

ENGLAND AND WALES / JUDGMENT

L v P

COURT
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICEBEFORE
SIR JONATHAN COHEN

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Case No: FA-2026-000118

Royal Courts of Justice

Strand

London WC2A 2LL

7 May 2026

Applicant

Respondent

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

FAMILY DIVISION

NCN: [2026] EWHC 1209 (Fam)

BEFORE: SIR JONATHAN COHEN

BETWEEN: MR L appeared in person

L

- and -

P

JUDGMENT

(As Approved)

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1. SIR JONATHAN COHEN: On 13 April 2026, I dismissed on paper as totally without merit an application by Mr L for permission to appeal the order made by His Honour Judge Goodrum on 27 February 2026. The application was made by the father of a young boy, H, who is now nine, the father being Mr L. I made a Civil Restraint Order for 3 years, which Mr L now seeks to set aside.
2. Mr L is no stranger to litigation about H, and the history is set out in the judgment of Mrs Justice Arbuthnot of 25 September 2023. That judgment is essential reading for any judge who has further dealings with this case. At paragraph 6 she sets out in her judgment all four previous applications for permission to appeal made by Mr L, which were dismissed as totally without merit, on each occasion by different judges. 3. In her judgment, Mrs Justice Arbuthnot dismissed another application on the basis that it was totally without merit, so that was a fifth such order made. At paragraph 71, she said this: “The father's situation comes about because of his failure to see himself as the court has found him to be, as an aggressive and abusive man who would emotionally harm his children”— Only one of his children is the subject of this application. —“because of the way he treats their mothers.” Mrs Justice Arbuthnot was able to say that because she had dealt with at least some part the litigation in relation to the other child. She said at paragraph 73: “Having considered the extensive history of the applications made by the father, which have no merit, I am considering making a civil restraint order.” She gave Mr L a chance to explain why such an order should not be made, and that if the court heard nothing, the court would proceed to consider the question.
4. When this application for permission to appeal, which I dismissed, came before me, I read the judgment of Mrs Justice Arbuthnot which had been sent to me by the respondent to the appeal, H's mother. I would have been in danger of going severely off the rails if I had not been provided with this information, which should have been sent to me by Mr L. I asked Mrs Justice Arbuthnot whether she had ever made the order, and she said that it that had slipped through the net.
5. The application which was made to Judge Goodrum was made notwithstanding the presence of a section 91(14) order, which did not expire until January 2026—some six months after Mr L made the application to the Family Court and which led to the order in respect of which application for permission to appeal I dismissed.

6. Mr L has told me that he made the application because he had done what Judge Goodrum had asked him to do and attended various courses before making a further application in respect of H. When he made the application, the judge ordered a CAFCASS report. Unfortunately for Mr L, the conclusion of the CAFCASS reporter who spoke to him was that the courses had made no difference to his attitude at all. No doubt it was that that led to Judge Goodrum to dismiss the application.
7. Mr L complains that the dismissal of his application by Judge Goodrum denied him the opportunity to show the Judge that the reporter was wrong.
8. The application that came before me, therefore, became his sixth application for permission to appeal which was dismissed as totally without merit. I fully understand Mr L's distress at not being able to see his son when he says that he had done everything that Judge Goodrum had asked him to do. However, attending courses is only the mechanism which is intended to change attitudes, and there was no evidence that the change had occurred. 9. It is clear that section 91(14) orders, and there have been three of them in the past, make no difference to Mr L in terms of him making applications. It is right and proper that I should make a limited civil restraint order, as Mrs Justice Arbuthnot had said that she was likely to do in September 2023. I remind myself that that order may be made where a party has made two or more applications which are totally without merit. That is provided for in practice direction 4B of the Family Procedure Rules 2010, paragraph 2.1, to which I have referred. Epiq Europe Ltd, Lower Ground, 46 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1JE www.epiqglobal.com/en-gb/
10. In the circumstances, this application to lift the civil restraint order so that he can go back to Judge Goodrum with a further application without a filter, the s.91(14) order having now expired, is dismissed.
11. That concludes this short judgment. I shall order a transcript of it at public expense. Epiq Europe Ltd, Lower Ground, 46 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1JE www.epiqglobal.com/en-gb/

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