Legal research handbook
Created by law school graduates for law students

England and Wales legal system
“Being able to use technology is an invaluable tool for a legal career. Besides the immediate utility, technology skills demonstrate an aptitude for learning and a willingness to adapt to changes. Students need to be able to do more than just find cases—they need to be able to understand and analyze how cases relate to each other.”

Legal Information Librarian
Boston University School of Law, Massachusetts
Designed for law students

This guide is brought to you by the vLex Justis team with contributions from law school graduates and specialists Ruth Bird, former Bodleian Law Librarian, University of Oxford, and Emily Allbon, a Senior Lecturer and Director of Mooting at The City Law School (City, University of London).

Who are vLex Justis?

vLex Justis, the company behind JustisOne, launched their first legal research platform in 1999, which was widely viewed as one of the most intuitive online libraries. In 2005, vLex Justis launched JustCite, an index of invaluable legal material, case relationships and citations. In 2016, vLex Justis combined the two innovative products to create JustisOne. In Spring 2019, vLex Justis was acquired by vLex, another legal technology company, allowing us to expand our vast collection of content to additional jurisdictions.

For over 30 years, vLex Justis products and services have been trusted by government organisations, leading international law firms, barristers’ chambers, academic institutions, public companies, top law schools and sole practitioners from over 40 countries.

Do I need this guide?

Yes! Legal research skills are highly desirable and valuable for securing a training contract or pupillage and excelling in your legal career.

A good legal researcher will understand the fundamentals of court structures and law reporting; where to look for relevant case law and legislation; how to identify good law; and how to utilise technology to ensure their time is used efficiently.

Who is this guide for?

This handbook is designed for current law students, to help you learn and improve your legal research skills. So if you are a law student working towards your LLB, LLM, GDL, BPTC, LPC or similar law degree, this guide is designed to help you during your university life and beyond.

How to use this guide

While reading this guide it is recommended that you are signed in to JustisOne, or that you have access to our accompanying user guide, available to download from the vLex Justis website.

To access JustisOne, visit www.justis.com and click Sign In at the top-right corner of the page. From here, click on the JustisOne sign in option on the left hand side. If your organisation has IP recognition enabled you will automatically be taken to the platform. Otherwise you will be asked to sign in with your username and password.
How will this guide help me?

Learn practical research skills

This guide will help you to understand the practical side of legal research and provide you with a walk-through approach to answering legal research questions.

Prepare for practice

JustisOne is used by government organisations, leading international law firms, barristers and public companies in over 40 countries. Understanding how to use JustisOne will help you to adapt to your new working environment when you leave university or college.

Save time

JustisOne acts as a single point of entry for your research. Rather than spending time searching multiple databases, you can locate content on other sources, including Westlaw, LexisNexis and BAILII, in one place on JustisOne. This will enable you to be more efficient and spend less time searching.

Stay up-to-date

JustisOne is updated with new cases every day, so your students always have access to the latest cases.
Say hello to... JustisOne

JustisOne gives you access to the most comprehensive collection of common law cases and uses intelligent technology to help you find and analyse content in ways not seen before on other platforms.

JustisOne’s features allow you to visualise the treatment of a case, identify the most quoted passages of a judgment, connect cases across multiple jurisdictions and much more.

“Researching foreign law in a bunch of common law jurisdictions just got WAY easier! JustisOne is an expertly designed, easy to use database with never-before-seen navigation tools that make researching foreign law fun.”

Associate Professor of Law and Legal Research, Boston University School of Law
Core knowledge

Let's start with useful information and FAQs to help you learn about the law, precedent, courts and more.

What is precedent?

Precedent in the judicial system means that a court is bound by the previous decisions of a court of higher standing or a court of equivalent standing. Superior courts are able to overrule decisions of lower courts, and sometimes even their own decisions.

What are primary and secondary sources?

Primary sources are direct sources of law, e.g. legislation, treaties, judgments from the courts, law reports (case law), parliamentary papers, etc. Secondary sources include opinions, commentaries, articles and discussions.

