

### **Daniel Monk (Welcome)**

Daniel Monk is Professor of Law in the School of Law at Birkbeck, University of London. His research has examined a wide variety of issues about children and parents' rights in the contexts of education, inheritance and sexuality. He is currently leading a research project funded by the Nuffield Foundation exploring contact between siblings in the public law system: <http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/siblings-contact-and-law-overlooked-relationship>

### **Her Honour Isobel Plumstead (Chair)**

Her Honour Isobel Plumstead retired as a circuit judge and deputy high court judge in December 2014 after nearly 25 years on the bench, mainly specialising in Family Law. She was DFJ for Cambridge and Peterborough between 2002 and 2009, and subsequently became Secretary then President of the Council of H M Circuit Judges. She was a barrister and is a bencher of Middle Temple, where she teaches advocacy to students and young practitioners. She continues to be a judge by request of the First Tier Tribunal with jurisdiction over applications concerning Restricted Patients.

### **Hazel Best**

Having qualified as a solicitor in private practice Hazel began her local government career in 2001 and was appointed as the Principal Lawyer for the Social Care and Education legal team at the London Borough of Hounslow in 2005. Hounslow dealt with a number of complex and high profile cases, one being in relation to its use of s20. Hazel moved to the Tri Borough legal team in June 2015 and continues to manage a team of lawyers providing legal advice to the children and adults departments of the tri borough authorities and is a member of the Central Family Court Family Justice Board.

### **Elizabeth Cape Cowens**

Elizabeth Cape Cowens is a children law solicitor at Blackfords LLP. She is on the Law Society's Children Panel and represents children and parents in public and private law proceedings. She is also regularly involved in policy work to protect and improve the system as a member of the executive board for the Association of Lawyers for Children and a trustee for Family Rights Group.

### **Shu Shin Lu**

Shu Shin is a barrister at Garden Court Chambers. Her practice has a strong emphasis on human rights and anti-discrimination. Her practice cuts across community care; housing; immigration; trafficking; civil liberties; mental health and mental capacity law. Children and care leavers are amongst her core client groups but she also regularly acts on behalf of NGOs and public bodies in judicial review claims or as intervener. She has appeared in many reported cases relating to the approach to take to best interests assessments of children in the context of age disputes, housing, social care, welfare benefits, and prison and probation services. She has advised extensively on the support provisions of the immigration bill and the recent children and social work bill as they made their way through parliament. She is on the panel of Counsel for the Equality and Human Rights Commission and is ranked in Chambers UK Bar Guide and Legal 500 in the areas of administrative and public law, civil liberties and human rights, community care and education.

## **Caroline Lynch**

Caroline is Family Rights Group's Principal Legal Adviser. She joined FRG in June 2015 to lead the organisation's work focussing on young parents whose children are involved with the child welfare system before taking up her current post. Prior to joining Family Rights Group Caroline practiced for 7 years from chambers in Newcastle upon Tyne specialising in public law children's work and immigration & asylum law. Caroline subsequently spent three years working as in-house counsel in the children's legal team of a busy London local authority. Caroline delivers seminars about children's rights/children in the legal system at the UCL Institute of Education and the Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy Education in London. She is also presently conducting socio-legal PhD research examining the educational experiences of homeless children primary school children in London.

## **Rosie Parratt**

Rosie qualified as a solicitor in 1994 into the family law department of a high street practice in Surrey. She moved to London in 1996 and began increasingly to concentrate upon public law care proceedings (in the main acting for parents and extended family members) as well as domestic violence matters. From 2003, she worked in the London Borough of Lewisham, for Mackesy's solicitors and its successor practice, Warren's Family Law. Rosie is a member of the Law Society's Advanced Family Law Panel. Rosie has a keen interest in child welfare policy and the ability of parents to access unbiased excellent quality legal advice at every stage of Social Services' involvement with their family. She feels strongly that family links should be retained where possible. In the past Rosie has undertaken a variety of pro bono advice work for the CAB, a Local Authority One Stop Advice Shop and for Rights of Women.

## **Andrew Pack**

Andrew Pack is a local authority care lawyer who previously also represented parents in care proceedings. He has been working in family law for 25 years and is also the author of the Suesspicious Minds law and social work blog.

## **Mital Raithatha**

Mital is an education and community care solicitor at Just for Kids Law. She joined JFKL first as a paralegal in July 2012 after volunteering for the charity for 6 months. Since joining the charity she has assisted young people in various matters including obtaining support from social services, acting in school exclusions cases, and obtaining support for children with special educational need. Mital was admitted to the roll in May 2010.

## **Lucy Reed**

Lucy Reed is a barrister at St John's Chambers in Bristol, whose specialism is child law, with an emphasis on public law proceedings. She is the Chair of The Transparency Project, an educational charity whose aims are to improve public understanding of family law and courts, and was a contributor to their Guidance Note on Section 20. Lucy is the author of *The Family Court without a Lawyer - A Handbook for Litigants in Person* (Bath Publishing 2014, 3rd Edition forthcoming), and has been writing her blog *Pink Tape* for almost a decade. Lucy is a Deputy District Judge.

## **Mark Twomey QC**

Mark Twomey is joint Head of Coram Chambers. Mark specialises in all areas of family law, including public and private children, care and adoption proceedings with an international element, adult and social care matters and ToLATA. Mark has a background in mixed common law, specialising solely in family law for the last 12 years, with particular expertise in care proceedings and abduction. He has regularly appeared in the Court of Appeal, most notably in three landmark cases, leading authorities in their areas. He has lectured frequently on Adoption, Contempt of Court, BIIR and Abduction, including to the Local Government Lawyers Association, the ALC, to solicitors and within Chambers. He is interviewed regularly by the BBC in relation to legal issues concerning children.