

Family Law (Journal)/2008 Volume 38/March/Review/Reviews: Pathways to Justice, BMER Women, Violence and the Law - [2008] Fam Law 280

Family Law

[2008] Fam Law 280

1 March 2008

Reviews: Pathways to Justice, BMER Women, Violence and the Law

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Pathways to Justice, BMER Women, Violence and the Law

Rights of Women, £12.00, paperback

Intended as an accessible and practical guidebook on issues of English (family) law which are characterised by an international dimension, this publication delivers on its promises. *Pathways to Justice* covers a kaleidoscope of legal issues which tend to affect women of ethnic minorities or people with an international element to their relationships and family set up. The publication provides insight into subjects such as recognition of foreign marriages and divorces, forced marriage, international child abduction, immigration and asylum, domestic violence and trafficking. By analysing these issues from a practical perspective in the context of English law this book succeeds in providing a detailed, easily accessible overview of the legal rights, procedures and remedies in each of these subject areas. Helpful flowcharts and textboxes with relevant case studies and case-law guide the reader through the book and help to illustrate and contextualise the law set out in the various chapters.

Authored and edited by staff members of Rights of Women in consultation with leading law practitioners, academics and activists on the different subject areas, this book is an valuable reference guidebook for individuals, non-governmental organisations, social workers and law practitioners alike. *Pathways to Justice* is divided into three parts.

Part 1 deals with the conceptual and legal framework of the book and is divided into seven chapters, which deal with human rights law, the law on marriage and civil partnership, divorce and civil partnership dissolution, financial arrangements following relationship breakdown and international child abduction. The book addresses and explains international or transnational aspects within these subject areas, and uses case-law to great effect in dealing with issues such as the status of a religious or overseas divorce (such as the Jewish 'get' or the Islamic 'talaq'), financial relief in the English courts following an overseas divorce and the enforceability of religious or other spousal agreements (dowry/'mehr') in the English courts.

Part 2 consists of two chapters which deal with the legal procedure concerning women seeking asylum in the UK/EU and immigration law and procedure in cases of domestic violence. This chapter sets out the procedure of obtaining a spousal visa and indefinite leave to remain for non-EEA citizens. There is also a helpful chart which provides a summary of the relevant application forms and fees.

Part 3 is divided into five chapters and focuses on forms of violence experienced by women of ethnic minorities. The chapters deal with domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and trafficking. The final chapter of this book provides a useful overview of public funding (legal aid).

The chapter on domestic violence incorporates issues affecting women from ethnic minorities, such as 'dowry-related violence' and honour crimes. It sets out in detail the procedure for obtaining non-molestation

and occupation orders and makes reference to the recent change in legislation which renders breaching a non-molestation order a criminal offence and has facilitated enforcement. The chapter on forced marriage provides a number of relevant case references and explains the use of wardship in cases of forced marriage involving a child and the use of the inherent jurisdiction in adult cases. It also sets out the powers that are expected to be available under the new legislation (Forced Marriage Act 2007) which will come into force at the end of 2008.

The layout of the book is clear and helpful to the reader. Pink textboxes highlight relevant case law and grey textboxes emphasise other important information. Each chapter contains a 'Key Points' and 'Useful Organisations' section. All of this facilitates easy access of the book for the purpose of obtaining quick information on a particular subject area. What is missing is a complete index of all the case references. A useful and comprehensive appendix details all relevant organisations, and a glossary of legal terms is contained at the end. This publication is long overdue and highly recommended.