England & Wales

- Criminal and civil cases are decided on an adversarial, not inquisitorial, basis. This is in contrast to the civil law systems used in European countries.
- The ultimate source of law is the legislation or statutes passed by Parliament in Westminster or the Welsh Assembly.
- There is a legal duty to comply with EU Law, and the courts must apply EU law where there is a conflict between this and state law.
- The European Convention on Human Rights was built into UK Law in 1998 and it is binding on public authorities and courts.

Northern Ireland & Scotland

- The system in Northern Ireland is broadly similar to England & Wales, with the Lord Chancellor as highest officer in the judicial system, and the Secretary of State responsible for criminal law and policing.
- The Scottish Parliament has authority to make law on matters devolved to it. The minister for Justice is responsible for civil and criminal law.

European Courts

Reference can be made to the European Court of Justice from any court in the system. The European Court of Human Rights enforces the European Convention on Human Rights. The UK acceded to the ECHR in 1957 and passed the Human Rights Act in 1998 to incorporate this into domestic law.

“JustisOne is a great place to start your legal research as it will allow you to search across multiple resources at once thanks to the legal indexing tool.”

LLB graduate, University of Aberdeen
The role of the UK Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the final court of appeal for all United Kingdom civil cases and criminal cases from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It was established in October 2009, and replaced the House of Lords as the final court of appeal. The House of Lords was made up of 12 Law Lords who sat in judgment in a room near the House of Lords chamber in Westminster. These were the most senior judges in the country, and would sit wearing lounge suits, in contrast to the judicial robes worn in the High Court. They became the new judges of the Supreme Court in 2009.

The Supreme Court hears appeals on arguable points of law of general public interest and concentrates on cases of the greatest public and constitutional importance. It maintains and develops the role of the highest court in the United Kingdom as a leader in the common law world.

The Supreme Court will hear appeals from the following courts in each jurisdiction:

**England and Wales**
- The Court of Appeal, Civil Division
- The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division
- The High Court (in some limited cases)

**Scotland**
- The Court of Session

**Northern Ireland**
- The Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland
- The High Court (in some limited cases)
To be reported, a case will usually...

- Raise a point of legal significance.
- Materially modify an existing principle of law or settle a doubtful question of law.
- Answer any questions of interpretation of statutes or important cases which illustrate new applications of accepted principles.

Which reports should be used?

If there are several versions of a case it is recommended that you use the most authoritative version such as The Times Law Reports, All England Law Reports or the Weekly Law Reports. Authorised versions are written by barristers, read and signed off by a judge(s). Cases reported multiple times will have parallel citations, which refer to different report series. Once you have made a search on JustisOne, each result will contain a line of parallel citations. They are ordered by authority, starting with the most authoritative at the left to the least at the right, so that you can be sure that you are referring to the most authoritative version every time. Alternatively, click on the name of the court a case has been heard in on your results page to see a list of citations from most to least authoritative.

Good to know

JustisOne contains both reported and unreported judgments so that you can conduct comprehensive and thorough research. If we have a reported version of a case, this will appear as a separate tab.
Getting started with research

What to think about when approaching a legal research question?

Think about what you are being asked

- Make sure you understand the question being asked and clarify uncertainties.
- List keywords and key concepts.
- Think about what sources should be used.

Choosing resources

- Which databases are available?
- What content is available on each database?
- How can you use each database to your advantage?
- Use reputable sources.

Record your research

- Avoid duplicated effort and always keep an eye on time spent researching.

Top tip

Try to summarise any relevant cases that you read in your notes while conducting your research. This will save you time when constructing your argument as you will be able to quickly locate the title of the case that you need.

“The Precedent Map allows a student to visualize the citing cases and the cases mentioned in the case at hand. Seeing a case in this way leads to a deeper understanding of its connections to other cases and how those cases might affect its continuing validity. Being able to switch from a list view to a graphical view serves different types of learners. It also allows a researcher to switch from a global to a granular view to see the problem from a different perspective.”

