



New Park Court

Valerie Sterling

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Valerie Sterling

Year of call 1981

For enquiries please call +44 (0)113 243 3277 or email

Valerie Sterling was educated at Manchester High School for Girls and Manchester University. Called to the Bar in 1981, she did chancery and commercial pupillages in London but now specialises in complex child care and high value matrimonial finance cases.

Valerie is Head of the Family Team and has a strong reputation for representing her clients with skill, determination and sensitivity.

Valerie can speak French and German.

Matrimonial Finance

Valerie represents clients from diverse backgrounds in medium to high net worth cases. She has broad experience of business, property and pensions, profit and loss accounts, third party interests, appeals and making successful applications for costs.

Valerie takes care in thorough and insightful preparation of complex material. In particular, she has wide experience of representing professional parties including consultant physicians and surgeons, as well as members of the teaching and accountancy professions and members of the Armed Forces.

Representative Cases

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- *Re: X*
Represented a husband in a contested final hearing and succeeded in obtaining an option to buy the wife out of the FMH because he had primary care of a child of the marriage.
- *Re: H*
Represented a wife in a complex case revolving around a preliminary key issue as to whether a substantial payment from her father's retirement pension to the parties was a bridging loan or an outright gift. Successful finding and a costs order made against the other party.
- *Re: Z*
Complex contested case in which there was a requirement for detailed analyses of business accounts as well as paper trail of spending patterns and lifestyle choices.
- *Re: P*
Represented a high net worth client with assets of over £10 million involving family trusts and settlements.
- *Re: Q*
Represented a wife in which her husband was in breach of a previous court order and had applied for variation of the same. She in turn applied for enforcement.

Care Proceedings

Valerie represents local authorities, guardians and parents in the most complex of care proceedings. Having worked for 16 years for Leeds City Council, she had acquired a profound understanding of public law work and attended many case conferences and adoption panels as a legal advisor.

She has an excellent understanding of medical evidence and how to prepare effective cross-examination of expert witnesses. For example, Valerie has represented parents alleged to have sexually abused their own children and where their children are expressing extreme sexualised behaviours.

Valerie handles with appropriate sensitivity cases involving personality and mental health issues.

Representative Cases

- *Re:X*
Represented a mother in the pool of possible perpetrators for deliberate infliction of a serious wound on her infant. This eight day finding of fact case involved obtaining and analysing corroborative evidence of many text and social media messages.

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- *Re: G*
Acted for a mother alleged to have caused a range of inflicted fractures or at least that she failed to protect her child from these injuries having occurred over a period of time. The latter case involved cross-examination of a consultant radiologist and a consultant paediatrician as to causation.
- *Re: L*
Acted for a local authority who have brought care proceedings following a chaotic set of home circumstances. There followed a range of professional assessments and ultimately a programme of rehabilitation with suitable social work support took place.
- *Re: M*
Represented a guardian who scrutinised and challenged local authority care plans requiring effective advocacy to articulate her views.

Children Act & Private Law

Valerie has a broad experience of private law Children Act proceedings involving residence, contact, Prohibited Steps Orders, Specific Issue Orders, applications to relocate both internally and internationally and Article 15 Brussels ii.

She able to represent her client's case in a persuasive manner and achieve the optimum outcome.

She has particular experience in the most complex cases involving a Rule 16.4 appointment of a Children's Guardian or NYAS worker.

Representative Cases

- *Re: K*
Recent experience of representing a mother in a contested High Court wardship against leading counsel, involving complex DNA and paternity issues with an international element.
- *Re: N*
Acted for a vulnerable mother in a two day finding of fact hearing in which Special Measures were required so that mother could give her evidence from behind a screen. Comprehensive findings were made in her favour.
- *R: G*
Acted for a mother who was assisted by an interpreter in a case involving complex police information and immigration/Home Office issues. The client had been the subject of many years of the most serious domestic and sexual violence.

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Child abduction and international relocation

Valerie is currently in demand to deal with cases of child abduction and international relocation. These often involve a parent taking a child abroad without the agreement of the other parent. Valerie is skilled in acting rapidly to get a child back – or to defend a parent raising the answers of acquiescence or grave risk or intolerable circumstances should the parent and child return.

What the directories say

'Clients can clearly see the quality in her work and representation within proceedings. She will fight for the client and takes a no-nonsense approach,'

Legal 500 2021 (Family)

"Willing to fight to the very end for the client."

Legal 500 2019 (Family)

'Very experienced in complex public law children cases.'

Legal 500 2018 (Family)

"Recommended for a broad range of family matters."

Legal 500 2017 (Family)

"Her broad family practice includes public and private law children disputes, and family finance matters."

Legal 500 2016 (Family)

"She is extremely thorough and her attention to detail is phenomenal."

Legal 500 2015 (Family)

"A specialist in all areas of family law, particularly public law children cases involving allegations of abuse."

Legal 500 2014 (Family)

Recommended and "appeared in the Court of Appeal case of Re: M (children), a case in which parents had been denied access to children following physical abuse."

Legal 500 2013 (Family)

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"Covers the full spectrum of family law."

Legal 500 2012 (Family)

Appointments & Memberships

Head of the Family Team, New Park Court Chambers

Family Law Bar Association

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