

Chambers & Partners 2018

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We are delighted to have 32 members of chambers recommended as leaders in the field of Children and Matrimonial Finance in the latest Chambers & Partners Directory.

THE SET

Offers market-leading children matters expertise in both private law and public law issues, and has a particular reputation for its depth of international expertise. The set also houses significant expertise in matrimonial finance matters. Its practitioners are no strangers to the appellate courts, having appeared in a high proportion of the most significant recent children cases.

Client service: "The clerks at 4PB are all so easy to work with. They go the extra mile to make things happen," say sources. Michael Reeves, the head clerk, is described as having "the right balance of cheeky charm and gravitas - everyone respects him and he gets results."

SILKS

Henry Setright QC

Extraordinarily experienced children law specialist who is widely regarded as the ultimate expert on international children matters, particularly abduction. He is routinely in the Supreme Court, leading the most significant, law-changing cases. He is also well versed in matters concerning the overlap with immigration, human rights and Court of Protection issues.

Strengths: "He's top-drawer. He is the man when it comes to anything with an international element, and isn't just a supreme advocate, but a Supreme Court advocate. He is the top guy and the man to go to for an appeal."

Recent work: Acted in *Ciccone v Ritchie*, acting on behalf of Guy Ritchie and Madonna's son Rocco.

Alex Verdán QC

Head of chambers and indubitably a force in the field of children law. His caseload sees him handling matters concerning the most severe and complex of children issues. He has expertise in everything from the most serious public law issues to the placement of high-profile people's children.

Strengths: "Perhaps the number one silk for private children work. His bedside manner with clients is superb, and his position statements are succinct, precise and no longer than necessary. His advocacy skills are second to none and he never makes a bad point. He is listened to by judges and invariably gets the desired result. A classy operator and outstanding team leader. The complete package."

Jo Delahunty QC

Highly sought-after specialist children silk entrusted with the most significant and demanding national cases. She regularly handles matters concerning the most serious injuries and fatalities resulting from sexual assault, radicalism and abuse. She has particular expertise in matters concerning a large amount of complex expert evidence following investigation.

Strengths: “Expert in children work, she is brilliant at distilling a case down to its key issues and is great at strategic planning. Very supportive to instructing solicitors, she’s easy to talk to.”

Teertha Gupta QC

Focuses on international children disputes, both public and private, many of which involve forensic investigation. He is universally commended for his personable advocacy style and his prowess in the courtroom. Sources see him as one of the foremost abduction silks.

Strengths: “The way he speaks is outstanding. He has the quality touch of someone who has a very, very pleasant court manner. His presentation, his diction and the content are always so good.”

Catherine Wood QC

Recognised for her expert international children practice, particularly when it comes to matters concerning abduction, parental alienation and sexual abuse. She brings her experience as a judge to bear when handling complex cases. She is experienced at representing high net worth and high-profile individuals.

Strengths: “She is a delight to work with. She is so calm and considered and it’s very reassuring to have her on your side. Catherine has meticulous attention to detail and an impressive ability to hold and then recall the smallest details among the myriad facts in a complex case.”

Charles Hale QC

Renowned family silk who specialises in complex matters in both the private children and matrimonial finance spheres. He routinely handles significant cases on behalf of an impressive client base of high-profile individuals including those with alternative family arrangements. He earns praise for his ability to connect with the full spectrum of clients.

Strengths: “An excellent advocate who is able to put across his client’s case in a persuasive and effective manner. He inspires judicial respect, his cross-examination skills are excellent and he always seems unflappable. He is calm with clients, who feel confident with his representation. He has great attention to detail and is always well prepared.”

Recent work: Represented a father in the Court of Appeal whose child had been relocated to another area of England. Hale argued that internal relocations should be treated in the same way as international abductions.

Alison Grief QC

Children law specialist who offers services in complex children cases and demonstrates noted expertise in those matters requiring expert medical evidence. She has a strong private and public law practice and is noted for her handling of alleged sexual abuse cases and those concerning other serious issues affecting children.

Strengths: “She is at the top of her game, an amazing advocate and someone with a mind that is as sharp as a razor. She’s so forensic in her approach but at the same time she’s got a really lovely, warm manner with clients.”

Christopher Hames QC

Has a notable international children practice and deep expertise in matters concerning the application of the Hague Convention. His growing financial practice sees him representing high net worth individuals in divorce proceedings with international issues. He wins plaudits for his willingness to get fully involved with a case.

Strengths: “He is prepared to go the extra mile. He works long hours and he’s willing to pull out all the stops for you and the client. He makes you feel that you’re working as a team and he seems genuinely interested in helping the client.”

