

Jo Delahunty QC

“A phenomenal cross-examiner, who gets unbelievable results.” “She has an extraordinary grasp of medical evidence.”
Chambers & Partners 2020 – Band 1

Experience

Year of Call: 1986

Year of Silk: 2006

Practice Areas

- Private Children Law
- Public Children Law

Awards



Education

MA (Oxon) Jurisprudence

Appointments

Recorder (South Eastern Circuit) Family: Public and Private Law 2009

Bencher the Honorable Society of Middle Temple 2011

Professor of Law Gresham College, London, 2016

Freedom of the City of London



Profile

Jo specializes in contentious and highly complex cases at High Court level and above involving:

- The death of/catastrophic injuries to a child
- Non Accidental Head Injury (NAHI)/ Shaken baby allegations (TRIAD cases)
- Vitamin D/Rickets/EDS/genetic disorders and congenital malformations which can mimic child abuse
- Fabricated Induced Illness (FII) allegations
- ISIS cases: alleged radicalisation of children/ risk of flight to Syria
- Sexual abuse (Intergenerational/ Inter sibling/ maternal rape/ genital mutilation/ internet exploitation)
- Ritualized child abuse/cultural practices such as Kndoki
- Child protection cases involving concurrent criminal prosecution for attempted murder/ child cruelty and neglect/ sex offences
- Parent or subject child with disabilities (with a particular interest in Child in Need issues and the rights of, and services for, a disabled child and/or adult parent within care proceedings)
- Cases involving cross examination of a child or vulnerable adult
- Re-litigation/challenge to historic findings of abuse based on emerging science/ fresh factual evidence.

Complex private law proceedings involving allegations of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect (alcoholism/ psychiatric issues) involving transfer of residence applications and contact disputes are a natural corollary to her practice.

Alongside her practice in the Family Division, Jo Delahunty QC worked alongside Mike Mansfield QC and Barristers from Garden Court Chambers and Doughty Street to represent 77 families at the Hillsborough inquests. On 26.4.16 the longest running Inquest in English legal history came to an end and the jury found that the 96 victims of the disaster who died on 15.4.89 were unlawfully killed and that no fan behaviour caused or contributed to the deaths. Jo Delahunty QC was responsible for leading the team on behalf of 77 families that successfully exposed the failures of the South Yorkshire Ambulance Service to respond to the disaster and the jury found that those failings were so fundamental that they led to or caused loss of life.

Jo has been ranked as a 'Top Ranked Silk' by Chambers and Partners in successive editions including the most current

She has been named a 'Top Tier 'Leading Silk by The Legal 500 in successive editions including the most current

Jo has been selected by her peers to be included in the Eighth Edition of The Best Lawyers in the United Kingdom for her work in Family Law.

Jo has had numerous articles published in legal journals and has also gained acclaim for her seminars delivered to Barristers, Solicitors, social work and medical professionals and the public on family law matters and access to justice. Jo has spoken on joint platforms with speakers who are as passionate about child protection and fairness and equality issues as she is: notably the Association of Lawyers for Children, The Criminal Bar Association, the Academy of Experts, the launch of 'Behind The Gown' and the Brilliant Minds Conference.

Jo has been included as a 'women of distinction' in Middle Temple's exhibition 'Celebrating a Century of Women in Law'

Publications and Teaching

Jo Delahunty QC was appointed Professorship of Law to Gresham College(Est 1597) in 2016 ; a role she maintains alongside her silk practice .

In her capacity as Gresham Professor of Law, Professor Delahunty QC continues the 421-year-old tradition of delivering free public lectures within the City of London at Bernard's Inn and via live streamed web to the UK and internationally

The annual series of six free public lectures confronts issues arising from her child protection practice and the family justice processes around families and children.

The hour-long free public lectures take place at the Barnard's Inn Hall, EC1N and are livestreamed: the lecture and notes are available to download via the Gresham website

<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/professors-and-speakers/professor-jo-delahunty-qc/>

The Practice of Law (2019-2020)

1. Have Women Achieved Professional Equality? 100 Years since the Sex Disqualification (Removal)
2. 100 Years of Women in Law
3. Can the Law Keep Up With Changes in Society?
4. The Insider's Guide to Becoming a Barrister
5. The Law is Broken: The Future of Legal Aid
6. Diversity in the Legal Profession

Challenges in the Family Justice System (2018-19)

1. Ethics In and Out of the Court Room
2. Sexual Harassment at the Bar
3. The 30th Anniversary of The Children Act 1989: Is It Still Fit For Purpose?
4. Politics and the Legal Profession
5. The Child and Medical Treatment: The Chance to Live, or to Die with Dignity?
6. Wellbeing at the Bar? Is a Family Lawyer's Work all Stress and Distress?

