



## Sharon Tappin

Barrister

**CALLED: 2012**

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## Summary

Before joining the Bar Sharon's previous career was in social work. During her social work career Sharon has worked as a social worker, an Independent Reviewing Officer, a Children's Guardian, a service manager and as Head of Service for Cafcass.

Sharon has experience of working in the areas of:

- Child protection
- Adoption
- Fostering
- Safeguarding
- Looked after children
- Youth offending
- Secure accommodation
- Signs of safety
- Brief solution focussed therapy
- Residential care (adults and children)
- Learning disability
- Mental health
- Elderly mental impairment (EMI)

Since completing her legal training in 2012 Sharon has worked in private practice for 18 months representing parents in public and private law proceedings. Between 2014 and 2017 Sharon has worked within local authority legal departments representing local authorities in public and private law child care proceedings.

Sharon has a great deal of experience of conducting proceedings and of court advocacy. Sharon has particular skills in working with vulnerable children and adults.

## Areas of Practice

### PUBLIC LAW CHILDREN

Sharon has conducted proceedings in all aspects of public law child care work, representing foster carers, adopters, parents and local authorities. Sharon's background in social work and knowledge of social work practice, policies and procedures means that she is well placed to represent children, parents, local authorities and Children's Guardians in public law proceedings.

Re T (Children) [2012] UKSC 36 – whilst undertaking legal studies Sharon was part of a team undertaking legal research on behalf of the applicant local authority. In a fact finding hearing where a local authority had joined parties as intervenors, the Judge refused costs of the

intervenor at first instance when no findings were made against them and they were exonerated. The Court of Appeal allowed the intervenors appeal and awarded costs against the local authority. In overturning the Court of Appeal decision the Supreme Court held that the general principle of not awarding costs against a party in care proceedings, in the absence of reprehensible behaviour or unreasonable stance, should not be an exception in cases of split hearings.

### PRIVATE LAW CHILDREN

Sharon has represented parents and local authorities in all aspects of private law child care work. Sharon's previous experience working for Cafcass also involved dispute resolution work with parents in conflict.

### COURT OF PROTECTION - HEALTH AND WELFARE

Sharon has a particular interest in court of protection work in respect of health and welfare matters for vulnerable adults, and children subject to transition arrangements. Sharon has represented a local authority in a case of a young person in care proceedings being subject to a deprivation of liberty authorisation. Sharon has advised local authorities on care arrangements which would constitute deprivations of liberty. Sharon's previous experience as a social worker has included working with vulnerable young people and adults with learning difficulties, mental health issues and adults in EMI services.

## Notable Cases

RE: TT (Children: Discharge of Care Order) [2021] EWCA Civ 742

Court of Appeal success for Sharon Tappin (on behalf of the Respondent Children) in this crucial decision relating to the law to be applied in a discharge of care order application.

## Appointments and Memberships

- North Eastern Circuit
- Trustee, Spire Foundation – 2019