation and is highly regarded for her compassionate style with clients. She is a contributing editor to the Family Court Practice. In 2019 she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Coventry University in recognition of her contribution to family law and equality law. She is an expert authority in all aspects of private child law disputes, with particular interests in LGBT parenting issues, parental alienation, habitual residence, relocation, disputes about education, religion and medical issues, and surrogacy and fertility law. She is frequently instructed in cases following breakdown of surrogacy arrangements or same-sex parenting arrangements.

Elizabeth is a member of the Family Law Bar Association, LGBT Family Law Institute UK & Ireland, Member of Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and is a trustee of the Donor Conception Network.

She is able to conduct arbitration hearings in person in chambers in Birmingham, London, Liverpool or Manchester, or is very happy to travel to any venue as requested. She is also able to conduct hearings remotely, by telephone or video-link, if required.

Arbitration

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oral and written advocacy skills at all levels of court.

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Re C (Declaration of Parentage: Written Consent) [2019] EWHC 648 (Fam)

M v W, C & Secretary of State for Health [2019] EWHC 648 (Fam)

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Re B (Appeals: Lack of Reasons) [2003] 2 FLR 1035 (CA)

Qualifications

BA (Hons) Psychology (Dunelm)

MA Social Work

LLB (Hons)

MCIArb (Family)

Appointments

Head of St Ives Chambers 2021

Honorary Doctorate of Laws Coventry University – 2019

Bencher of Lincoln's Inn 2019

Deputy High Court Judge (Family Division) 2016

Public and Private Family Law Recorder (SE Circuit) 2012

Crown Court Recorder (SE Circuit) 2009

Silk Member of The Family Justice Council (2014-2019)

Memberships

Family Law Bar Association

Association of Lawyers for Children

LGBT Family Law Institute – UK & Ireland

Chartered Institute of Arbitrators

Awards

Shortlisted for the Legal 500 Silk of the Year 2019 (Regions)

Winner of the Legal 500 UK Silk of the year 2018 (Regions)

Publications

Clarke, Hall & Morrison on Children – contributing editor

Family Court Practice (Jordans) – contributing editor

Challenging and Defending Local Authority Child Care Decisions (April 2013) Jordans Publishing (Co-author)

Social Work Decision Making: A Guide for Child Care Lawyers (2nd Edition March 2012) Jordans Publishing (Co-author) – "A valuable addition to any Childcare library."

Privacy Notice

Click here to view the Privacy Notice for Elizabeth Isaacs KC.

Recommendations

Chambers and Partners 2023: "Elizabeth's preparation is impeccable and she has a fantastic manner with her client." "Elizabeth is very approachable along with having a sound experience base." "She has excellent knowledge and skills, and has great empathy for clients."

Legal 500 2023: "Elizabeth is a tenacious, strategic, and passionate advocate. She fights her client's case with all her energy and is immensely knowledgeable particularly in relation to surrogacy cases." Elizabeth Isaacs KC is a "formidable advocate with great attention to detail."

Chambers & Partners 2022: "Elizabeth's technical knowledge is brilliant and she is also excellent and grounded in her relationships with the client." "Elizabeth has an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of the law. It's astounding and impressive and she's a pleasure to watch in action."

Legal 500 2022: "She is clever creative and very hard working. Her written work reflects this and her advocacy is thorough and persuasive. Many expect her to be on the high court bench soon. I agree with them."

Chambers and Partners 2021: "She is creative, strategic and collaborative in her approach. A QC of choice for cases which challenge the law or raise novel issues in the area of LGBT family law and fertility law."

Legal 500 2021: "Her preparation of every case is meticulous and impressive, her advice is robust and straightforward, and she stands up for her clients."

Chambers & Partners 2020: "She has an excellent in-depth knowledge of the law and social work practice, and tenaciously fights her client's corner in a firm and balanced manner. She's also extremely personable and a great team player." "She's a phenomenal individual who mastered the issues very quickly."

Legal 500 2019: “An enormously effective trial advocate.”

Chambers & Partners 2019: “She fights the client’s corner in a firm and balanced manner. She is also extremely personable and a great team player.” “She has an excellent grasp of the law and is also a brilliant strategist.”

Legal 500 2018: “Exceptionally clever; a strategic thinker who is willing to push the boundaries in her approach to cases.”

Chambers & Partners 2018: “A joy to work with. She is incredibly collaborative and gets the best out of the whole team. She is massively bright and has an ability to think outside of the box.” “She has a superb work ethic and retains her balance, judgement and humour in stressful situations.”

Legal 500 2017: “A Titan in children’s work.”

Legal 500 2016: “She radiates creative energy and has one of the quickest minds in the business.”

Legal 500 2016: “Her expertise in care work includes complex cases involving child fatalities, serious injuries and sexual abuse.”

Chambers & Partners 2016: “She would always be my first choice – an excellent advocate. She is very well prepared, has very good client care skills and is very approachable. She is bright and passionate about what she does. I would go to her with any family matter that needed silk.” “I would single her out as a really strong, feisty advocate who is incredibly thorough in her preparation and extremely effective.”

Chambers & Partners 2015: “Continues to be regarded as a go-to barrister for complex children matters involving death and serious injury. She has a keen interest in the academic side of litigation and is a thorough and versatile advocate.”

Legal 500 2014: “Approachable and a pleasure to deal with.”

Chambers & Partners 2014: “A child law expert in care proceedings as well as child abduction and forced marriages…and she is well versed in dealing with cases concerning learning disabilities. A competent lawyer who handles her clients very well and provides sensible advice.”

Legal 500 2013: New silk Elizabeth Isaacs QC is “a brilliant barrister.”

Chambers & Partners 2013: “A former social worker, she is valued for the unique perspective that her previous job affords her. Those that use her do so as “she is very personable and has very good judgement.”

Legal 500 2012: Elizabeth Isaacs “fights her corner with determination.”

Chambers & Partners 2012: “Personable, sensible, and highly knowledgeable,” she is “excellent with clients” and “fights their corner doggedly.” As a former social worker, she brings to the table invaluable added insight into the workings of the care system.

Legal 500 2011: “Superb”