



Liz Adams

Year of Call: 2021

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Overview

Elizabeth Adams (Liz) is an Education and Family law barrister. She accepts instructions across all areas of family law, including financial remedies/TOLATA, public and private children law, and domestic abuse injunctions. Liz frequently appears on behalf of both parents, young people, and local authorities in the First Tier Tribunal for Special Educational Needs and Disability matters, with a particular interest in disputes around Education, Health and Care Plans.

Liz understands that Family and Education law matters are highly stressful for clients, with very high stakes and often with years' worth of background events leading up to court applications. Liz's calm and empathetic approach puts clients at ease and Liz prioritises making sure that her clients feel heard and understood. Liz is experienced with the Advocate's Gateway Toolkits and has experience with representing and cross-examining vulnerable witnesses. Liz is experienced in matters where multiple health and social care professionals are involved, matters involving complex and/or co-morbid mental health and neurodiverse conditions, and matters involving alcohol and/or substance abuse.

Liz has a specialist interest in matters involving disability, neurodiversity, and/or special educational needs. Liz previously delivered pro bono legal advice with IPSEA, a charity that assists parents of children with additional needs with securing educational support. Liz's experience in SEN, neurodiversity and disability in both Family and Education law greatly assist in matters where these issues cross over, such as in Family Court applications involving children with additional needs.

Liz completed her 12-month pupillage with 3PB and became a member of chambers in October 2023. Liz graduated with a first-class law degree before obtaining a distinction in her LLM, studied alongside her BPTC. Prior to pupillage, Liz worked with policymakers and charities to write and promote policies addressing domestic violence. She also advised on non-molestation and occupation orders through her work with the University of Law's pro bono clinic.

Liz also worked for two years as the in-house counsel for a company specialising in water filtration and enhancement. She delivered practical advice that considered the commercial reality of the business. She dealt with commercial property leases, employment/HR advice, and intellectual property matters, and drafted and negotiated a wide range of domestic and cross-border commercial agreements. Liz's drafting and negotiation skills greatly assist in financial remedy proceedings, where her attention to detail and practical approach are valued by clients. Liz's corporate experience also assists in matters where Liz is representing organisations. Liz is adept at dealing with internal authorisation procedures and cross-department communication when taking instructions and giving advice.

Liz currently sits on a policy advisory group examining Science and Technology, including AI and its use in education, local government, and the legal sector. Liz takes a keen interest in how AI is impacting practitioners and clients in these areas and how issues relating to technology and AI may be dealt with effectively as they arise in cases.

As a previous Open Championship Irish dancer, in her spare time Liz continues to enjoy non-competitive dance for exercise, as well as Pilates, swimming and hiking.

Education

Elizabeth Adams regularly acts for and advises all parties including parents, carers, young people, and local authorities. She has undertaken a variety of cases in the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability). She frequently deals with appeals relating to the contents of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans), focusing on sections B, F and I, Health and Social Care, and refusal to assess.

Examples of matters that Liz has dealt with include:

- Disputes over sections B and F, including disputes over whether something should be classed as provision that educates or trains, and including matters where expert witnesses disagree.
- Section I disputes, including local authority resistance of a parental preference on the grounds of inability to meet the child's needs, incompatibility with the provision of efficient education of others, and incompatibility with the efficient use of resources, and where EOTAS/EOTIC is being considered.
- Determination of an expensive and intricate EOTIC package of support for a young person with a very complex brain injury.
- Extended appeals that include recommendations for Health and Social care, and direct payment assessments.
- Matters that involve issues around transport.
- Issues involving non-compliance with directions and applications for late submission of evidence and adjournments.

Liz is happy to provide training in relation to education law.

Liz has a wider interest in other education law matters and prior to pupillage she provided pro-bono advice to parents, carers and young people through IPSEA's legal advice helpline. Liz also gave pro-bono assistance to SEND families impacted by attendance issues during Covid, where she assisted with interpreting updated government guidance to schools and drafting letters to request consideration for authorised absences in appropriate circumstances under a school leader's discretionary powers. Liz has also written legal advice around ensuring school behaviour policies comply with legal duties to students with additional needs and requesting reasonable adjustments. Liz has completed training to deal with Ofsted appeals.

Liz has a specialist interest in neurodiversity and mental health and ensures that her knowledge in this area remains current. Liz understands approaches that utilise the social model of disability. Liz's knowledge of neurodiversity extends to areas traditionally less well understood including neurodiversity in women and girls, PDA and Demand Avoidant profiles, and co-morbid chronic fatigue/autoimmune/hypermobility conditions.

Academic qualifications

- BPTC, University of Law, Birmingham, Very Competent
- LLB (Hons), University of Gloucestershire, First

Scholarships

2023 Ann Goddard Scholar - Gray's Inn

Professional bodies

- Member of Gray's Inn
- Family Law Bar Association

- Association of Lawyers for Children