



FAMILY LAW CONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2026 – 09:30 – 16:15
MARSHAM COURT HOTEL, BOURNEMOUTH




COST
£125 Solicitor Member/Associate Member/Trainee Solicitor £175 Non-Member of BDLS
CPD
6 Hours
BOOKING
Please book online at: www.bournemouthlaw.com/bournemouth-district-law-society-lectures
HOTEL PARKING
Marsham Court Hotel, 3 Russell Cotes Road, Bournemouth BH1 3AB Parking: This is at the rear of the hotel (postcode BH1 3AU) No parking charge. On arrival, please inform hotel reception of your car registration number and, when you leave, ask for the exit code to raise the exit barrier. Alternatively, there is parking at Berry Court in St Peter's Road, Central Car Park in Upper Hinton Road or street parking around the hotel.

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08:45 – 09:15	Registration and refreshments
09:15	<p>WELCOME Emma Hamilton Cole</p> <p>Emma is the co-chair of the BDLS Dispute Resolution Sub Committee and sits on the local Family Justice Board as the Law Society and Resolution representative. She works as a solicitor at Steele Raymond, a mediator and collaborative practitioner and is a professional practice consultant for local mediators.</p> 
09:15 – 10:15 1 hour	<p>FAMILY FINANCE Neil Maton and Sannah Dad, College Chambers</p> <p>Within this talk Neil and Sannah will be looking at a selection of current topics, including Conduct, dealing with less usual Chattels and Issues arising in Pensions.</p> <p>Neil Maton: Matrimonial Finance has been Neil's primary area of specialism for the last 21 years. He has a long-established practice across the south and south coast of England. He acts for a wide range of individuals including business owners, entrepreneurs, those with modest assets to those with significant wealth. His work in family finance also extends to applications under TOLATA and advising and acting for third party interveners.</p> 

	<p>Sannah Dad is instructed across the entire spectrum of financial remedy disputes from FDA, FDR through to Final Hearings and private children matters, undertaking work at all court levels. The cases undertaken by Sannah may involve serious allegations of domestic abuse and coercive control, all types of abuse (including sexual abuse), parental alienation and/or alienating behaviours, substance misuse and issues with mental health and/or capacity.</p>
<p>10:15 – 10:30 15 mins</p>	<p>SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDREN AND THIRD-PARTY ACCOUNTS PLUS PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTS - HOW CAN THESE SUPPORT YOUR PRACTICE?</p> <p>Beth Rowe, OurFamilyWizard</p> <p>Beth Rowe is a Professional Liaison at OurFamilyWizard. OurFamilyWizard is a communication platform designed to facilitate communication between parents before, during, and after the divorce and separation process. Beth has been part of the Family Law community for over 3 years previously working as a Family Law Trainee at a law firm in Reading. Beth works with Courts, Chambers, Firms, CAFCASS, Mediators, Organisations and Charities to help parents with their communication.</p> 
<p>10:30 – 10:45 15 minutes</p>	<p>Refreshments</p>
<p>10:45 – 11:45 1 hour</p>	<p>DOMESTIC ABUSE – WHY CLIENTS STRUGGLE TO LEAVE – HOW CAN WE HELP?</p> <p>Jan Hawkins</p> <p>Supporting clients who are living in abusive relationships can be painful and frustrating. Unless the domestic abuse is flagrantly physically violent, many clients do not recognise that what they are living with is abuse. Verbal, emotional, financial and sexual abuse chip away at the target’s confidence such that it becomes almost impossible to see a way out. Women and men who are on the receiving end of domestic abuse may present for therapy for anxiety, low self-esteem, depression and a whole host of other difficulties which they have not linked with enduring unhealthy behaviours from their partners. For lawyers and family mediators, the situation can be complex and frustrating. Clients may attempt to initiate proceedings and then backtrack. In mediation, clients may be replaying the unhealthy dynamics in the meeting, but in such subtle ways that the mediator is left mystified about how to proceed.</p> <p>This short presentation will address some of the reasons for the difficulty people have in leaving relationships where domestic abuse is at the centre. We shall also consider some ways to help when there is an impasse.</p> <p>Jan Hawkins works in private practice as a person-centred therapist, supervisor and trainer, receiving self-referrals and those from social services, NHS Trusts and CCGs. Jan has a passion for experiential learning opportunities for practitioners, for the ongoing development and deepening of the core attitudinal qualities of the person-centred approach and its applications across a broad range of professions. Jan also works alongside documentary filmmakers, supporting their teams with training and backup, as well as providing therapeutic support to their contributors. In recent years she has enjoyed meeting with,</p> 