Legal Information Librarian
Boston University School of Law, Massachusetts
Research steps

A) Identify and analyse

- Define the objective of your research.
- List the facts and issues of the case.
- Classify the subject in legal terms.
- Understand the keywords and practice areas.

B) Research

- Look for relevant sources of information.
- Speak to the law library staff and search using online services.
- Remember to use citations, abbreviations and style guides as instructed by your law school.
- Research the relevant area of law.
- Read journal articles as well as relevant cases, statutes and textbooks to really understand the area of law that you are researching.
- Construct a list of sources consulted.

Sometimes there is no answer to your legal research question. In some scenarios there will be no relevant case law, acts and no useful precedent (for example queries to do with new technology). However, you will only know that having gone through these basic steps. If you have found relevant information, it is then important to evaluate this.

C) Evaluate information

Identify the source: Who is providing the information? Are you getting information from credible sources? Ensure you are using authoritative, credible and reliable sources of information.

Source’s expertise: Is the source an expert or an authority? Examine spelling; try to verify credentials independently; has the person published in legal reviews etc?

Determine level of objectivity: Does the source provide a balanced viewpoint? Is the writing style trying to be persuasive or objective? Does advertising influence the content?

Establish date of publication: Is the information current at time of publication? Examine creation and revision dates – don’t rely on search engine dates! Review facts and analysis in historical context. Undated information should be avoided.

Verify what is claimed in the information: Try to find two or more reliable sources providing the information. Use primary sources for facts. Secondary sources should provide cited references. Reliable sources will meet this quality criteria.
D) Present results

- Organise your results logically and use good layout structure. Use correct spelling, grammar and syntax. Summarise, paraphrase and attribute correctly.
- Apply law to the facts.
- Provide clear advice or conclusions.
- Acknowledge materials cited.
- Construct a list of sources.

Keeping up to date with the law

Nicola Stephenson, LLB graduate, discusses how to use the unique search and analysis tools in JustisOne to stay up to date with case law.

Why is JustisOne important for law students?

"Many law students will already be aware of JustisOne, but for those of you who are not, it is an intelligent legal research platform that provides access to case law and legislation. It is a useful tool to stay up to date with case law and find out how cases relate to one another, without having to spend too much time sifting through irrelevant information to do so. It is especially useful during essay time!

Keeping up to date with new cases while you are a student is a great habit for going into practice after graduating. It will also be useful in the later years of your degree when you will be expected to conduct your own research and find authorities to back up your own arguments. JustisOne makes it easy to find case law on a specific topic so you can explore similar cases until you find what you are looking for."

Good to know

One of the main goals of JustisOne is to ensure users have access to an exhaustive list of results regardless of their subscription. This is why you can use JustisOne to locate content across over 100 other online services. This allows you to use JustisOne as a single point of entry for your research. Rather than spending time searching on multiple databases, you can locate content from other sources, including Westlaw, LexisNexis and BAILII, all at once. Click on the Citations & Sources tab within the case to see where you can view the case, if it is not included in your subscription.
What makes JustisOne different?

JustisOne uses an algorithm to tag different practice areas which relate to any one case. This means that it is easier to find important and related cases that might generally come under different practice areas. For example, a student studying corporate insolvency law may find it useful to look at cases from banking and finance or contract law to give them a wider understanding of the corporate legal world.

JustisOne provides a list of cited and citing cases, including many from other jurisdictions, so it is easy to see how the area of law you are looking at has been applied in other legal systems. The platform also links out to several other services, making it simple to find cases on other platforms outwith your JustisOne subscription.

What if you want to find the leading cases for a particular area of law?

Once you have made a search on JustisOne, the most relevant results will appear at the top of your list. This is based on the level of court the case was heard in, how many times it has been subsequently cited and if it is a leading authority in that area of law.

