

BOOK REVIEW

THE FAMILY COURT PRACTICE 2014

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THE COMPREHENSIVE AND AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS IN THE NEW FAMILY COURT

An appreciation by Phillip Taylor MBE and Elizabeth Taylor of Richmond Green Chambers

Once again -- and good news for family law practitioners -- the Family Law imprint of Jordan Publishing has launched the current and most up to date edition of the familiar 'Red Book': 'The Family Court Practice 2014'.

This annually updated work of reference is almost invariably used by judges in the family court -- which now means the new family court -- which also means that as a family law practitioner, you need it too, particularly in this latest edition.

Note that the new family court structure was established in May 2014; coincidentally the date when His Honour Judge Anthony Cleary wrote the useful introduction to this edition. Here he refers to 'the tsunami of amended rules, new legislation and revised public and private law programmes' with which practitioners have now to contend -- and the consequent anxieties.

Such concerns of course have not been alleviated by the removal of funding in private law, which has led to predictable increases in litigants in person representing themselves in court without competent legal advice. It is not surprising that the time taken to complete hearings has risen by fifty per cent.

This 'tsunami' of consequences has given rise to problems with timetables, delays and failure of litigants to adhere to court orders, shortfalls in local authority budgets -- and more; much more. It is worth reading Cleary's further remarks concerning these developments, just to remind one of the challenges that practitioners -- and all those involved in family court proceedings -- now face.

However -- and this is a truth widely acknowledged -- that because of these and other issues which have recently arisen in family court practice, you as a practitioner will now need your stalwart and ever-reliable copy of 'The Red Book' more than ever. It can certainly help you avoid the pitfalls you are likely to encounter in everyday practice.

Within its more than 3,500 pages, this book provides the materials you need, including tables of statutes, statutory instruments, cases and practice directions, plus a table of CPR, FPR and Supreme Court Practice Directions. The six parts into which it is divided include -- with necessary commentary -- procedural guides, statutes, procedure rules, practice guidance, European material and more. And to aid navigation, there is an extensive index with useful cross-references throughout.

It is not surprising that this book has, over the years, emerged as the standard work of reference in family law and has therefore become an essential acquisition for the family law practitioner.

The law is cited as at May 2014.