



Tim Donnelly



Tim is a family law specialist practising in children law.

Tim receives instructions from local authorities, family members and children (with or without children's guardians).

The mainstay of Tim's practice is complex care and related proceedings before the Family Court and High Court (Family

(suspicious death, factitious and induced illness, shaking and other non-accidental injuries, and sexual abuse). Tim is experienced in cases involving complex or disputed medical issues, associated or ongoing police investigations, significant amounts of documentary or other evidence, and many parties and witnesses.

Tim regularly advises and appears in cases involving jurisdictional or international issues, cultural or religious issues and the deprivation of a child or young person's liberty.

Tim is often instructed before or at the outset of proceedings. He is experienced in cross-examining children, young people or vulnerable adults: he was in the first cohort to participate in the Family Law Bar Association's 'Vulnerable Witness Advocacy Training'.

Chambers and Partners 2024

Timothy Donnelly often acts for local authorities and parents in care proceedings involving complex medical evidence such as allegations of sexual abuse, and induced illness. He has particular experience in cross-examining children and other vulnerable witnesses. He also acts on child arrangement and abduction matters.

YEAR OF CALL

2003

APPOINTMENTS

Recorder (Family)

Approved Pupillage Supervisor

Accredited Advocacy Trainer (including to train Advocacy Trainers)

Advocacy Junior, North Eastern Circuit

Treasurer, Family Law Bar Association (North East)

AREAS OF PRACTICE

FAMILY

Public Law – Children

Tim Donnelly

NOTABLE CASES

Re G (2024-5)

Representing the local authority in a fact finding hearing relating to the origin of chlamydia in a 6 month old child.

Re C (2024)

Representing a mother alleged to have caused a skull fracture – no findings made.

Re T (2024-5)

Representing the mother in a fact finding hearing regarding suspected asphyxiation.

Re M (2024)

Representing the local authority in a fact finding hearing regarding suspected asphyxiation.

Re F (2024)

Leading Rachael Landin – Representing a father alleged to have caused numerous clavicular and rib fractures to his 3 month old child – no findings made.

Re C (2024)

Led by Nicholas Stonor KC – Representing a mother alleged to have caused numerous rib fractures to her seriously ill baby – no findings made.

Re P (2024)

Appearing for the local authority against 11 respondents in a fact finding hearing in consolidated proceedings relating to interfamilial and transgenerational sex abuse.

Re A (2023-4)

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Appearing against Kings' Counsel. Representing the local authority in a fact finding hearing in relation to the causation of intracranial injuries to a newborn baby with a genetic defect.

Re F (2023)

Representing a father accused of having inflicted a broken femur on his newborn baby – no findings made.

Re M (2023)

Appearing against Kings' Counsel. Representing the local authority in a fact finding hearing in relation to allegations of repeated sexual and physical abuse.

Re L-B (2023)

Appearing against Kings' Counsel. Representing a mother, who was also a solicitor, accused of shaking her baby. No findings were made.

Re R (2022-23)

Leading Christopher McKee, appearing against Kings Counsel, representing the children's guardian in a 4 week fact finding hearing concerned the cause of death of the child's sibling. The case involved over 60 areas of injury, 6 medical experts and a linked murder investigation.

Re H [2023] EWFC 19

Appearing against Kings Counsel, representing the child in an application for a Female Genital Mutilation Prevention Order.

Re T (2023)

Leading Andrew Pike, appearing against Kings Counsel, representing a father alleged to have fabricated illness in his children.

Re M (2023)

Appearing against Kings Counsel, representing the local authority in a 3 week fact finding hearing concerning fabricated and induced illness in respect of 4 children.

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Re S (2023)

Representing the local authority in care proceedings concerning the nature and causation of non-accidental shaking injuries where the carers were children's social care professionals.

Re F (2023)

Leading Shona Upton, appearing against Kings Counsel, representing the local authority in a 2 week fact finding hearing in respect of alleged non-accidental injuries said to have resulted from a short drop fall.

Re M (2023)

Representing the children's guardian in a 2 week fact finding hearing regarding the cause of death of the child's sibling.

Re S (2022-3)

Appearing against Kings Counsel, representing a solicitor alleged to have caused non-accidental shaking injuries to her child: no findings made.

Re L (2022)

Leading Andrew Pike, appearing against Kings Counsel, representing the children in a 5-week fact finding hearing regarding alleged fabricated illness.

Re S/T (2022)

Leading Lindsay Webster, appearing against Kings Counsel, representing the local authority in a 3-week fact finding hearing regarding the nature and causation of non-accidental shaking injuries.

Re M (2022)

Led by Nicholas Stonor KC, representing a parent alleged to have caused non-accidental shaking injuries with life limiting consequences.

Re P (2022)

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Representing the local authority in care proceedings concerning the causation of bruising in a baby subsequently found by treating clinicians to have Ehlers Danlos and resulting in the proceedings being withdrawn.

Re B (2021)

Representing a foster carer alleged to have sexually abused a child in their care.

Re B (2021-2)

Led by Kate Branigan KC, representing a teenager with severe Autism alleged to have sexually abuse their sibling.

