

HELEN COMPTON

Year of call
2011



Helen is an experienced barrister who specialises in family and employment law. She is regularly instructed in complex cases with voluminous material. Helen is quickly able to grasp the crux of the case and distil the key issues. She is regularly praised for her advocacy as being thorough and incisive. Helen has appeared against leading counsel and in the Court of Appeal.

In her family practice, Helen is regularly instructed in the most serious cases, including traumatic injuries and allegations of FII. Her background in clinical negligence work makes her comfortable approaching and challenging medical evidence. She often represents very vulnerable clients and is sensitive and re-assuring.

In her employment practice, Helen provides strategic insight at all stages and gives clear and tactical advice. Helen represents both individual and corporate clients. She tailors her approach to best suit the needs of each client and the case.

Outside of her work in chambers, Helen gives talks, writes articles and offers training. In February 2023, Helen was appointed as a barrister member of the Council of the Inns of Court Disciplinary Pool. In May 2023, Helen was appointed as a Recorder to sit in Family on the South Eastern Circuit.

Helen is qualified to accept instructions directly from clients and is registered under the Bar Council's Public Access Scheme, meaning that members of the public who seek specialist advice can come direct to her. In addition, she welcomes instructions from solicitors, in-house law departments, qualified foreign lawyers, and clients licensed by the Bar Council to give instructions direct to barristers under the Bar Council's Licensed Access Scheme. For more information please visit our Direct Access page [here](#).

LEGAL EXPERTISE

Family Law

Helen is regularly instructed in both public and private Children Act proceedings. Helen's client base includes, local authorities, parents and guardians, as well as intervening grandparents or other family members. Helen has considerable experience of lengthy care proceedings which investigate allegations of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse. Helen is instructed in cases of traumatic brain injuries and FII. As a result of her clinical negligence and inquest work Helen assimilates and processes large amounts of complex medical information and conducts incisive cross-examination.

Helen is an extremely approachable advocate who builds a good rapport with those she represents. She is aware that all proceedings involving children are distressing for the parties and require great sensitivity. She provides robust advice whilst being sympathetic to the issues raised. Helen frequently works with vulnerable clients, often with learning and mental health difficulties. Helen fearlessly defends their interests.

Examples of Helen's recent cases include:

- Kensington and Chelsea RLBC v NM [2024]: Helen represented the father as leading junior against King's Counsel in lengthy care proceedings involving a 14-day composite final hearing. Helen's advocacy received judicial praise.
- Kensington and Chelsea RLBC v NM [2024] EWFC 48: Helen, as junior counsel, represented the father in a '*...difficult case management decision regarding the proper ambit of the finding of fact exercise...*' before Mr Justice MacDonald. Helen prepared the written arguments.
- Lincolnshire County Council -v.- M, PF, A and B [2023]: Helen successfully represented a '*psychological father*' in lengthy care proceedings. Despite the local authority and the guardian seeking removal of the child, Helen succeeded in securing the return of the child to her client. The publication of the judgment is awaited. The court reiterated important principles as to the ambit of the role of professional witnesses and commented on the evolving concept of 'family'.
- S (Children: (Party Status)) [2022] EWCA Civ 1717: Helen successfully represented the appellant in the Court of Appeal against the refusal to grant the appellant party status. The Court of Appeal joined the appellant as a party and noted Helen's advocacy to be '*concise and effective.*'

Selected Cases

Barnet v D [2022]

Helen represented the father as junior counsel in a fact-finding involving allegations that the parents or maternal grandmother had caused the child deliberately inflicted injuries including subdural haemorrhages and rib fractures. The father was exonerated.

A Local Authority v AA [2022] EWHC 1596 (Fam)

Helen represented (as junior counsel) the mother in a fact-finding hearing in the High Court where the parents were accused of FII. The mother was exonerated in respect of all allegations of direct harm to the children.

2022

Helen represented the guardian in a 11-day composite hearing. This case involved consideration of an application for a cross-border kinship placement. There was a dispute between the local authority and the guardian as to the nature and robustness of the assessments and planning. The court supported the position of the guardian.

2021

Helen successfully represented the mother in a fact-finding hearing where a child has sustained significant facial bruising. The mother was exonerated and at the welfare hearing the children returned to her care.

2020-2021

Helen represented the mother in a nine-day final hearing involving allegations of extreme domestic violence.

2020

Helen represented the father in a 12-day composite final hearing involving traumatic head injuries to children. There was evidence from numerous experts, including a Paediatric Neuroradiologist, Paediatric Neurosurgeon and a Paediatric Ophthalmologist.

2020

Helen represented the children in a five-day final hearing in which there was a dispute between the professionals as to the outcomes for the children. The judge agreed with the guardian and made orders in line with his recommendations.

2020

Helen represented the mother in a final hearing at which the Local Authority was seeking adoption of her daughter. At the outset of the hearing Helen applied for an adjournment and further assessments due to gaps in the evidence. Following five days of cross-examination the Judge granted the applications and the case was adjourned for further assessments.

G (Children: Fair Hearing), Re [2019] EWCA Civ 126

2019

Helen successfully represented a grandmother in a nine-day case where the Local Authority alleged that the grandmother, with whom the children were residing, were at risk of harm. Case resolved with children remaining in her client's care.

2019

Helen represented the children in a High Court case involving multiple experts and allegations of fabricated illness.

Employment

Helen is very experienced in Employment Law. She has acted in many lengthy Tribunal hearings on behalf of claimants and respondents. Helen has been instructed to appear in the EAT on a number of occasions. Helen is very familiar with the Equality Act 2010 and has acted for both claimants and respondents. She has undertaken work involving all aspects of equality legislation and is attune to equality and diversity issues. She has been involved in claims against service providers under the Equality Act and has provided advice in such matters.

Helen has experience representing local authorities in several Tribunal cases. Helen worked as a consultant for Leicester City Council. This role involved advising and managing a wide range of cases from the earliest stages, including engaging in negotiation. Helen is frequently asked to review and draft settlement agreements and contracts.

Recent examples of Helen's cases include the following: In December 2022 Helen advised a client on a whistleblowing claim and merits of an interim relief application. The case settled for over £200,000. In September 2022 Helen successfully represented a charitable education trust. The claims against the trust of unfair dismissal, direct race discrimination and victimisation were all dismissed. In March 2020 Helen succeeded in a five-day case representing a forensic scientist in her claims for constructive unfair dismissal and sexual orientation discrimination. The claimant secured over £80,000 in compensation. This case was reported in the national press. Helen's other cases include successfully representing a claimant in a nine-day direct race discrimination and victimisation case. The claimant was awarded more than £55,000 in damages, a large proportion represented the Claimant's injury to feelings and psychiatric harm following his treatment at work. Helen successfully represented an accountant in her claim against an accountancy firm for automatically unfair dismissal and unlawful deduction from wages. The claimant received over £40,000 following a contested remedy hearing.

Selected Cases

In 2024, Helen successfully represented a bank in a disability discrimination claim. The Tribunal determined that the claimant had not established that he was disabled within the meaning of the legislation.

In 2022, Helen advised a claimant on a whistleblowing claim and merits of an interim relief application. The case settled for over £200,000.

In 2022, Helen successfully represented a charitable education trust. The claims against the trust of unfair dismissal, direct race discrimination and victimisation were all dismissed.

In 2020, Helen succeeded in a five-day case representing a forensic scientist in her claims for constructive unfair dismissal and sexual orientation discrimination. The claimant secured over £80,000 in compensation. The case was reported in the national press.

Memberships

- Inner Temple