



EXCHANGE  
CHAMBERS



**Family Law Reform Now Network: Supporting Families**

**September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, 9am-5:30pm**

**The Exchange, 3 Centenary Square, Birmingham B1 2DR**

## **PROGRAMME**

9.00 – 9.20 – Welcome: Coffee and refreshments

**9.20 - 10.30 – The challenges with law and policy in care proceedings – Session 1 (Chaired by Charlotte Bendall)**

9.20-9:30 – Introductions and project introduction with Dr Charlotte Bendall (Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Birmingham)

9:30-9:50 – ‘Ending care orders: The case for a new approach’ - Professor Judith Masson (Emeritus Professor, University of Bristol)

9:50-10:10 – ‘The challenges for practitioners and parents within care proceedings’ Celeste Greenwood (Barrister-at-Law, Exchange Chambers)

10:10-10:30 – Discussion

**BREAK (10.30-10.45)**

### **10.45-12.25 – The challenges with the court system – Session 2 (Chaired by Samantha Davey)**

10.45-11.05 – ‘Keeping families together – is that possible in 26 weeks?’ - Celeste Greenwood (Barrister-at-Law, Exchange Chambers)

11.05-11.25 – ‘Experiences as a solicitor working with parents whose children have been taken into care’ - Elizabeth Eigbefoh (Solicitor, Francis Solicitors Limited)

11:25-11:45 – ‘Care proceedings, the Court of Protection and Supporting Disabled Mothers’ - Dr Jaime Lindsey (Associate Professor, University of Reading)

11.45-12.05 – ‘Whose Responsibility? Support for Parents with Learning Disabilities in and before Childcare Proceedings’ Dr Mary Baginsky (Reader in Social Care, King’s College London)

12.05-12.30 – Discussion

### **LUNCH (12.30-1.20)**

### **1.20 – 3.00 – Supporting Parents through the system and beyond – Session 3 (Chaired by Celeste Greenwood)**

1.20-1.40 – ‘Silenced by the system: can birth mothers whose children have been adopted find a voice via the artist’s book?’ Dr Samantha Davey (Lecturer in Law, University of Essex)

1.40-2.00– ‘Parents after adoption proceedings – findings from a qualitative study in Northern Ireland’ – Dr Sarah Hansen (Practice Fellow, Queens University of Belfast)

2.00-2.20 – ‘Protection and Assistance to the Family: Interpreting and Applying Article 10 ICESCR from Learnt and Lived Experiences’ – Dr Koldo Casla (Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Essex)

2.20-2.40 - Discussion

BREAK (2.40-3.00)

### **3.00-5.00 — Supporting policy change – Session 4 (Chaired by Rehana Parveen)**

3.00-3.20 – ‘Set up to fail: Women’s experiences of psychiatric and psychological expert witness assessments during care proceedings’ - Omolade Adedapo (PAUSE) and Anna Rickards (PAUSE)

3.20-3.40 – ‘The power of lived experience: changing hearts and minds’ - Angela Frazer-Wicks, MBE

3.40-4.00 – ‘The Jurisdiction over Child’s Welfare and Excesses of the Local Authority in Child Proceedings: A Need for Parliamentary Action’ - Olugbenga Falade (PhD Student, University of Hull)

4.00-4.20 – ‘Expressions of Self: Race, Religion and Representation of Care-Experienced Children and Young People’ Dr Kusha Anand’ (Post-doctoral Research Associate, University of Coventry)

4.20-4.50 – Discussion

4.50-5.00 – Concluding Comments

5.00-6.00 - Drinks Reception

## Information about the Chairs and Speakers

This event has been brought to you by the Family Law Reform network, created and led by Dr Charlotte Bendall and Dr Rehana Parveen at the University of Birmingham. This event, 'Supporting Families,' has been brought to you by Dr Samantha Davey (University of Essex), Celestine Greenwood (Exchange Chambers), Omolade Adedapo (Pause) and Elizabeth Eigbefoh (Francis Solicitors). Further details about the network leads, the event organisers and all the speakers can be found below.

### **Omolade Adedapo – Policy and Public Affairs Officer (Pause)**

Omolade joined Pause in March 2021. As Policy and Public Affairs Officer, Omolade is responsible for delivering key components of our influencing work. This ranges from developing policy positions on key issues, managing briefings and consultation responses, maintaining excellent working relationships with key stakeholders, and supporting women to campaign and influence themselves. As a passionate and value-driven individual, Omolade has made it a point to challenge institutional barriers faced by marginalised communities to bring systemic change. Before joining Pause, she worked for a Member of Parliament, to monitor political and policy developments by lobbying Government ministers on behalf of constituents and campaign groups. Outside of work, Omolade is a trustee for We Belong, a migrant youth-led organisation campaigning for the rights of young migrants in the UK.

### **Dr Kusha Anand – Post-Doctoral Research Fellow (Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University)**

Kusha Anand is Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University. She has a decade of fieldwork experience in interdisciplinary projects focusing on minorities, refugees, and migrants in the UK. As a political sociologist, she pays attention to the intersections of identity, citizenship, and education.

