

Young Association of Lawyers for Children
Legal Advice Competition 2026

Terms and conditions

- This competition is open to all students in their third year of undergraduate study and above, postgraduate students, CPE/LPC/BPTC students, recent graduates, paralegals, and anyone currently applying for training contracts or pupillage.
- The winner will receive one year's free membership to the ALC, a work experience programme with solicitors, barristers and a Judge, and a free place at the Saturday session of the annual Conference on 21 November 2026.
- Four runners up will receive one year's free membership to the ALC.
- The format of the competition will be a written problem question.
- All entries must be typed in English and saved as a word document (not a pdf).
- Entries must be sent to awatts@1kbw.co.uk by 5.00pm on **Friday 28 August 2026**. Any entries received after this will not be accepted.
- All entries must comply with the word limit. Any entries which exceed the word limit will not be accepted. Any footnotes should be limited to case citations, sources, and other references and will not count towards the word limit.
- Entrants must submit their own work and entries must not be prepared with the assistance of any artificial intelligence.
- All entries must be sent with a covering email stating (i) the level of study/qualification the entrant has reached and at which educational institution, and (ii) their preferred contact details, (iii) proof of their student status. This information will be kept confidential and will not be seen judges during the judging process.
- Entries will be marked anonymously and given a score based on the following criteria:
 - Application of law to the facts
 - Clear and concise writing
 - Exercise of judgement
- The judging panel will consist of members of the ALC Executive Committee and will be chaired by Her Honour Judge Robertson, Circuit Judge at the Central London Family Court. The decision of the judges is final and binding.
- The winner and runners up will be announced by mid-October 2026.
- By participating in this competition entrants agree to abide by the terms and conditions. Any failure to comply with these terms may result in disqualification.

Problem Question

N is a 13-year-old boy who has dual UK/Zimbabwean citizenship. He was born in Manchester and has lived there throughout his life. His parents were born in Zimbabwe but moved to the UK after their marriage and shortly before N was born. Both sets of grandparents and extended family members live in Zimbabwe. N's uncle lives in Birmingham with his wife and two small children.

N has had a difficult year at school. He has been in several fights, and one left him with a black eye. He has skipped school with friends a few times and is regularly late for classes. N's parents have spoken to the teachers about this and are concerned that N has fallen in with the wrong crowd.

N and his parents travelled to Zimbabwe this summer to visit family, as they usually do each year. Unbeknown to N, his parents had enrolled him in a boarding school near to his maternal grandparents' home. N was left in Zimbabwe when his parents returned to Manchester, and they took N's passport with them.

N has contacted a solicitor in Manchester and asked for help to get back to the UK. N told the solicitor that he loves his grandparents and likes visiting but he doesn't want to live in Zimbabwe. He says the school is fine but it's very different to what he is used to, and he doesn't think he will fit in. His main concern is that he cannot pursue his dream of being a premiership footballer if he's in Zimbabwe. He can no longer play football for his team, and he is the star striker. He is also devastated that he can't watch Man City matches, having been an avid fan since he was a small child. His best friend, J, has said his mum would let N live with them if everyone agreed.

The solicitor has instructed you to provide your opinion on the case and to consider:

- 1) What court application can the solicitor make to try to get N back to the UK? 200 words
- 2) What options could be suggested on N's behalf to explore the options for N? 300 words

3) What are the strongest arguments for and against returning N to the UK? 500 words

Suggested reading:

- *S v F & M* [2025] EWHC 439 (Fam) - https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Approved-Judgment_FD24P00406-1.pdf
- *Re S (Wardship: Removal to Ghana)* [2025] EWCA Civ 1011 - <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Re-S-Wardship-Removal-to-Ghana.pdf>