Transparency in the Family Justice System (2017-18)

1. Women Lawyers: Equals At The Bar?
2. What Do Judges Do in the Family Court?
3. Vulnerable Clients and The Family Justice System
4. Dealing with Sex Abuse: How Does the Family Court Assess Risk?
5. The Child in the Family Court Room: Whose Child is it Anyway?
6. Transparency in the Family Court: What Goes On Behind Closed Doors?

When Worlds Collide: The Family and the Law (2016-17)

1. Sex Death and Witchcraft: What Goes On In the Family Court Room?
2. Is One Individual's Radicalism another's Right to Free Speech?
3. When Legal Worlds Collide
4. Guilty Until Proven Innocent
5. Expert Witness: a Zero Sum Game?
6. 'Two Point One Children': Why There Is No Typical Family in The Family Court

In Jo's capacity as Gresham Professor of Law, she gave the Welcome Speech at The Sheriffs Breakfast in Guildhall in September on the subject of 'Respect for the Independence of the Judiciary and the diversity challenges facing the City and Law to reflect the society they live and work amidst.' Members of the audience included the City corp, The Recorder of London and Old Bailey Judges, Alderman and Women and various Embassies.

Public Speaking Profile

Alongside her public speaking engagements for lawyers Jo is in demand for talks to the business community and private industry on issues such as leadership and teamwork, coping under pressure and transferable skills please see:

<https://harveythorncroft.co.uk/speakers/professor-jo-delahunty-qc/>

On the 22nd January, Jo will be delivering the closing keynote speech at the JD Woods International annual conference at The Hurlingham Club, Fulham.

In March, Jo is giving the closing address at HTL's Brilliant Minds Showcase. The line-up at the event includes speakers Helen Glover, Iain Hennessey, Dr. Neslyn Watson-Druée, Prof Elaine Fox, Kate Cook and Richard Cotter.

On the 26th March Jo is delivering the keynote address at the Resolution Conference in Brighton.

In June, Jo is giving the opening address at the Institute of Travel and Tourism Conference in Istanbul. Speakers include John Bercow, Jess Phillips MP and Tim Peake.

In November 2019 Jo spoke at the Middle Temple event 'Survive & Thrive - Judge: Friend or Foe' on the relationship between Advocates and Members of the Judiciary.

In November 2019, Jo gave a talk at Quadranture Capital on 'the importance of transparent and effective communication within the company and with the public.'

On the 15th-16th October, Jo spoke at the Amadeus Annual Conference in Malaga which brings together delegates from the North America and Latin America travel sectors for the first time. Jo will be speaking on the subject of 'Change and Challenge; how to make it work for you and your customers.'

Jo spoke at the MKM annual results meeting on the 17th October where she will discuss 'Risk taking and strategic thinking.'

Jo was invited to speak at the Law Society Gazette's 'Women in the Law reception' which marked the Centenary of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 and the launch of the Law Gazette's page on 'Women in Law.'

With the centenary of the Sex Discrimination Removal Act 1919 approaching, Jo was interviewed for episode 9 '[The Leaky Pipeline](#)' of the 'First 100 Years' podcast.

In June, Jo spoke at the [Institute of Travel & Tourism Conference 2019](#) in Spilt, Croatia at the invitation of the Chair of Steven Freudmann. Jo spoke on the concept of Change and Challenge.

Jo was among speakers at [The Risky Business Conference 2019](#) on learning from other industries where she spoke on 'Lessons to be learnt from large scale disasters like Hillsborough to intimate tragedies such as the death of an abused baby'

Jo recently joined the panel for the launch of the '[Us Too? - Bullying and Sexual Harassment in the Legal Profession](#)' report.

Jo delivered the keynote address as the 'Big Ideas' invited speaker at the [Opex Leaders Europe Conference](#) at the beginning of April where she shared her secrets to winning over adversaries and persuading others to take her views.

Jo was part of the well known personalities at the [Brilliant Minds Conference](#) on 12th March 2019, where she talked about how to manage work stress and cope with the fear of failure in Performance. The speakers included Greg Wallace, David Coluthard MBE and Gavin Hewitt.

"The most destructive thought" interview can be viewed [here](#).

