

Date: 31 December 2020

Ridley and Hall

Nigel Priestley of Ridley and Hall honoured with an MBE for his services to childcare and public law



Nigel Priestley, senior partner at Huddersfield law firm Ridley and Hall and one of the UK's most respected care and adoption specialist solicitors, has been named in the Queen's New Year 2021 Honours List in which he has been awarded an MBE in recognition of his services to Children and Families

Nigel, 68, is a leading expert in kinship care, adoption breakdown and care proceedings. A member of the Children's Panel, he regularly represents children, parents and grandparents in care proceedings. Throughout his long career, Nigel has received many awards including being named National Kinship Care Legal Champion, Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year 2017 and Solicitor of the Year in the Law Society Excellence Awards in 2010. Nigel's accolades have culminated in now being made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE).

Nigel has been involved in landmark decisions as a result of Judicial Reviews he has brought including a case in the Court of Appeal setting out when children living with grandparent carers should be regarded as 'looked after' children. A grandfather himself, Nigel works closely with Grandparents Plus and many kinship support groups. He is a former trustee of Family Rights Group (FRG).

As a result of actions in which Nigel and his team have been involved, over £1.5 million has been paid to carers in back paid fostering allowances.

Commenting on the award, Nigel said: "This is a tremendous and unexpected honour which came completely out of the blue. It was such a surprise that when, in December, I received an email asking me



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if I would accept the honour, I sent the email to our IT security team to check it was safe to open!
Huddersfield solicitors don't usually receive emails from the Cabinet Office!

"I have no idea who nominated me, but I am deeply touched by it. I have spent the last 25 years, fighting for families and children. There have been long hours, long journeys – and long battles!

"Our work with adopters who find their adoption breaking down has grown because they feel we understand their situation."

He continues: "It is an honour for the great team at Ridley and Hall Legal. I want to give special mention to my assistant Jane Bolton, who should be sharing the honour with me. Whatever I have achieved over the years has only been possible because we work as a team; a team that constantly will not take no for an answer; a team determined to be the voice of those who are too often ignored or not understood. Together, we have seen the transforming impact of the Human Rights Act, enabling a difference to be made to lives of kinship carers.

"I am so thankful that throughout this legal journey, I have had the support of my wife, Sue. She is a patient listener!

"Finally, I thank God for the gifts he has given me, and for the team who have enabled us to make this difference. We are committed to keep on doing so!"

With offices in Huddersfield, Leeds and Pontefract, Ridley and Hall has a 80 strong team and specialises in family, private client, litigation and property law.

ENDS

Picture Shows: Nigel Priestley, senior partner at Huddersfield law firm Ridley and Hall