



MEDIA RELEASE

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Local Lawyer makes the Top 100 list

Local Islington lawyer, Jonathan Wheeler of Bolt Burdon Kemp, has made the Hot 100 Lawyer list in the legal publication "The Lawyer" for his work with trying to change the law over child abuse.

Jonathan Wheeler, who is aged 36, has been spearheading a national campaign that, if successful, will allow hundreds of child abuse victims to fight for justice in the courts.

He is the head of the Islington firm, Bolt Burdon Kemp's child abuse team and is a member of the Association of Child Abuse Lawyers' (Acal) executive committee. He and Bolt Burdon Kemp are acting without fee to change the time limit on cases of child abuse.

"These cases are tragically slow to come to light," he said, "because people just try to bury their memories. Eventually, many of them find the courage to tell their stories, only to realise they have no recourse in law to help them."

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The current law means that if someone has been abused as a child, they have a non-extendable 6 years to sue the abuser which runs from their 18th birthday and therefore expires by the time they are 24. To sue an organisation or individual who may have been negligent in allowing the abuse to take place, the case has to be brought within 3 years from the date of majority, or a later 'date of knowledge'. For this, claimants have to prove that they only later realised the nature or seriousness of the harm done, and/or the identity of those responsible. While the courts do have discretion not to apply the 3 year limitation period, this is now rarely exercised.

The campaign to change the law has won backing from the Law Commission, but needs support and pressure from MPs to force through the necessary legislative change. Jonathan Wheeler has been working with MPs to try to get the law changed.

Jonathan added; " I am delighted to have been chosen for this list. It's a real honour and a testament to Bolt Burdon Kemp's work in this field to get this archaic law changed. The clients I come across deserve better than this, they have been through so much and survived but to find out there is no route to justice simply because the law won't allow it, is completely wrong."

According to "The Lawyer", the work that Jonathan Wheeler and Bolt Burdon Kemp have done will be key to convincing the Government to act.

Notes for editors:

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