When it comes to deciding which cases to cite for yourself, I suggest using a similar strategy: look at the number of cases which have quoted or referred to the main case (tip – try JustisOne’s key paragraph feature), check that you are reading the highest court’s hearing of the case (JustisOne will alert you to an appealed or overruled case at the top of the document) and choose cases which have been heard at higher courts over others.

Some reported series versions are also deemed to be more authoritative than others. You should always aim to cite the most authoritative version of a case. JustisOne displays the different parallel citations for any one case on the search results page, and in Citations & Sources. These are ordered from the most authoritative first, to the least authoritative last, so it is easy to see which citation is best to use.

Why is it important to consult online resources as a student?

Having the ability to conduct legal research online is becoming increasingly important. As the legal industry turns more and more to technology, new lawyers are expected to be able to conduct legal research both in law libraries and online. Getting familiar with online services such as JustisOne as a student will allow you to start your training contract or pupillage with knowledge of how to conduct your research quickly and efficiently.

JustisOne will also show you where cases have been cited by others, how cases have treated one another and warn you if a case has been heard in a higher court – all things that are easy to miss or interpret wrongly without the platform’s prompts. JustisOne offer a free online proficiency test which is certified and can be added to your legal CV. The proficiency test is great for understanding the tools available on the service and how to put them to practice before using them for real research. The certificate will prove to employers you are proficient in using JustisOne for legal research.
Practical legal research

Accessing JustisOne

Go to www.justis.com and click Sign In at the top-right corner of the page. From here, select the option to sign in to JustisOne on the left hand side of the screen. If your organisation has IP recognition enabled, you will be taken straight to the platform to start searching. For others, you will be asked to sign in with your username and password.

You may be able to access the service directly through your university library pages – speak to your law librarian or knowledge base team with any questions regarding access.

Need help accessing JustisOne? Contact helpdesklondon@vlex.com or call us on +44 (0)20 7284 8080.

Searching made easy

A helpful place to start searching is the JustisOne Browse feature. This feature will allow you to search for content using a step-by-step process, as shown in the image to the right. You can also use the search bar to search for citations, categories, the title of a case, legislation, EU law, keywords and phrases. Boolean search operators can also be used.

“You can search using the intelligent search bar with as broad or as niche a term as you would like, and it will bring up the relevant results. You can also search across multiple common law jurisdictions at once (even if your university does not subscribe to them) to see if a case exists under your search, and use the links provided to access it where it is available.

Once you have found the case you need to explore, the case analysis tools make it simple to pinpoint the area of law that you are looking for within each case, saving you time on research tasks both in practice and as a student.”

LLB graduate. University of Aberdeen
“Comparative law research in common law jurisdictions can be an extremely time consuming and laborious process..."

That was the case until Justis. Now doing these types of comparative law research projects are a breeze due to the Justis platform, its taxonomy, and its many features that make navigation of the information easy and fun.”

Associate Professor of Law and Legal Research
Boston University School of Law

Cross jurisdictional searching

If your goal is to work for a global law firm, or if you are studying International Law, you can use JustisOne as a legal citator to find information about cases heard in different jurisdictions. Regardless of your university’s subscription, use the jurisdiction settings in JustisOne to select those that you are interested in and search as normal.

When looking at a case, it is easy to see how it has been influenced by cases from other jurisdictions, as well as how subsequent cases from elsewhere have relied on it. Take a look at the cited and citing cases tabs to see a list of all cases involved. You can order cases by jurisdiction, so you can see how other common law systems have approached and used the same point of law.

View cases from different jurisdictions side-by-side using the Multiple View feature. Click the button here to switch between different views.
Go beyond your reading list

It is often expected that you will look beyond the list of cases supplied by your lecturer or faculty. Researching relevant cases, in addition to your reading list, allows for a more in-depth analysis of an area of law.

JustisOne has many unique features which can significantly reduce the amount of time needed to find related cases and understand the relationships between those cases, such as our Precedent Map.

Precedent Map

As shown on the right, the Precedent Map is the perfect way to see at a glance how cases are related to one another. See the most binding and recent cases, and understand how other cases have treated or been treated by the selected case.