### **Dr Mary Baginsky – Reader in Social Care (Policy Institute, King's College London)**

Mary has worked in and with government departments and agencies in the United Kingdom and overseas, local authorities, consultancies, universities and the voluntary sector. She is currently Reader in Social Care in the Policy Institute in King's College London and Associate Director of NIHR School of Social Care Research. Her previous posts have included Senior Fellow at Social Science Research Unit, University of London, Assistant Director at Children's Workforce Development Council and Senior Research Officer at the NSPCC. She was a 2013 Churchill Fellow. Recent projects that she has led that are relevant to the Network include:

- evaluation of the early implementation of the New Orleans Intervention Model – an approach which leads to recommendations about adoption or permanent return of children to birth families;
- evaluation of Signs of Safety Project across 10 local authorities in England;
- evaluation of post-proceedings support after involvement in FDAC.

### **Dr Charlotte Bendall – Associate Professor (University of Birmingham)**

Charlotte is an Associate Professor at Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham. Her research investigates a variety of possibilities for challenging the 'nuclear' family and traditional gender constructs through law and legal institutions. To date, her projects have addressed a number of areas, including: same-sex relationship breakdown; finances within couple relationships; shared parental leave; and grandparents and mediation. She also jointly leads the Family Law Reform Now network, and is co-editor of an edited collection showcasing law reform proposals from the network's first conference (for publication by Hart in 2024).

### **Dr Koldo Casla – Senior Lecturer in Law (University of Essex)**

Koldo is a Lecturer in Law and the Director of the Human Rights Centre Clinic. He leads the 'Human Rights Local'

project at the Human Rights Centre. Between 2017 and 2019, he was a Research Associate at the Institute of Health & Society of Newcastle University, where he co-drafted the first Bill on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the UK. Between 2016 and 2019, he was the Policy Director of Just Fair, leading the organisation's research, strategic communications, partnerships and campaigning on economic and social rights in the UK. Between 2013 and 2019, he worked as an independent researcher for Amnesty International, authoring four reports on the rights to health, education and housing in Spain. Over the years, he has also been very involved in Amnesty's strategy-development and governance at the international, national and local levels. Between 2011 and 2013, he was the Chief of Staff of the Human Rights Commissioner of the Basque Country ("Ararteko"). He is also a member of the advisory committee of Gentium, a Madrid-based law firm specialised in strategic human rights litigation. He holds a PhD in European and International Studies from King's College London (2017), a Fulbright MA in International Studies from the University of Denver (2011), a MA in Theory and Practice of Human Rights from the University of Essex (2009), and a Law Degree from the University of the Basque Country (2008). He is the author of *Politics of International Human Rights Law Promotion in Western Europe: Order versus Justice* (Routledge 2019), and *Spain and Its Achilles' Heels: The Strong Foundations of a Country's Weaknesses* (Rowman & Littlefield 2021), and co-editor of *Social Rights and the Constitutional Moment: Learning from Chile and International Experiences* (Hart 2022).

#### **Dr Samantha Davey (University of Essex)**

Samantha is a Lecturer in the School of Law at the University of Essex. She lectured Family Law at Anglia Ruskin University and taught Family Law at Queen Mary, University of London. She holds an LLB in Law, an LLM in Health Care Law and Human Rights and a PhD in Law from the University of Essex. Currently, she teaches Land Law and Foundations of Property. She is also an external examiner for Legal Skills and Family Law modules. She has been involved in two books published in 2020. She edited the textbook *Family Law* in the Palgrave Macmillan series and wrote *A Failure of Proportion: Non-Consensual Adoption in England and Wales*, published by Hart. She also co-authored *Grandparents and the Law: Rights and Relationships* with Dr Jaime Lindsey, which was published by Hart in 2023. She is the lead for the 'Supporting Families' Family Law Reform Now project.

#### **Elizabeth Eigbefoh – Solicitor (Francis Solicitors)**

Elizabeth Eigbefoh was admitted to the roll of solicitors of England and Wales in 2015. Prior to this, she worked in the Civil Service for 14 years, where she was involved in several pioneering projects. Elizabeth is currently one of two Directors at Francis Solicitors, a busy high street firm in the borough of Lewisham. Elizabeth's primary area of practice is family and housing law and she represents parents in public and private law proceedings. Elizabeth is a committee member of the Association of women solicitors. Elizabeth is passionate about family law. She believes that parents and families should be given the right support throughout legal proceedings and that the law and process should be as clear as possible.

#### **Olugbenga Damola Falade - PhD Candidate (University of Hull)**

Olugbenga is a Law Lecturer and a legal practitioner with extensive experience in the field of human rights, family law, and sustainability. He is a member of the Society of Legal Scholars and Chartered Institute of Arbitration, United Kingdom. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate and an Associate Lecturer at the University of Hull and the University of Lincoln. His research interest lies in the field of human rights and family law, which he has taught for over 13 years.

