DERE STREET BARRISTERS

James Howard

James joined Chambers in 2019 after successful completion of pupillage under the tutelage of Stephen Ainsley. James has a thriving practice in which he acts for local authorities, parents, children and intervenors in all manner of cases involving children, including public and private law proceedings. James accepts instructions in increasingly complex matters and now appears regularly in the Family Division of the High Court.



NOTABLE CASES

Re A [2024]:

Representing the Applicant Local Authority in consolidated proceedings brought in respect of two sets of children from two families. The Local Authority sought findings of inflicted head injury to a baby by shaking, which almost resulted in fatality and an increased likelihood of developing cerebral palsy and/or epilepsy in later life. Four experts were instructed to comment on the likely mechanism of injury. All findings sought by the Local Authority were made by the Court following a finding of fact hearing. A safe family placement was subsequently identified.

Re L [2024]:

Representing the father throughout care proceedings, which included a 9-day finding of fact hearing, in respect of 11 subject children. The Father faced allegations that he had subjected the mother to campaign of controlling behaviour and sexual abuse for almost 20 years over the course of their marriage and in the presence of the children. At the conclusion of proceedings, the Court sanctioned care plans which provided for the father to have unsupervised contact with the children subject to the parents staying separated and the Father's completion of domestic abuse work.

Year Of Call

2018

Areas of Practice

FAMILY

Divorce & Domestic Violence
Public & Private Law – Children

RISING STAR
Legal500
UNITED KINGDOM
2026

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Re J [2024]:

Representing the Applicant Mother in protracted private law proceedings, including in a 6-day finding of fact hearing. There were various issues in the case including the loss of the subject child's interview to the police, the capturing of a non-subject child's evidence to the Court and the use of electronic devices and professional position as a means of perpetrating the abuse alleged. Notwithstanding the loss of key pieces of evidence by the police, at the finding of fact hearing the mother pursued findings against the father of controlling behaviour and sophisticated emotional abuse over a period of 9 years and physical and emotional abuse of the child over a period of 5 years. The Court made 18 findings against the father, largely in the terms sought by the mother.

Re B [2024]:

Representing the Applicant Local Authority throughout care proceedings brought in response to the subject child's allegations of physical abuse by the mother, resulting in multiple injuries all over her body. The Court made the findings sought by the Local Authority and the child's placement was secured outside of her family.

Re L [2023]:

Representing a mother throughout care proceedings, including at a composite Final Hearing, before the High Court. The case centred on determining the cause of the tragic death of the mother's 3 month old baby, whilst in the care of the parents. The Court was also charged with the welfare planning of the four surviving siblings of the child, who were ultimately placed within the family.

Re V [2023]:

Representing a 9 year-old child (by her Guardian) at a Final Hearing in private law proceedings before the High Court. Due to the parents' intractable hostility towards one another following the mother's relocation to the UK, these were the sixth set of proceedings in the child's life. Following a 5-day contested hearing in which the Court heard evidence from both parents and two experts, the Court made final Child Arrangements Orders, Specific Issue Orders and s.91 (14) Barring Orders, all of which were recommended by the Guardian

Re A [2021]:

Represented the Local Authority as a led junior in a 15-day final hearing in the High Court. The case involved the long-term placement of 4 teenage boys, who were in separate residential placements and 2 of whom were subject to Deprivation of Liberty Orders. Issues included inter-sibling sexual abuse, parental sexual abuse, domestic violence and complex psychological/psychiatric evidence. As a led junior, James was part of a team which considered and presented approximately 18,000 pages of evidence. The court made the orders sought by the Local Authority.

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Recommendations and Client Feedback

The Legal 500 2027 – Leading Junior

The Legal 500 2026 – Rising Star

'James a great advocate to work alongside, he is informative and friendly, and he provides clear advice and has good communication with instructing solicitors.'

Memberships

The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple;

Qualifications

BA (Hons) Politics, Newcastle University (2013);

Graduate Diploma in Law with Commendation, University of Law (2014);

Bar Professional Training Course – Outstanding, Northumbria University (2018).

Scholarships/Awards/Prizes

Certificate of Academic Excellence (Newcastle University);

Jules Thorn Scholarship (Middle Temple);

Dean's Award (Northumbria University);

Certificate of Honour (Middle Temple);

Baron Dr Ver Heyden de Lancey Prize (Middle Temple);

Highest marks on the Bar Professional Training Course in Criminal Law, Family Law and Advocacy.

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