Jo has been interviewed by BBC Radio 4 for '[The World Tonight](#)' where she discussed the significance and importance of the Bar Councils Judicial Bullying Guidance.

Jo is a sought after speaker at medico/legal family conferences for her insights into how to deal with challenging cases involving complex medical evidence and emerging science as well as how to manage the cross examination of experts and vulnerable witnesses and how to approach cases of sexual and physical abuse: the White Paper Conference 2017, the Park Lane Plowden Annual Conference 2017 and previously at Butterworths Annual Public Law Conference and for Jordan's Family Law. Jo headlined a conference in Leeds in January 2016 alongside the academic DR Gordon Clubb, lecturer in International Security and Chair of the Terrorism and Political Violence Association on the 'Risks of Radicalisation' and spoke alongside Charles Farr, Director -General Counter Terrorism Unit, academics and professionals from Prevent, social workers and representatives from the National Terrorism Unit in London, November 2015 on the subject of 'Radicalisation; Safeguarding and the Family Courts'.

Last year Prof Jo Delahunty QC delivered a lecture at Gresham College in central London saying sexual harassment at the Bar was not being reported because pupils and young lawyers feared their careers would be damaged if they complained.

To read the full article [click here](#)

Articles

Jo writes for specialist legal journals - including 'Counsel' Magazine and 'The Barrister' and is a regular invited contributor to the Jordan's Family Law monthly periodical where articles include a 3 part series on

the Rights of Parents with Disabilities in the Family Justice System April, July and August 2018 and most recently on 'The 30th anniversary of the Children Act 1989: is it still fit for purpose?'

Jo has had an article published in October 2019's edition of 'Counsel' Magazine where she discussed 'PTSD and working in an underfunded sector, and following this in November an article titled 'On the shoulder of giants' discussing gender equality in the Bar. Jo has also written an article for the winter edition of 'The Barrister' on 'Wellbeing at the Bar? Is a Legal Aid Lawyer's Work All Stress and Distress?'

Jo has written an article on 'The child and medical treatment: the chance to live, or to die with dignity?' where she examines how the courts have applied the best interests test and the children's welfare principle in cases where doctors and parents disagree about the provision of experimental medical treatment to a seriously ill child. Assesses the argument that the parents should be the final arbiter of their child's care. Discusses the proposal to introduce a harm threshold below which the courts will not overturn the parents' wishes.

Jo has written an article on the Day in the life...of a child protection silk for Counsel magazine where she discusses the exhilaration and endurance challenge of working to the max as a child abuse public lawyer.

Jo has recently written an article for 'The Barrister' on Politics and the law: Where do we draw the line?

Previous articles published by Jordan's have sought to explain the ramifications of emerging research on childhood disease and suspected child abuse and natural disease mimicking inflicted injury, the role of experts in family proceedings, and issues arising within alleged Radicalism cases confronting family practitioners and the Family Division.

Memberships

Association of Women Barristers

Family Law Bar Association

The Temple Women's Forum (steering committee) 2011 - present

Centre for Child and Family Reform (CCFLR) committee 2012-present

United Kingdom Association of Part Time Judges (UKAPTJ)

Patron of AMEND (The Association for Multiple Endocrine Disorders)

Association of Women Judges

Directories

Highly sought-after specialist children silk entrusted with the most significant and demanding national cases. She regularly handles matters concerning the most serious injuries and fatalities resulting from sexual assault, radicalisation and abuse. She is particularly experienced in cases involving non-accidental injury to children.

Strengths: "A phenomenal cross-examiner, who gets unbelievable results." "She has an extraordinary grasp of medical evidence."

Chambers & Partners 2020

Band 1

'The set has many "excellent" barristers including Prof Jo Delahunty QC who "dominates every case she is in.'"

'Is extremely well respected by judges and is a real force to be reckoned with.'

Legal 500, 2020

Top Tier

Highly sought-after specialist children silk entrusted with the most significant and demanding national cases. She regularly handles matters concerning the most serious injuries and fatalities resulting from sexual assault, radicalisation and abuse. She is particularly experienced in cases involving non-accidental injury to children.

Strengths: "She is fantastic on tactics and very impressive on the law." "She has excellent analytical skills and a great grasp of complex medical evidence. Her advocacy is robust, and she's amazing to watch."

Chamber & Partners 2019

Band 1

'She is a very robust cross-examiner.'

Legal 500, 2019

Top Tier

Highly sought-after specialist children silk entrusted with the most significant and demanding national cases. She regularly handles matters concerning the most serious injuries and fatalities resulting from sexual assault, radicalism and abuse. She has particular expertise in matters concerning a large amount of complex expert evidence following investigation.