### **Celestine Greenwood – Barrister-at-Law (Exchange Chambers)**

Celestine (Celeste) Greenwood is a human rights activist and Barrister. She splits her time between practicing from the Liverpool office of Exchange Chambers and her consultancy work overseas. She has over 20 years' experience representing parents, children, and local authorities in the most serious cases of alleged abuse of children in both the criminal and the family jurisdiction and has appeared in several significant reported cases. She took a sabbatical from practice at the Bar between 2011 and 2019, gaining a Master's degree in Development and working overseas in conflict and post-conflict transition countries both for NGOs and donor agencies in the field of human rights, in particular child protection and the rights of women and girls. Whilst in the United States, Celestine also gained her Master's degree in International Human Rights. Recently, she has published several articles about the public law family justice system and is a contributor to several projects exploring areas for change to improve the system. She is also currently researching the law's approach to the changing dynamics of the family and who the law recognises as a parent. Her other legal interests include the application of feminist legal methodology both to lawyering and judging, in particular in international criminal law; her revised judgment in the case of the Prosecutor v. Radovan Karadzic was published in "Feminist Judgments in International Law" edited by Hodson and Lavers.

She has mentored postgraduate students and legal professionals from multiple international jurisdictions as well as pupil barristers. She taught Law in the U.S. and is a certified trainer who has delivered human rights and legal training to a range of professional audiences, including most recently judges of the ICC and the ICJ. Celestine also provides legal and communications consultancy services to NGOs, governments, and international organisations around the world.

### **Dr Sarah Hansen – Practice Fellow (Queen's University Belfast, School of Law)**

Sarah Hansen practised at the Bar of Northern Ireland as a family lawyer from 2012-2017. In 2017, she commenced her doctoral studies at Queen's University Belfast, with a thesis focusing on birth parents and lawyers' experiences of negotiating and having post-adoption contact in Northern Ireland. Sarah is now employed as a Barrister, and as a Practice Fellow at Queens University Belfast School of Law.

### **Dr Jaime Lindsey – Associate Professor in Law (University of Reading)**

Jaime Lindsey is an Associate Professor in Law at the University of Reading. Her research interests include healthcare law, mental capacity and adult safeguarding law, access to justice and dispute resolution. Jaime is a non-practising Solicitor and an Academic Fellow of the Middle Temple. She is currently an ESRC New Investigator award holder for her project on 'Mediation of Medical Treatment Disputes: A Therapeutic Justice Analysis' and recently published her first book, *Reimagining the Court of Protection: Access to Justice in Mental Capacity Law*, which was awarded the Hart SLSA early career book prize 2023 and was shortlisted for the SLS Peter Birks prize 2023.

### **Professor Judith Masson PhD, FAcSS, K.C. (hon), Emeritus Professor (University of Bristol)**

Judith retired from full-time academic work in 2020, but continued research on the discharge of care orders and advising on projects in England, Scotland and Norway. During her career, she taught family and child law at Leicester, Warwick and Bristol Universities, and was a visiting fellow at the Universities of Sydney, Melbourne and Florida. Throughout her career, she undertook innovative empirical studies on step-parent adoption, children's guardians, parents of children in care, emergency child protection, care proceedings and legal representation for children and parents and with funding from Government Departments, charitable foundations and the ESRC. She has published widely on child law, served as a special adviser to a Parliamentary Select Committee, the academic member of the Judicial Studies Board and on the Family Justice Council. She is now learning to be a beekeeper and helping school children and the public learn about the fascinating world of bees.

**Dr Rehana Parveen – Associate Professor (University of Birmingham)**

Rehana Parveen is a former Solicitor and a former Senior Tutor at the University of Law. Rehana joined the University of Birmingham Law School in 2012 and completed her doctoral thesis exploring Muslim women's experiences of using religious tribunals (shari'a councils) and comparing this to their experiences of using state law. Rehana currently works as a Senior Lecturer in the Law School, teaching on a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate modules. Rehana is particularly interested in the developing relationship between English Family Law and Islamic Family Law and how women navigate these interacting frameworks. More recently, Rehana has been exploring how legal concepts and structures may be decolonised to place them within their social, historical, political and postcolonial context.

**Anna Rickards - BA, BSW, MSW (Pause)**

Anna Rickards is qualified as a social worker from Australia and has over 26 years of professional experience in Essex and London, including front line children and family work, palliative care, CAMHS and Early Help – both as a practitioner and then manager and service manager. Anna joined the national team for Pause in 2015 as the first National Practice Lead supporting the development of practice in the original 7 pilot areas and, since this time, has continued to support practice development in England (and in the last 5 years, in Scotland and Northern Ireland). Anna is passionate about trauma-informed systemic practice and the ideas around creative therapeutic approaches and how they can be adapted to support women who have had children removed from their care. In her spare time, Anna is the safeguarding trustee for HomeStart in Suffolk, loves to travel, cook and enjoy musical theatre.