

Reported Case: Deirdre Fottrell KC, Rebecca Foulkes and Andrew Powell appear in the matter of *S v F and M* [2025] EWHC 439 (Fam)

28th February 2025

Judgment in *S v F and M* [2025] EWHC 439 (Fam), a case attracting widespread media attention has been handed down.

The case concerned a 13-year-old boy (now 14), 'S' born in the UK. In March 2024, he was taken to the Republic of Ghana by his parents. The parents and S each held both Ghanaian and British nationality. In September 2024, S applied through his solicitor to make himself a ward of the High Court and for an order that he be returned to the jurisdiction of England and Wales.

The case concerned an examination of whether the parents' decision to remove S to Ghana was within the ambit of their parental decision making, in circumstances where the parents alleged that S was at risk of peripheral involvement with gang culture. Mr Justice Hayden ruled that "the decision falls within what I regard as the generous ambit of parental decision-making, in which the State has no dominion."

Deirdre Fottrell KC represented the young person, S, leading Andrew Powell on 18 February 2025, and Prof Rob George (Harcourt – Family Law) on 26 -27 November 2024, instructed by James Netto of The International Family Law Group LLP.

Rebecca Foulkes represented the father, instructed by Forum Shah from Dawson Cornwell.

Read the judgment and view the press coverage below:

Judgment

New York Times

BBC

The Times