

Transparency in the Family Court and violence against women

17th January 2022

In December 2021, the Court of Appeal handed down judgment in Griffiths v Tickle **[2021] EWCA Civ 1882** permitting the publication of a fact-finding judgment in proceedings under the Children Act 1989 in which a family court judge had made findings against a former MP, Andrew Griffiths, that he had perpetrated domestic and sexual abuse against his ex-wife, Kate Griffiths MP. This was an appeal against a July 2021 decision of the High Court that the fact-finding judgment should be published with the names of the father and the mother included, and only relatively modest redactions: Tickle v Griffiths **[2021] EWHC 3365** (Fam) (Lieven J). The decision of the Court of Appeal permits publication of the earlier decision of Mrs Justice Lieven and the fact-finding hearing of HHJ Williscroft where she made serious findings against a former MP and Minister of State. The application for publication was made by two journalists, Louise Tickle and Brian Farmer.

Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC of Doughty Street Chambers, leading **Chris Barnes** and **Charlotte Baker**, represented the charity **Rights of Women** in their intervention in the High Court and Court of Appeal. Whilst the decision has, since publication, received considerable media attention the focus of Rights of Women's intervention was on the public interest in transparency in the Family Court and the importance of victims of domestic abuse having the opportunity to see the Family Court judges addressing serious allegations in a careful and considered manner. Rights of Women also sought to promote the right of those who have suffered domestic abuse to exercise their freedom of expression, to exercise their right to informational self-determination, and to seek clarification of the extent to which victims of domestic abuse whose cases have been before the Family Court can discuss their experiences with their support network.

The Court of Appeal gave permission for the Skeleton Arguments to be published, and Rights of Women have now published their submissions, [here](#). Tortoise have published all the Skeleton Arguments from the High Court and a number of the submissions before the Court of Appeal, [here](#).