Why is this important?

When you start a training contract, you’ll no longer have access to reading lists. When you start to search for a case in a specific area of law, the Precedent Map can help you to find other similar cases, which agree on a point of law.

If you are more of a visual learner, you can take a look at the Precedent Map to give yourself a break from lists!

What does the Precedent Map show me?

Cases are in date order, so you can see at a glance if recent cases have reacted positively or negatively to the main case.

The larger the circle, the more cases in common this case will have with the main case being researched. They are therefore much more likely to cover similar questions of law.

“The Justis Precedent Map is an excellent tool for seeing at a glance where an authority has been considered. Equivalent deliberate search would take up to a few minutes and is not really possible on some platforms.” QC and Barrister, Quadrant Chambers, London

JustisOne’s Precedent Map feature
Building a strong argument

When constructing an essay or argument for a mooting competition, it is important to ensure that your supporting material has not been overruled and that the specific point you are using to support your argument remains good law. In JustisOne this is easy to check.

Note: We display a notification on cases if they have been heard in a higher court or overruled.

CiteLine: If you click on the button within JustisOne labelled All Citing Cases, you will be shown the passages from subsequent cases where the current case has been mentioned. This allows you to swipe through each passage easily to see how it has been treated, as shown below.

Citations in context: Use our list of cited and citing cases, as this will show you where within a judgment another case has been mentioned, and if it was treated in a positive, negative or neutral way. The button next to each title, as shown below, will display the number of mentions of that case within the judgment. To highlight exactly where they have been mentioned, simply click on the button. You can even clearly see if the case has been cited in other jurisdictions.
A useful feature for essay writing

JustisOne’s Key Passages are a useful feature for revision and essay writing. The Key Passages show you the most quoted sentences and phrases from a case.

Why is this useful? If you are looking at cases that have formed the basis of a legal test for a point of law, the Key Passage will often be the legal test itself, since this is the part of the judgment that is most commonly cited.

In this way, the Key Passages feature is a great way to quickly identify legal tests and the most important part(s) of the case, so that you can decide if the case is relevant to your studies before reading the entire judgment.

“Sometimes I want to use a case to support an argument, but can see that it has been subsequently doubted or distinguished; in such circumstances I have to ensure that the treatment is for a different point of law or an unrelated issue which does not impact the relevant point for me or the overall status of the case. This task is easily possible because of the CiteLine feature, which provides the key parts of a case and how that part has been subsequently used in other cases as well.”

LLB student, The City Law School, City, University of London
GDL student...

“The multiple view feature is one of the most useful tools available on JustisOne. It allows the user to organise their thoughts while viewing cases/legislation side by side.

As a student, writing an essay or answering a problem question in preparation for a tutorial is always a constant battle between all the tabs I have open on my browser. No matter how organised I am, I still find myself clicking on each of the tabs in turn to find the reference I am looking for. The JustisOne multiple view tab takes this problem away, keeping all of my cases in one handy drop down within the one tab, and allowing me to view two or three simultaneously or side-by-side with the legislation.

I think that the feature will also be particularly useful after my studies, as it will allow me to conduct my research and build a case very easily. It is so simple to compare judgments on JustisOne and I never have to worry about finding the correct tab to find a particular case.”

GDL graduate, BPP University

LLM student...

“Writing essays during your LLM can be a daunting process. One of the main challenges can be how do you convince your reader that your argument or view has merit? In this regard, JustisOne’s Key Passage feature certainly gave me confidence.

This feature provided me with specific text of what others cited the most, in most cases, it was a crucial part of the judgment. I could also see where throughout the judgment other parts had been cited. I was able to see this information instantly, without reading through the entire judgment. However, you need to remember that sometimes reading an entire judgment is advisable. The Key Passage feature is a great guide to find what others find most useful within a judgment, but you will still need to understand the context of the case!

