

# Poonam Bhari

**Year of Call:** 1999

**Telephone:** 020 7583 8055



## Overview

Poonam Bhari practices in all aspects of family law, with experience in complex public law proceedings, private law applications, international child law and financial remedy applications.

Poonam also undertakes Court of Protection cases including welfare, property and affairs, serious medical treatment and applications for costs order.

In her first five years in practice Poonam also undertook immigration and criminal law cases.

Poonam is able to accept direct public access cases.

Poonam can speak and take instructions in conversational Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu.

Poonam was selected as one of the six finalists for the prestigious Inspirational Women in Law Awards in 2019.

In 2021 Poonam was appointed by the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice as a member of the Family Procedure Rule Committee.

## Recommendations

Poonam Bhari is ranked in **Legal 500 2025**/Family: Children and Domestic Abuse/London Bar

Poonam Bhari is ranked in **Legal 500 2025**/Family: Children and Domestic Abuse/Midlands Circuit

'Poonam is pragmatic, methodical, and sympathetic and fights for clients. She puts clients at ease and makes them feel that they are being listened to.'

**Legal 500 2024**/Children Law (including public and private law)/London

'Poonam has a great eye for detail. She is empathetic with her clients and strikes up a rapport with them. She is particularly in demand in dealing with clients with vulnerabilities.'

**Legal 500 2024**/Family: Children and Domestic Violence/Midlands Circuit

Poonam Bhari is ranked in the **Legal 500 2023**/Children Law (including public and private law)/London edition.

Poonam Bhari is ranked in the **Legal 500 2023**/Child Law (public and private)/Midlands Circuit edition.

'Poonam is a brilliant and effective communicator, not just on a professional level with Instructing Solicitors and the other parties but also with the lay clients and any relevant support networks that they have.'

**Legal 500 2022**/Child Law (public and private)/Midlands Circuit

'Her client handling is excellent.'

Poonam Bhari is ranked in the **Legal 500 2022**/Children Law (including public and private law)/London edition.

**Legal 500 2021**/Child Law (public and private)/Midlands

'A superb advocate.'

**Legal 500 2021**/Children Law (including public and private law)/London

'A strong family law generalist.'

**Legal 500 2020**/Family and Children Law/Midlands

'Outstanding with clients and an excellent advocate.'

**Legal 500 2020**/Children Law (including public and private law)/London

"A family law specialist"

**Legal 500 2018/19**/Family and Children Law/Midlands

"An empathetic advocate"

**Legal 500 2018/19**/Children Law (including public and private law)/London

"Thank you Poonam and thank you so much for your hard work and advice this week"

**Social worker**

## Academic qualifications

- B.Ed (Hons)
- MA in Education
- Graduate Diploma in Professional Studies
- Graduate Certificate in Applied Professional Studies
- Graduate Diploma in Law
- Bar Vocational Course
- Trained Mediator (CALM Mediation, Open College Network)

## Professional qualifications & appointments

- Family Procedure Rule Committee Member (March 2021 to date)
- Trained Mediator (CALM Mediation)

## Professional bodies

**Current:**

- Family Law Bar Association (West Midlands)

- LexisNexis case analysis panel
- Middle Temple
- Midland Circuit Women's Forum committee member

**Previous:**

- Association of Lawyers for Children executive committee member 2016-2018
- FLBA committee member 2006-2008
- Fellow of Royal Society of Arts (FRSA)
- Legal Action Group (Charity) member 2004-2016; Chair of Board of Trustees 2006-2016
- The General Council of the Bar (Elected Member 2006-2008; Member of GMC and various Bar Council committees)
- West London Law Society

# Expertise

## Family

Poonam Bhari appears in the Family Court and specialises in public law children cases where there are allegations of sexual abuse, non-accidental injuries, death of a parent. Poonam undertakes cases with an international element including forced marriage, validity of a marriage and child abduction cases.

Poonam acts for parents, children's guardians, the Official Solicitor and local authorities in public law children cases. Poonam has represented clients with mental health and learning difficulties and clients from minority ethnic groups.

During 2000-2005 Poonam undertook criminal and immigration law cases. She represented the Home Office and appellants in immigration hearings before the tribunal in relation to both asylum and human rights claims.

Poonam undertakes voluntary work. She has reviewed cases for the Bar Pro Bono Unit. Poonam was a Trustee of Legal Action Group (Charity) from 2004 to 2016 and Chair of the Board of Trustees for over 10 years. Poonam has been an Executive Committee member of the Association of Lawyers for Children.

Poonam was a former schoolteacher and special educational needs co-coordinator before retraining as a barrister.

### Reported Cases

- Oxfordshire County Council v A Mother & Ors [2022] EWFC 141
- Re S (vulnerable party: fairness of proceedings); A v A local authority and others [2022] EWCA Civ 8
- Re S (A Child) (Hague Convention 1980: Return to Third State) [2019] EWCA Civ 352
- S (Father) v D (Mother) [2019] EWHC 56 (Fam)
- HA (A Child : placement of a child abroad) [2019] EWFC B2
- M v F [2018] EWHC 1949 (Fam)
- Medway Council v MI & Ors [2017] EWFC 59
- Medway Council v MI & Ors [2016] EWFC 74
- Re B and E (children), [2015] EWFC B203
- Re M'P-P (Children), Re [2015] EWCA Civ 584
- A & Anor v A Local Authority & Anor [2014] EWHC 4816 (Fam)
- Birmingham City Council v Riaz & Ors (Rev 3) [2014] EWHC 4247 (Fam)
- Re O (A Child), Re [2012] EWCA Civ 1955
- Re O (A Child), Re [2012] EWCA Civ 1576
- Re C (A Child) [2009] EWCA Civ 72

### Publications

- Provision of undertakings in response to defence under Article 13(b) of Hague Convention 1980 (S (Father) v D (Mother)) - This article was first published on Lexis@PSL Family on 28 January 2019.
- Experts: Maintaining and Expanding the Pool, Family Law February 2005. Co - Author: Dr Claire Sturge
- Transparency in Family Proceedings, The Circuiteer, Spring 2007, Issue 24
- Family Affairs - FLBA Newsletter - Occasional Contributor [1999 - 2006]
- Children Law UK Newsletter - Occasional Contributor [1999 - 2006]

## Court of Protection

Poonam Bhari is an experienced advocate who acts in a range of Court of Protection (COP) matters including welfare, property and affairs, serious medical treatment and applications for costs order.

She has expertise in mental capacity and mental health law. She regularly attends COP hearings in the High Court and Round Table Meetings.

Poonam acts and advises in matters relating to the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court for both children and vulnerable adults. She has acted in many cases in relation to applications for deprivations of liberty of children and young people.

Poonam receives instructions from individuals, local authorities, care home /residential school, children through their children's guardian.

She regularly acts in complex proceedings, including cases involving Nearest Relative Displacement proceedings, financial deputy, lasting powers of attorney and financial abuse issues.

She was instructed in the notable case of [South Gloucestershire Council v DN \[2022\] EWCOP 35 \(12 August 2022\)](#) [Read more about this case here:](#)

- [BAILII](#)
- [Local Government Lawyer](#)
- [Court of Protection Hub](#)