	<p>and contributing to professional development for lawyers and family mediators. Sometimes she is asked about the ‘many things you do’, but Jan is clear she does one thing, in a number of different ways. With decades of practice, she feels she’s beginning to get somewhere! For more information on Jan and her publications, see www.janhawkins.co.uk</p>
<p>11:45 – 12:30 45 minutes</p>	<p>PRIVATE LAW UPDATE – CASE LAW AND PRACTICAL MATTERS Molly Mifsud with Jonathan Rees College Chambers</p> <p>Within this talk Molly and Jonathan will be speaking on a Case law update, the new bundle rules, covert recordings, alienating behaviours and experts, and neurodiversity in proceedings.</p> <p>Molly Mifsud specialises in Family Law and accepts instructions in Public and Private Children matters as well as Financial Remedy and Injunction matters. Molly has been involved in a number of fact-finds including those involving coercive and controlling behaviour as well as issues of physical, emotional and psychological abuse. Whilst representing Rule 16.4 Guardians Molly has been involved with cases including allegations of child abuse and neglect and an external relocation case at a fact-find with live issues including imprisonment and child abduction</p>   <p>Jonathan Rees joined Chambers in 2023 following a successful career as a solicitor and advocate within Local Government. Jonathan practises in all aspects of Family Law, both Children Act and Family Law Act proceedings. In Private Law, Jonathan represents parents and Guardians in any application relating to children at interim hearings and during fact finding and final hearings where serious allegations are raised, such as alienating behaviours (also known as parental alienation) and domestic abuse.</p>
<p>12:30 – 13:30 1 hour</p>	<p>Lunch</p>
<p>13:30 – 14:15 45 minutes</p>	<p>TOLATA Hamish Dunlop, 3PB</p> <p>Hamish Dunlop is an experienced family law advocate. Hamish’s family law practice is concerned with the financial claims of: spouses on divorce; co-habitees upon separation and dependants from the estate of a deceased. In the context of financial provision on divorce, he has particular expertise in cases involving family businesses; professional clients and the military. He advises and represents co-habitees, co owners and other family members on property issues including legal and beneficial ownerships and promissory and proprietary estoppel.</p> 

	<p>Hamish was shortlisted for Junior Barrister of the Year at the 2019 Family Law Awards. He was also, until 2012, the Chair of the Hampshire Family Justice Money and Property Committee. He is regularly invited to lecture at external conferences and offers bespoke in-house training seminars for clients. Hamish is also a clinical negligence specialist. His practice includes high value claims and he advises on personal and medical short term and long term care and life time housing requirements where appropriate. Hamish’s recent important cases have involved failures in GP referrals leading to cauda equina lesions and subarachnoid haemorrhage. His claims against Hospital specialists have included: A&E Departments; obstetrics; orthopaedic and general surgery. He also has a strong practice in personal injury and product liability claims. Hamish is experienced in claims involving: housing requirements; lifetime care and complex dependency claims.</p>
<p>14:15 – 15:00 45 minutes</p>	<p>PRIVATE LAW CHILDREN UPDATE Sara Lewis KC, 3PB</p> <p>Sara Lewis KC is one of the foremost family silks in the UK, described as "the KC you want on your case" (Legal 500, 2026). She joined 3PB in January 2026 and was shortlisted as Family Law KC of the Year at LexisNexis Family Law Awards 2025. She also served as her former set's Head of Chambers from August 2023 until November 2025. Ranked as a Leading Silk by Legal 500 since she became a KC in 2021, Sara is commonly one of the first choice for public law cases involving the most serious types of non-accidental injury, such as those involving significant head trauma and death. She also has considerable experience of acting for those with complex psychiatric issues such as FII. Sara is revered for her meticulous preparation, the quality of her court performance and her robust advocacy when necessary. Legal 500 describe her as “extremely thorough”, “always impeccably prepared” and her “courtroom manner is unfaltering, and cross-examination is bespoke and effective.”</p> <p>Sara is regularly instructed to represent parents and guardians, renowned for her proactive and user-friendly approach, providing plain-speaking and straightforward advice at every stage of a case. Noted by the Legal 500 for being “approachable” and having “an exceptional rapport with clients”, Sara likes to build a productive working relationship with both lay and professional clients. Prior to coming to coming to the Bar, Sara was a neuropsychologist undertaking both clinical and research work therefore has particular interest and expertise in matters involving complex medical evidence.</p> 
<p>15:00 – 15:15 15 minutes</p>	<p>Refreshments</p>
<p>15:15 – 15:30 15 minutes</p>	<p>CHALLENGING TOXICOLOGY EVIDENCE IN FAMILY PROCEEDINGS Casey Baldwin, DNA Legal</p> 

15:30 – 16:30 1 hour	<p>JUDICIAL INSIGHTS: COVERT RECORDINGS, FUTURE TRENDS AND DORSET DEVELOPMENTS</p> <p>HHJ Christopher Simmonds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covert recordings• What is the likely road ahead• Dorset Update• Q & A <p>HHJ Christopher Simmonds is a Family Circuit Judge, the Designated Family Judge for Dorset and National Lead Judge for Divorce. He was originally a District Judge appointed in 2010. He sat in the Principal Registry of the Family Division until his transfer to the Western Circuit in November 2015. He has been the Lead Regional Judge for the Court of Protection (South West), a Commissioner of the Judicial Appointments Commission and former Course Director at the Judicial College (Family). Before being appointed he was a Solicitor and Partner in the firm of Davis Simmonds & Donaghey specialising in Public Law Proceedings and a member of the Children Panel. He is editor of A Practical Guide to Family Proceedings and one of the contributors to The Dictionary of Public Children Law</p> 
16:30	Close

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Course Notes: For environmental reasons, BDLS will no longer be providing printed course notes at lectures. Lecture notes will be emailed to delegates in advance for either printing or accessing via their laptop or alternative device on the day.

Payment for lectures: Please be aware that payment must be received at the office **before** the lecture takes place. Course bookings will only be confirmed upon payment. No refunds within 7 days of the course.