I used this information to support my own argument by either 1) citing/quot ing the paragraph directly or; 2) finding a case or judgment which cast doubt on that often cited part. While it is often quick in most online services to see who and how a case has been cited, this feature provides context to what is actually being cited. It is a useful tool to help understand the strengths and weakness of an argument, but to also navigate to other cases that may be of value.”

LLM Student, The City Law School City, City, University of London
Legislation (UK and Ireland)

Through JustisOne, you can access legislation from both the UK and Ireland. You can also see how this legislation has been used and interpreted by other common law jurisdictions. For example, many judges from the Caribbean refer to UK statutes when deciding the outcome of the case they are hearing. On JustisOne, you can view a list of the cases from any jurisdiction that have cited a particular piece of legislation.

You can also view the text of cases side-by-side with legislation so that you can work with them at the same time. The multiple view feature will allow you to keep all of the documents that you are working with together on one screen, saving you time from having to switch between tabs on your browser and keeping all of your research neatly together!

Good to know

- Use read mode to bring any case into the centre of the screen to allow you to focus purely on the text.
- Your original typed search will automatically be highlighted within the judgment so that you can locate important sections quickly. Use the pen icon to turn this off.

“We have often impressed our members by locating a judgment from JustisOne that they thought would be really difficult to find!” Advocates Library, Parliament House, Edinburgh
Test yourself

Let’s get practical

Once you’ve been given a legal research question, you will likely check the area of law and conduct some initial background research using texts such as Halsbury’s Laws of England.

Following this you will want to take a look at the relevant legislation or precedents in this area or region. This is where JustisOne can help you.

Example question

Olivia and Jack both aged 37, were married seven years ago in Manchester and now live with their three children in London. They have twin girls, Sophia and Amelia, aged 6 and one boy, George, who is 4. When the twins were born, Jack (working as a vet) had a higher income and the couple decided that Olivia, who was a secondary school teacher, would remain home to take care of their three children. As George was about to start school, Olivia was planning on going back to her previous job and had started to tutor in the afternoon to get back into the routine of teaching. Over the past year, Jack has been working overtime and spending less time at home. As a result, Olivia has been relying on an old school friend, Harry, to help her with childcare while she tutors. Olivia and Harry have been growing closer over the past month and last night, Olivia admitted to Jack that her and Harry were having an affair and she was going to move in with him. She wanted the children to live with her and Harry in his home and sell her property with Jack so that she and Harry might buy a larger home together. The house is in joint names and valued at £300,000, with a remaining mortgage of £60,000.

Olivia will be on a new income of £38,000 per year when she returns to work next month, and Jack has an annual income of £45,000 plus overtime. Jack would like the children to stay with him and asks for your advice on the following:

Legal research questions

On what grounds can he end the marriage?
How will their assets be divided?
What will the court take into account when deciding with whom the children should live?
How to answer this question with JustisOne

Nicola Stephenson, Head of Training at vLex Justis, and LLB graduate, discusses approaching the problem question using JustisOne.

There are three different ways to search on JustisOne, so we’ll approach each question using a different tool. For the question below, we will conduct the research using the general search bar at the top of the JustisOne platform.

Question 1

On what grounds can he end the marriage?

When using JustisOne, it is important to remember that you can search across multiple jurisdictions at once, so you must choose which are relevant to the questions at hand before making a search. We know from the information provided that the couple were married and reside in England, so we must set our jurisdiction settings to reflect this. Use the settings tab on the bottom left of the platform, followed by jurisdictions, ensuring that only UK is selected.

Focusing on the first question, we can select relevant words to search on the topic. I entered “ending of marriage” in the search bar to search for this phrase within any of our documents. At the time of making the search, this returned just under 40 results, but as news cases are constantly being added to JustisOne, this number could change in the future.

JustisOne’s search results are ordered by relevance, which ensures that the most relevant and leading authorities are at the top of your results. Therefore, I chose to view the first few results on the list as I was confident they would be the most appropriate to start my research with.