Marcus Scott-Manderson QC

Private children law specialist who is recognised for his extensive experience and knowledge of issues concerning the Hague Convention. He mainly focuses on international cases and is solid in proceedings concerning expert evidence.

Strengths: "Shows excellent attention to detail and has a good manner with the clients."

Michael Sternberg QC

Extremely experienced family practitioner who focuses on complex ancillary relief proceedings for high net worth individuals. He is additionally noted for his specialism in matters relating to pensions.

Strengths: "Has a very keen commercial sense and is always exceptionally well prepared."

John Tughan QC

Has expertise in both public and private children proceedings. He possesses great experience of handling complex cases concerning abuse and relocation matters at the most serious end of the spectrum. He is particularly good at matters concerning fabricated allegations, risk assessment and medical issues.

Strengths: "He's a heavyweight in children matters who is empathetic, expert in his field, knowledgeable and powerfully persuasive."

JUNIORS

Joy Brereton

Highly experienced children law barrister who is recognised for her work in cases concerning the movement of children internationally. She additionally exhibits strength in matters concerning issues of criminal offences and abuse. Her expertise spans both private and public cases.

Strengths: "She's just always very available, a very persuasive advocate and very good with the clients. She has it all."

Michael Gratton

Family junior fast developing a strong children practice with a focus on complex cases involving the international movement of children. He has appeared before the Supreme Court and the ECHR despite his relatively junior level of call. His experience includes the Hague Convention, jurisdictional disputes and the recognition of foreign orders.

Strengths: "He's just your perfect barrister really. He's really easy to work with, great with clients and adored by judges. His written and oral advocacy is exceptional and you would be quite comfortable with him going up against most silks without a leader."

Recent work: Appeared in the Supreme Court on behalf of the successful appellant children in re N (Children) (Adoption: Jurisdiction). Gratton argued that the English courts had previously considered the welfare of children too narrowly with regard to Article 15 of Brussels II revised.

Justine Johnston

Renowned for her expertise in both family finance and complex private children matters, she handles all issues flowing from relationship breakdown. She is recognised in particular for international leave to remove or internal relocation cases. Sources commend her no-nonsense and direct approach.

Strengths: "A fierce advocate who fights her corner and pulls no punches. Clients love her for it."

Samantha King

Renowned family junior in high demand due to her deep knowledge of public and private law cases, both at home and abroad. She exhibits strength in the most serious public law cases and private issues concerning non-traditional families and surrogacy.

Strengths: "Direct and clear in her advice." "Her cross-examination skills and eloquent submissions are

second to none.”

Barbara Mills

Highly regarded family barrister with recognised expertise in private children proceedings, in particular cross-border cases in the High Court. She also demonstrates strength in mediation and is a private judge. She earns consistent praise for her ability to connect with every client.

Strengths: “She’s a brilliant advocate. She’s good with the most difficult of clients and her presentation in court is second to none.”

Judith Murray

Balanced practitioner who divides her practice between representing high net worth individuals in complex financial remedy and private children proceedings. She has experience across a range of Children Act issues including leave to remove matters. She also routinely handles acrimonious proceedings concerning alleged sexual abuse.

Strengths: “Judith is an advocate who is focused and fearless in court. Her advice is concise and clear, and delivered with empathy and charm. She really fights for her clients.”

Jacqueline Renton

Focuses her specialised children practice on sophisticated international issues centring on jurisdiction, relocation and abduction. She already has an impressive number of appellate notches on her belt including appearances in the UK Supreme Court.

Strengths: “Jacqueline’s star is shining very brightly and she is in hot demand. Clients like her as she is firm in her advice and forceful in her advocacy. She will go on to even bigger and better things without a doubt.”

Recent work: Led by David Williams QC on behalf of Madonna Ciccone in a high-profile Hague Convention issue.

Rebecca Foulkes

Manages a diverse children practice that has seen her appearing in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court in significant proceedings. She also has a growing reputation with regard to cases concerning assisted reproduction. Her expertise includes serious public law issues centring on complex non-accidental injuries.

Strengths: “She’s great through and through. She brings impressive legal analysis to everything that she does and is extremely thorough with her papers. Clients have absolute faith when she represents them in court.”

Recent work: Involved in an emotionally challenging case relating to a local authority’s application to remove her client and her siblings from their parent’s care. The application was brought after the client, aged 16, attempted to travel to Syria to join so-called Islamic State.

Mark Jarman

A cross-jurisdictional specialist who represents notable individuals in private children disputes. He mainly acts in cases concerning relocation, abduction and enforcement orders among other international issues. He has experience of dealing with Hague and non-Hague jurisdictions.