Re M (2021)

Representing a parent alleged to have trafficked children to the UK from a Central African country

Re K (2021-2)

Leading Christopher McKee, appearing against KCs, representing a parent alleged to pose a risk of radicalisation to their children.

Re A (2021)

Representing the local authority seeking a declaration as to the lawfulness of withdrawing life sustaining treatment in respect of a child in their care.

Re M/A (2020-1)

Led by Barbara Connolly QC, representing children facing placement outside the jurisdiction in the USA and the Caribbean.

Re R/J (2020-1)

Led by Nicholas Stonor QC, representing a parent in a 4-week fact-finding hearing in respect of allegations of intra-familial trans-generational sex abuse; the case involved two local authorities and 11 other parties; the allegations were found to be false memories induced by the other parent.

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Re H (Interim Care: Scottish Residential Placement) [2020] EWHC 2780 (Fam) (Cobb J)

Representing the local authority in a case used to provide guidance as to the legal framework for achieving, authorising and recognising the placement of an English child in a Scottish residential care home. [\[2020\] EWHC 2780 \(Fam\)](#)

Re H/P (2019-20)

Representing a parent alleged to have fabricated illness in their children, the case also considered the interface between clinical negligence and public law proceedings as the allegations questioned the legitimacy of an earlier negligence claim.

Re R/M (2019-20)

Representing the children in a case involving non-accidental shaking injuries and involving consideration of the relevance of surgical intervention in response to the injuries.

Re A (2020-1)

Representing the local authority in care proceedings arising the parents' involvement in an attempted murder linked to organised crime; the case involved repeated public interest immunity issues.

Re W (2019)

Representing the local authority in care proceedings regarding injuries to a non-verbal 9 year old child who suffered from severe epilepsy carrying risk of fatal seizures; involved calling the child's teenage sibling to give evidence in respect of their parents' behaviour.

Re M (2018-19)

Representing the local authority in respect of allegations of inter-sibling and parental sex abuse involving a serving police officer; also involved deprivation of liberty and cross-border jurisdictional issues.

Re C (A Child) [2018] EWHC 3332 (Fam) (Cohen J)

Representing a teenage mother seeking to relinquish her baby without the father being notified of the child's existence; involved the rarely used 'alternate dispute procedure' and built upon the line of existing authorities in respect of non-notification of birth fathers. [Re C \(A Child\)](#)

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Re B/S (2018)

Representing the children where the mother introduced bacteria into the child's via their central venous catheter whilst in hospital; involved evidence from a number of diverse areas of medical expertise including nephrology, microbiology, immunology and infectious diseases.

Re C (2017)

Representing the local authority in respect of the nature and causation of a numerous injuries discovered post-mortem to a 15-week old baby; involved complex evidence from three radiologists, two pathologists and a histopathologist.

Re S/G (2016-18)

Representing the local authority in establishing causation of a femoral fracture to a 8-year old child with an extremely rare brain disorder and complex health needs (including significant seizure activity and reduced bone density); included consideration of a further fracture sustained in the midst of proceedings and the relevance of subsequently hospital interventions, the child's increased immobility and a further reduction in bone density consequent upon the initial injury.

Recommendations and client feedback

Chambers and Partners UK Bar 2026

"Tim is always thoroughly prepared for each case and provides excellent advice to clients who respond well to his approach." "A persuasive courtroom presence – sharp, composed and highly effective under pressure."

Legal 500 2025/2026

'Tim is a master of his craft.'

Chambers and Partners UK Bar 2024/2025

"Very methodical, detailed and careful to be accurate."

Chambers and Partners UK Bar 2023

Tim Donnelly

"Timothy is a skilled advocate. His client care is excellent." "Timothy provides detailed advice and demonstrates great knowledge with excellent client management skills." "An excellent advocate who builds excellent rapport with clients.

Legal 500 2023

'A highly respected and stand out junior on the circuit. Tim is an outstanding advocate, hard working and very thorough in his preparation.'

Legal 500 2022

Ranked at Tier 2.

Chambers and Partners UK Bar 2021

"He is able to approach any problem with a calm, commanding and approachable manner." "He's a very well-respected junior counsel and a fantastic advocate. He's very good with the clients and very well organised."

Legal 500 2020

"Tim is smart and combines a rigorous attention to detail in preparation with a quietly ruthless advocacy style which makes him a very effective unit as a barrister."

Chambers and Partners UK Bar 2020

"Whenever he says something in court, the Judge will listen. He brings with him excellent preparation but also gravitas." "Tim is unflappable. Clients like him and he has a manner about him which commands respect."

Legal 500 2019

"Specialises in abuse international child abduction cases."

Chambers and Partners UK Bar 2019

"Very approachable and very well prepared. He is well respected by judges and professionals". "A very friendly, professional and diligent barrister. He works incredibly hard and does his job incredibly well."

Memberships

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Tim Donnelly

Member of the Family Law Bar Association

Member of the North Eastern Circuit

Qualifications

LLB (Hons), Newcastle upon Tyne