After looking at a few of the top cases in the results list, the Key Passage in one of the cases informed me that the case was regarding similar points of law as our example.

Then, to understand if there was any relevant legislation surrounding this area of law, I used the ‘cited legislation’ tab. Here I found the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973. I clicked on the Act name to open the legislation within JustisOne. After reading the Act and learning about the law surrounding the grounds on which a marriage can be ended, I used the list of ‘citing cases’ to find other cases that have used this Act in practice. Within the list of citing cases, I could see the flags of each jurisdiction, and quickly find relevant cases from the UK.
Using the list of UK cases that have cited the relevant legislation, I was able to explore other cases on similar points of law, locate appropriate precedent and find cases to support my arguments.

By using the tools in JustisOne, it is easy to link between relevant documents to find what is needed to prepare your final answer. I was also able to quickly link between documents and find the relevant documents needed to prepare the final answer to this question.

Question 2

How will their assets be divided?

For this question, we will explore the second way to make a search on JustisOne; the advanced searching tool. After selecting advanced on the left menu (shown on page 44), I selected to search across ‘ALL’ (along the top bar), and entered divorce assets into the full-text search. This brought back around 2000 results – far too many to read one by one!

To reduce the number of results, I decided to refine my search further. To do this, I returned to the advanced search to add more information. Choosing to focus on ‘CASES’ (rather than all content), I added the Supreme Court to my search criteria. This provided me with 23 results at the time, a much more manageable starting point for this legal research.

By looking through the results, you will see each case has associated categories which will display in blue, green and peach boxes under each document title.

On the second page of results, I found some cases
tagged with 'Divorce'. By selecting one of the tagged cases, I can automatically see my search terms (divorce assets) highlighted within the document. I can also look for other terms such as 'property' or 'joint ownership', by using CTRL + F on my computer.

Using the tools in JustisOne, I was able to find a few specific cases as a starting point for my reading into this area, which eventually led me to an answer.

Question 3

What will the court take into account in deciding with whom the children should live?

The final question to be addressed is that concerning the custody of the children. To identify the relevant information needed to answer this question, we will use JustisOne's browse feature.

Located on the left of the screen and under advanced, this feature can be used to search by category, jurisdiction, reported series, year of case or year reported. To answer the question, I chose to narrow down cases in the UK by the categories of Family Law > Children > Custody and Contact.

After clicking the ‘Show Documents’ button on the top left of the browse feature, I looked through the first few cases listed in my results. I decided to look at Payne v Payne, and from the Key Passage feature within this case, I could instantly see that the case had discussed factors of relevant law and it was a great starting point to answer this question.

Next, I opened the Precedent Map for Payne v Payne, using the button in the upper right corner. I chose to view only the positive and negative treatments within this feature, so that I could really focus on the persuasiveness of my argument. As the Precedent Map is ordered chronologically from left to right, I could instantly see that this case has recently received a negative treatment in 2015. By double-clicking on the negative citing case, the Precedent Map shifted its focus on the new case: Re C (Internal Relocation). By selecting the title at the top of the Precedent Map, I was taken straight to this case where I could view the full-text judgment.

Using the ‘Cited Cases’ tab, I found Payne v Payne and selected the corresponding
citations in context button showing me the 18 mentions of the case within Re C (Internal Relocation). I could then read the relevant paragraphs and analyse them, allowing me to decide whether the case was still persuasive for my arguments.

Using the results from my initial search, the Precedent Map and the list of Citing and Citing cases, I continue to explore relevant cases to find authorities that will help to answer the question.

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Training available

Did you know, vLex Justis offer free online training to all customers?

Training sessions are conducted online so that your colleagues, staff or students can join the session remotely. We can also offer in-person training in some parts of the UK and Ireland, and provide special training sessions for JustisOne’s Admin Portal.

If you would like to benefit from a training session, please contact your law librarian or our training team.

Are you ready?

When applying for a vacation scheme or mini-pupillage, you’ll often be looking for ways to make your application stand out from the crowd.

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