

Abla O'Callaghan

Call: 2011



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Abla O'Callaghan is a Public Law barrister with expertise across Education, Community Care, Court of Protection, Immigration and Employment law.

She is known for her calm, thoughtful approach and her ability to navigate complex and emotionally sensitive cases with clarity and care.

Abla acts for individuals, families, and public authorities, and is recognised for her clear advocacy and her ability to build strong working relationships with both clients and professionals.

She appears regularly in the First-tier Tribunal, Upper Tribunal, and Administrative Court, and is noted for her precise, accessible advice and her steady presence in challenging situations.

Abla also has a growing practice in education-related employment law, particularly Equality Act claims, where she advises both individuals and institutions on discrimination and workplace issues in educational settings.

Alongside her advocacy work, Abla has completed mediation training and draws on these skills in dispute resolution, especially where relationships require ongoing management, such as in care planning, education matters, or multi-agency contexts. She will be offering formal mediation services in the near future as part of her expanding practice.

Abla is fluent in spoken Arabic, which has been of particular value in cases involving Arabic-speaking clients and interpretation matters.

Expertise

Court of Protection & Community Care

Abla acts in complex Court of Protection and community care matters, with a particular focus on welfare issues of mental capacity, deprivation of liberty, and best interest decisions. She is regularly instructed by local authorities, the Official Solicitor, and family members, and is noted for bringing clarity, composure, and sensitivity to legally and emotionally challenging cases.

Education

Abla advises and represents clients in a wide range of education law matters, including special educational needs, exclusions, admissions, and appeals before both the First-tier Tribunal and the Upper Tribunal. She is also experienced in further and higher education matters, including university-related disputes. Her approach ensures that legal rights are effectively pursued with a strong grasp of the practical and institutional context.

Employment

Abla advises and represents individuals, educational institutions, and local authorities in employment matters arising within the education sector. Her practice focuses on Equality Act claims, particularly those involving allegations of discrimination in schools, colleges, and universities. She is known for providing clear, practical advice and measured advocacy in sensitive workplace disputes.

Immigration & Asylum

Abla has experience in asylum and human rights appeals, and appears regularly before both the First-tier and Upper Tribunal. She is recognised for her thorough preparation, sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable clients, and careful handling of cases involving complex credibility and protection issues.

Mediation

Abla has completed mediation training and incorporates a calm, constructive approach to resolving disputes involving families, public bodies, and individuals. She brings valuable insight to matters where ongoing relationships require careful management, such as care planning, education disagreements, and inter-agency collaboration. She will be offering formal mediation services in the near future as part of her developing practice.

Public & Administrative Law

Abla undertakes judicial review and public law challenges across a range of areas, including community care, education, and immigration. She is instructed by both individuals and public bodies to provide clear, focused advice and effective advocacy in sensitive and legally complex matters that often engage detailed statutory duties and the exercise of public powers.

Appointments

- Welsh Government Panel of Approved Junior Counsel B (2021)
- Free Representation Unit, Employment Law Representative (2013 – 2015)
- IPSEA (Independent Parental Special Education Advice), Advisor and Tribunal Officer (2013 – 2015)
- Waging Peace, London, Researcher and Translator (2012/13)
- Citizens Advice Bureau, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire (2009/10)
- Arts Alliance Pro Bono Scheme, Vancouver, Canada (2008)

Awards

- Best Performance Awards in Public law, EU Law, Contract Law, and Land Law, University of Keele (2010)
- Winners National Round Telders Mooting Competition – Finalists International Round Hague – Winners of Best Applicant Memorial, University College London (2012)

Education

- LLM International Commercial Law, University College of London (2011 – 2012)
- BPTC, College of Law London (2010 – 2011)
- LLB (First Class Honours), University of Keele / University of British Columbia (2007 – 2010)

Languages

- Arabic (fluent)

Publications

- Individual Development Plans and the Code – Welsh Education Law Conference 5 (2019)
- A Practitioner’s Guide: Basic Legal Principles: Co-author with Ruth Henke KC, Laura Shepherd (2018)
- Education Law – Case Management and Practical Considerations Presentation for Local Authorities (2018)
- Issues / Duties for Health Authorities arising from the Act – Welsh Education Law Conference 4 (2018)
- Information sharing between Childcare and Immigration Proceedings – Welsh Public Law Conference (2017)
- Capacity, The Legal Test – Court of Protection Conference (2017)
- An Overview of the Legal Relationship between a Student and a University, Cardiff & District Law Society (2015)
- “Understanding the New School Admissions and Appeals Processes” Presentation for Local Authorities (2015)
- Exclusions Training Seminar for Individual Review Panel Members (2015)
- End “unofficial exclusions”, SEN Magazine (2014)
- Education law update – when is pursuing a contractual claim an abuse process in higher education, Solicitors Law Journal (2014)
- The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013: What will it do? Hardwicke Chambers (2014)

- Student Litigation – Choosing the Right Words, Hardwicke Newsletter (2013)