Strengths: "Expert in children work, she is brilliant at distilling a case down to its key issues and is great at strategic planning. Very supportive to instructing solicitors, she's easy to talk to."

Chamber & Partners 2018

Band 1

'She displays razor-sharp analysis and a clear sense of direction.'

Legal 500, 2017

Top Tier

Highly sought-after specialist children silk entrusted with the most significant and demanding national cases. She has particular expertise in matters concerning a large amount of complex expert evidence following investigation.

Strengths: "She is exceptional in every way and has an attention to detail beyond any other silk right now."

Chambers & Partners 2017

"She is an absolute force of nature and a star in court."

Legal 500, 2016

Top Tier

Specialises in serious cases where sexual and physical abuse are alleged. She is the only family law practitioner to be involved in the Hillsborough Inquest.

Strengths: "She is deservedly pre-eminent. She has a brilliant mind, and is one of the few who is as good a fearsome cross-examiner as she is arguing the law in the Supreme Court." "She is very detailed in her approach and has an immaculate knowledge of the papers."

Recent work: Has been acting on behalf of 75 families in the Hillsborough Inquest to try to determine whether the medical response was acceptable.

Chambers & Partners 2016

Band 1

A dedicated children lawyer who focuses on difficult public law matters and care proceedings concerning

allegations of sexual and emotional abuse. Also handles cases involving the death of children.

Expertise: "A first port of call for care work," "she is extremely hard-working, knowledgeable and very committed to the client that she represents. Jo is a very tactical and effective advocate, who is good to observe and learn from."

Chambers & Partners 2015

Band 1

A formidable advocate, and fascinating to watch and learn from.

Legal 500 2015 Top Tier

A masterful tactician and a brilliantly passionate advocate.

Legal 500 2014 Top Tier

Specialises in children law. She has handled some complex and often controversial disputes involving child death, and ritualised and sexual abuse.

Expertise: "Superb. She has one of the sharpest brains I know, and is very forensic and tactical."
"Exceptional. She works incredibly hard, is excellent at cross-examination and great at presenting a case at court."

Recent work: Delahunty represented a teenage mother who was falsely accused of inflicting multiple fractures to a newborn baby, killing him by shaking/impact. The case involved cross-examining 40 medics and 16 experts.

Chambers & Partners 2014

Band 1

Jo Delahunty QC has 'a phenomenal brain, and great forensic skill'.

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in the area of Children Law

Legal 500 2013 Top Tier

The "absolutely brilliant" Jo Delahunty QC is a children law expert who deals with cases involving issues such as catastrophic injury, sexual abuse and ritualized abuse. She is reputed to be particularly strong in cases with daunting medical aspects, with sources noting that "she dissects extremely complex medical concepts with ease."

Chambers & Partners 2013

Band 1

Jo Delahunty QC, who has 'a sharp forensic eye and an extraordinary memory', recently acted in the high-profile cases of Re E (Children) and LB of Islington v Al Alas and Wray.

The Legal 500, 2012

The "absolutely superb" Jo Delahunty QC is another at the set to handle the most complex children cases, often involving sexual assault and complex medical issues. She has in the last twelve months handled a number of non-accidental injury matters.

Chambers and Partners 2012

Jo Delahunty QC is much admired for public children work. "Her conversational style of advocacy puts witnesses at their ease, yet conceals a rapier-like incisiveness."

Chambers and Partners 2011

Jo Delahunty QC has ‘a razor-sharp mind with a phenomenal work-rate’
Recommended as a Leading Silk in children’s law in [Legal 500](#) 2011

Jo Delahunty QC is “young, dynamic and making waves in every case she gets involved in.”
Recommended as a Leading Silk in Chambers and Partners 2010

The set was recently bolstered by the arrival of Jo Delahunty QC. Delahunty has particular prowess advising on complex care cases, particularly where there are allegations of abuse.

Recommended as a leading Silk in The Legal 500 2010

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in the Legal Experts 2010

Jo Delahunty QC applies a “relaxed, straightforward and no-nonsense” attitude to her work and can often be seen acting in complex care proceedings.
Recommended as a Leading Silk in Chambers and Partners 2009

Jo Delahunty QC has expertise in complex care proceedings including the death of, or catastrophic injuries to children.

