

# Catherine Heyworth KC

Call: 1991 | Silk: 2022

"Catherine Heyworth's approach is empathetic but tough when she needs to be. Her advocacy is incomparable."

Chambers UK 2025



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Catherine Heyworth KC is a highly respected family Silk with a strong reputation across Wales, and a growing profile in England. She is known for her calm, authoritative presence in court and her ability to guide clients and professionals through the most complex and sensitive cases.

Her practice focuses on serious and high-risk care proceedings, including cases involving rape, sexual abuse, serious non-accidental injury, fabricated induced illness, child cruelty, and murder. Catherine has particular expertise in cases involving complex medical evidence.

She is recognised for her skill in identifying genetic or underlying medical conditions such as osteogenesis imperfecta, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, and Prader-Willi syndrome, where inflicted injury has been wrongly suspected.

She is also instructed in cases with international elements, including removal from and return to the jurisdiction, human trafficking and forced marriage protection. She also undertakes instruction in DoI cases and private law cases.

Catherine has considerable experience acting in proceedings involving vulnerable children and adults, including those with significant mental health needs, and is skilled in cross-examining young and vulnerable witnesses.

Catherine is consistently ranked in Chambers & Partners and The Legal 500, where she is praised for her attention to detail, sensitive handling of difficult issues, and her ability to deliver clear, practical advice.

## Expertise

### Family & Childcare

Catherine specialises in complex care proceedings, including serious allegations of abuse, non-accidental injury, FII and forced marriage. She is recognised for identifying medical explanations where inflicted harm is alleged and for representing vulnerable clients with skill and sensitivity. She acts regularly in cases involving international issues and secure accommodation.

## Appointments

- King's Counsel
- Bencher of The Inner Temple
- Pupil Supervisor

## Education

- LLB (Hons)

## Memberships

- Association of Lawyers for Children
- Family Law Bar Association

## Notable and reported cases

- *A Local Authority v T (No. 1)* [2018] EWHC 576 High Court proceedings considering the issue of authentic consent by a young person in a deprivation of liberty context.
- *Re G (A Child)* [2014] EWCA Civ 432 Application by a non-parent for leave to oppose adoption, following care and placement orders. The case addressed legal routes available for non-parents to participate in adoption proceedings.
- *Re EN (A Child) (Special Guardianship Order)* [2008] 2 FCR 229 Special guardianship order concerning a child injured non-accidentally by her mother. The paternal grandmother's application for care was refused at first instance; the case proceeded to the Court of Appeal to consider judicial error.
- *Re W* [2001] 1 FCR 139 Case involving threshold criteria and whether a fact-finding hearing was necessary to address allegations of inappropriate sexual behaviour between a mother and child during contact.
- *Re S* [1996] 2 FLR 773 Case concerning early hearings in contested care proceedings to clarify issues and encourage expert consensus in order to prevent delay.

### Recent & Notable Work

- Represented local authorities in care proceedings involving allegations of sexual abuse by foster carers.
- Acted in non-accidental injury cases requiring analysis of historical injuries previously thought accidental.

- Instructed in care proceedings revisiting historic child deaths within families.
- Acted in High Court care cases involving alleged drug poisoning of children.
- Appeared in media-access care cases before the High Court.
- Represented Health Boards in complex, disputed medical treatment cases involving children.
- Acted in care cases concerning international sexual abuse and cross-border evidence.
- Instructed in serious non-accidental head injury cases resulting in death or life-altering injury.
- Appeared in cases involving interfamilial and step-parent sexual abuse, including allegations of rape.