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## Catherine Heyworth KC

Called: 1991 Silk: 2022  
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### Practice Overview

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Catherine has built a reputation as a highly accomplished advocate in Wales. Now in silk she is extending her reputation to England. A great strength of hers is her approachability and the sense of calm that she brings to the most complex of cases.

Catherine has long been recognised for managing the needs of vulnerable clients in complex care proceedings.

Catherine is praised for recognising signs of genetic disorders in cases where inflicted injury has been suspected.

Her recommendations in Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners attest to how well respected she is and her attention to detail when involved in complex cases.

Catherine is rightly recognised for her expertise in cases which include:-



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- Sexual abuse including historical allegations;
  - Fabricated Induced Illness;
  - Non accidental injury cases including non accidental head injuries;
  - Salt poisoning;
  - Allegations of murder and attempted murder;
  - Allegations of child cruelty and significant neglect;
  - Genetic disorders including prader willi syndrome, osteogenesis imperfecta and EDS;
  - Allegations of honour based violence and forced marriage;
  - Cases with international elements involving transfer applications to jurisdictions outside of England and Wales;
  - The representation of vulnerable clients including children and young people with mental health needs;
  - Re W applications including the cross examination of young and vulnerable witnesses;
  - Secure accommodation and Deprivation of Liberty;
  - cases involving Special Advocates.

#### **Notable and Reported cases**

- Re EN (A Child) (Special Guardianship Order) [2008] 2 FCR 229  

Special guardianship order. Child the victim of nonaccidental injury by mother. Paternal grandmother cared for the child for over three years. Application by paternal grandmother for care of her grandchild refused. Case taken to the Court of Appeal to determine whether the judge was in error.
- Re G (A Child) [2014] EWCA Civ 432  

Application by non parent who had cared for the child until his removal under care and placement orders for leave to oppose adoption. Consideration of the legal route for a person who is not a parent or guardian to seek to participate within adoption proceedings.
- A Local Authority v T (No1) [2018] EWHC 576  

A Local Authority v T Consideration of the issue of authentic consent of a young person in deprivation of liberty case.
- Re TS (Children) [2019] EWCA Civ 742  

An appeal concerning the approach of a court to a potential impasse with a local authority on an important element of the care plan.
- Re W [2001] 1 FCR 139.



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Threshold criteria - necessity for hearing on allegations of inappropriate sexual behaviour between mother and child during contact;

- Re S [1996] 2 FLR 773.

Early hearings in contested care cases to identify issues and encourage agreement between experts, to avoid delay.

- Other

**During the course of the last five years, Catherine has undertaken very challenging work which has included:**

- Acting in care proceedings on behalf of local authorities where allegations of sexual abuse have been made against foster carers.
- Non accidental injury cases where historical injuries have had to be considered, which had previously been thought to be of accidental origin.
- Care cases involving the revisiting of historical child deaths within a family.
- Care cases dealing with drug poisoning of children.
- Care cases in the High Court where media access has been permitted.
- Catherine has acted for Health Boards dealing with disputed treatment issues involving children.
- Care cases dealing with international sex abuse of children.
- Care cases involving severe head injuries to children resulting in death or significant disability.
- Care cases dealing with interfamilial and step parents sexual abuse including rape.

## Recommendations

- "Catherine Heyworth's approach is empathetic but tough when she needs to be. Her advocacy is incomparable." (Chambers & Partners 2025 - Family: Children)
- 'Catherine excels as an advocate, demonstrating superb communication skills paired with unwavering empathy. She maintains thorough knowledge of the law, ensuring her advice is consistently clear and reliable.' (Legal 500, 2025 - Family: children and domestic abuse)
- Shortlisted for Family Silk of the Year, Legal 500 Awards 2024
- Catherine Heyworth KC  
Catherine Heyworth KC has a depth of experience in complex injury cases and undertakes a range of care work, including serious physical and sexual abuse matters. She has notable expertise in cases involving complicated head injuries, and her recent work has also included grooming cases. "Catherine Heyworth KC



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is a fantastic leading barrister. She's personable, approachable and her advocacy is outstanding." "She's a real fighter for her client and she's got an excellent knowledge of the law." "Catherine is very personable and an expert in her field." (Chambers & Partners 2024, Family: Children)

- 'Her preparation of cases is meticulous, which shows in her expert cross-examination and flawless advocacy. She is calm and confident in her approach and extremely patient.' (Legal 500, 2024 - Family: Children & Domestic Violence)
- "Catherine is an excellent advocate with thorough preparation of cases." (Chambers UK, 2023 - Family: Children)
- "Catherine is an exceptional advocate. An excellent communicator with unquestionable empathy, she is always up to date with the law and gives clear advice." (Legal 500, 2023)
- "Catherine is one of the most knowledgeable and hard-working barristers I have had the pleasure of working alongside." "The effort and time that she puts into cases is above and beyond her brief." (Chambers UK, 2022)
- 'Catherine is extremely thorough in her approach and picks out details that are perhaps missed by others. She is sympathetic with clients but firm when required making her the perfect counsel for care and family clients.' (Legal 500, 2022 - Family & Children Law)
- "She is a fantastic advocate, very knowledgeable and a pillar of support in difficult cases." (Chambers UK, 2021)
- 'An incredibly accomplished advocate with the gift of the common touch.' (Legal 500, 2021)
- 'She's very good, makes herself available out of hours if necessary and is a very strong advocate.' (Chambers UK, 2020)
- 'Specialises in care proceedings involving abuse allegations.' (Legal 500, 2020)
- 'She brings considerable experience, knowledge and superb advocacy skills.' 'A well-respected and authoritative advocate who displays excellent and rigorous preparation in her court work. She shows a high degree of interest in the cases that she has been instructed in and treats her clients with courtesy at all times.' (Chambers UK, 2019)
- 'Recommended for complex care cases.' (Legal 500, 2018)
- 'A highly regarded childcare practitioner who is wonderful with clients. She is excellent and rightly recognised'. (Chambers UK, 2018)
- 'She easily builds good client rapport'. (Legal 500, 2017).
- 'Highlighted by sources for her depth of experience in complex injury cases, Catherine Heyworth undertakes a range of care work including serious physical and sexual abuse matters. She has notable expertise in cases involving complicated head injuries. Strengths: "I have always been impressed with her ability to empathise with the clients and her knowledge of areas outside the legal remit, such as medical knowledge." (Chambers UK, 2017)
- 'An incredibly accomplished advocate.' (Legal 500, 2016)
- 'Highly experienced senior junior with a broad-based practice. She undertakes financial relief cases involving high-value assets and represents clients in care proceedings involving serious neglect and abuse.' "She keeps clients calm and gives them confidence." "She is very able at communicating with the client and making sure that the young person understands and is able to get their views across." (Chambers UK, 2016)
- 'Her workload includes cases involving serious injuries to children and child fatalities' (Legal 500, 2015)
- 'Commended for her work in serious care cases, she is proficient within both children law and financial



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dispute resolution. She is adept in children's proceedings that involve the most serious allegations of neglect, physical and sexual abuse, and infanticide. She is frequently instructed by local authorities on such cases, but also represents parents, guardians and interveners.' (Chambers UK, 2015)

- "Experienced in complex care cases and high-net-worth financial disputes" (Legal 500, 2014)
- "Her preparation and advocacy skills are excellent." "She is highly able and meticulous in her preparation." (Chambers UK, 2014)

## Appointments

- Bencher of The Inner Temple
- Pupil Supervisor

## Education & Qualification

- LL.B (Hons)

## Memberships

- Family Law Bar Association

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