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in The Legal 500 2009

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in the Legal Experts 2009

Jo Delahunty QC most frequently represents parents in public law care proceedings. She also acted for alleged perpetrators in sex abuse cases who were themselves minors, thus subject to the Children’s Act. “I find her a challenging opponent and admire her very much for it,” commented one opposing counsel.
Recommended as a Leading Silk in Chambers and Partners 2008

Jo Delahunty QC has particular expertise in care proceedings and child protection issues. Peers note that she is an “exceptionally well-prepared lawyer who is ready on paper to destroy your case.” In court, she “fights hard, yet always maintains her focus on the child.”
Recommended as a Leading Silk in Chambers and Partners 2007.

Cases

29/10/2019	AA & 25 Ors (Children) (2019)	Jo Delahunty QC Cyrus Larizadeh QC	[2019] EWFC 64
23/10/2018	Rochdale Borough Council v M (Acting Through the Official Solicitor) & Ors (2018)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2018] EWFC 102
11/04/2018	P (A Child), Re (2018)	Kate Branigan QC Jo Delahunty QC	[2018] EWCA Civ 720
22/02/2018	Y (A Child : Fact Finding : Fabricated Induced Illness) (2018)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2018] EWHC 4020 (Fam)
29/01/2016	C, D & E (Radicalisation: Fact-Finding) (2016)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2016] EWHC 3087 (Fam)

06/02/2013	Re A (A Child) (Costs) (2013)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2013] EWCA Civ 43
29/01/2013	Re A and B (Children) [2013]	Jo Delahunty QC	[2013] EWHC B22 (Fam)
16/11/2012	Re A (A Child) (2012)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2012] EWCA Civ 1477
16/11/2012	Re A (A Child) [2012]	Jo Delahunty QC	[2012] EWCA Civ 1477
19/04/2012	Islington London Borough Council v (1) Chana Al-Alas (2) Rohan Wray (3) Jayda Faith Al -Alas Wray (By Her Children's Guardian Dorothy Pottinger) (2012)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2012] EWHC 865 (Fam); [2012] 2 FLR 1239 : (2012) 128 BMLR 1 : [2012] Fam Law 943
19/01/2012	Re M (A Child) (2012)	Jo Delahunty QC Joanne Brown	[2012] EWCA Civ 165: [2012] 2 FLR 121 : [2012] Fam Law 511
14/12/2011	K (Children) [2012]	Jo Delahunty QC	[2012] 2 FLR 745; EWHC Case No. LS09C05566
11/11/2011	A London Borough v O and Others [2011]	Alex Verdan QC Jo Delahunty QC	2011 EWHC 2754 (Fam)
04/07/2011	A County Council (Applicant) v (1) K (2) C (3) T (By the Child's Guardian HT) (Respondents) & (1) CAFCASS (2) Anonymous Referrer (3) T (4) Nagacro (Interveners) (2011)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2011] EWHC 1672 (Fam)
18/05/2011	Kent County Council (Respondent) v (1) A Mother (2) F (3) X (A Minor) (4) Y (A Minor) (5) Z (A Minor) (6) IR (Applicants) (2011)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2011] EWHC 1267 (Fam): [2011] 2 FLR 1088 : [2011] Fam Law 933 : (2011) 108(26) LSG 18
03/03/2011	Kent County Council (Applicant) v (1) A Mother (2) F (3) X, Y, Z (Children) (Respondents) & IR (Intervener) (2011)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2011] EWHC 402 (Fam)
19/02/2010	Re (1) X (2) Y (3) Z (Care Proceedings: Costs) (2010)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2011] 1 FLR 1045 : [2010] Fam Law 800
08/05/2009	A Local Authority v S (2009)	Jo Delahunty QC Alison Grief QC Rob Littlewood	[2009] EWHC 2115 (Fam); (2010) 1 FLR 1560
24/06/2008	X Local Authority v N J & 6 Ors (2008)	Jo Delahunty QC Alistair G Perkins	(2008) 2 FLR 1389; [2008] EWHC 1484 (Fam)
11/06/2008	Re B (Children) (2008)	Jo Delahunty QC Alison Grief QC	[2008] UKHL 35; (2008) 3 WLR 1 : (2008) 4 All ER 1 : (2008) 2 FLR 141 : (2009) 1 AC 11 : Times, June 12, 2008
25/07/2006	(1) Haringey London Borough Council (2) Hackney London Borough Council v MRS S & 7 Ors(2006)	Jo Delahunty QC	[2006] EWHC 2001 (Fam)

14/04/2006

Re X Sub Nom Barnet LBC v Y (2006)

Jo Delahunty QC

(2006) 2 FLR 998