Strengths: “He is a very experienced, robust and measured advocate who is more than a match for anyone at the Children’s Bar. He is comfortable in international disputes and knows how to deal with wealthy parents.”

Recent work: Represented a mother estranged from her child for four years following its removal to Egypt after a family holiday.

Brian Jubb

Brings extensive experience to bear in complex children proceedings. He has a specialism in public law cases representing vulnerable adults.

Strengths: "He has that aura of experience, and is both very fair and very concerned with his case. What really struck me was how committed he was to protecting his client's rights."

Hassan Khan

Experienced children law junior who handles a wide range of private children law cases. He is noted for his strength in matters relating to wardship, stranded spouses and cross-border child abduction among other areas.

Strengths: "He knows exactly how strong to be in his advocacy and when he should ease up to get the best result for the client. He knows his audience and what they expect from him."

Michael Edwards

Children law junior with a growing international practice, who has handled a number of highly complex abduction cases in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. His practice spans a broad range of private and public law proceedings involving international issues.

Strengths: "He's fabulous. His client care is brilliant for somebody of his call and his knowledge is outstanding."

Recent work: Led by Alex Verdan QC in an independent inquiry into child sexual abuse on behalf of Leicestershire. The matters centred on allegations made against Lord Janner relating to care homes in Leicestershire in the 1970s.

Dorothea Gartland

Private and public law lawyer focusing on complex children issues, domestically and abroad. She is noted in particular for her expertise in cases involving issues of parentage. She has a growing reputation in surrogacy and jurisdictional dispute work.

Strengths: "Dorothea Gartland inspires confidence in clients and comes across as a kind and caring individual. She really does the absolute best for all her clients and does everything she can to win the case."

Ruth Kirby

Experienced family and Court of Protection practitioner who has expertise in sensitive matters. She is praised for the strength of her advocacy and for the tenacity she shows on behalf of her client in court. Her expertise includes wardship, radicalisation and international issues.

Strengths: "She fights her client's corner really hard, distils the most important issues and knows what the judge is looking for. She's very, very quick on her feet and so well experienced that she knows what to push for."

Stephen Lyon

Respected senior junior who possesses a deep knowledge of matrimonial finance proceedings and services clients of significant wealth including international persons. He is additionally a qualified family arbitrator and sits in ADR proceedings.

Strengths: "He's very good with clients, very user-friendly and loved by judges because they know he's being straight."

Samantha Woodham

Family practitioner handling a variety of private law matters relating to both family finance and children. Her specialism lies in high-value matrimonial disputes, Schedule 1 and leave to remove cases. She is frequently sought out to provide a pre-emptive insight on developing problems before proceedings are issued.

Strengths: “She’s absolutely fantastic and goes above and beyond what she needs to do. Brilliant with clients, she’s approachable and enormously helpful.”

Henry Clayton

Up-and-coming family finance junior who handles matters including maintenance orders, Schedule 1 and CSA appeals. He routinely services high net worth clients and is commended for his grasp of complex issues despite his junior level of call. He has experience of handling matters involving incapacitated adults.

Strengths: “He is very keen, very hard-working and already has experience of some very big and complex cases. His advocacy is very clear, measured and persuasive.”

Andrew Powell

A rising presence in the world of private law children work both domestically and abroad who is proficient in child abduction cases. He has further particular expertise in surrogacy and broader fertility issues.

Strengths: “His knowledge in surrogacy cases is really second to none. He’s just really personable, gets on really well with clients and is really persuasive with the judges. He’s just got this charm about him that you don’t see with barristers of his call, and is really classy.”

Sally Bradley

Specialises in complex public law children issues involving serious abuse and injury. She acts on behalf of parents, children and local authorities and has particular experience in matters with concurrent criminal proceedings, having previously practised criminal law herself.

Strengths: “When you’re dealing with really complex care cases involving vulnerable people, families and children who may not be able to return to their parents, you need someone who can be extremely child-focused and think carefully and pragmatically about the issues. That’s what she does.”

Cleo Perry

Her broad children practice spans both public and private law domestically and abroad. She has experience of representing both parents and children in disputes including leave to remove applications.

Strengths: “She is tactically astute, eloquent in court and it goes without saying she’s completely on top of her papers. She’s extremely committed to ensuring that her clients have the best representation and get the best results.”

Chris Barnes

A well-respected junior who is increasingly well versed in matters concerning the overlap between public law and international children issues. He has experience in contested adoption, relinquished children and radicalisation cases.

Strengths: “He’s very intelligent and has picked things up and taken cases to places you wouldn’t think they could go. He’s definitely a rising star.”

Recent work: Led by Janet Bazley QC in a long-running adoption case which has twice been heard in the Court of Appeal.