

Chambers & Partners 2019

1st November 2018

We are thrilled to have once again been ranked as a Leading Set in the 2019 Chambers and Partners Directory. 4PB is the only chambers to occupy band one for Children Law and is also recommended as a leading set for Family Matrimonial work.

32 members of chambers recommended as leaders in the field of Children and Matrimonial Finance.

A highly renowned chambers that provides a significant depth of talent in both public and private law children matters. The chambers handles a variety of cases ranging from Children Act matters to issues of radicalisation and surrogacy. The set also draws acclaim for its experience in financial matters, such as TOLATA claims. Its barristers routinely act in some of the most sensitive and noteworthy children's cases to come before the High Court.

Client service

Sources note: "All of the clerks are friendly and helpful and they will always do their best to make your preferred counsel is available and to ensure that consistency of counsel is given on a case where that is required." Head clerk Michael Reeves draws praise for "running a tight ship" and is considered "charming" and "always happy to go above and beyond the call of duty."

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.

"He's the godfather of international children's work. A solicitor once told me the most scared they'd ever be for a case was when they were against Henry Setright." "Brilliant on his feet, and someone with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the law." Recent work: Acted in the widely reported case of Al-Jeffery v Al-Jeffery, appearing on behalf of a 21-year-old daughter held against her will in Saudi Arabia by her father.

Alex Verdan 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. "Outstanding in his field." "An exceptional advocate and strategist. His client care is faultless, his documents are succinct and persuasive, and his advocacy is second to none."

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.

“The modern-day equivalent of a knight in shining armour for difficult children cases, she is robust enough for the most difficult of clients and cases.” “She is a force of nature and a go-to barrister for tricky private children work.”

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, radicalisation and abuse. She is particularly experienced in cases involving non-accidental injury to children.

“She is fantastic on tactics and very impressive on the law.” “She has excellent analytical skills and a great grasp of complex medical evidence. Her advocacy is robust, and she’s amazing to watch.”

Michael Gration

Family junior establishing a strong children practice with a focus on complex cases involving the international movement of children. He is experienced in Hague Convention matters, including international abductions and the summary return of children. He is also proficient in jurisdictional disputes and the recognition of foreign orders.

“He is already established as a leading junior for international children work despite his relatively junior level of call. His client care is impeccable and he has a very appealing style of advocacy. If he’s on the other side, you have to up your game, even if you feel that your case is watertight.”

Recent work: Defended a mother who had removed her child to Australia against Hague Convention proceedings from the child’s father, who sought its return. Gration successfully argued that she had lost her habitual residence in Australia, resulting in the claim’s dismissal.

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.

“Utterly charming in everything he does.” “His knowledge is formidable, and he’s brilliant on his feet. He is co-operative and collaborative, and great at building a rapport with his clients.”

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. “She is ferocious. If you’re on a sinking ship of a case and want someone to fight your corner, she’s the one to call.” “She is hugely committed and persuasive.”

Barbara Mills

Highly regarded family barrister with recognised expertise in private children proceedings, in particular cross-border cases in the High Court. She also has equal strength in domestic child disputes, involving issues of welfare and parental alienation. Mills further demonstrates strength in mediation and is a private judge.

“A complete superstar whose paperwork, advocacy and judgement are flawless.” “Supremely sensible and tough when necessary, she is very straight with her clients and strong in court.”

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 those concerning leave to remove matters and Schedule 1 proceedings. She also routinely handles acrimonious proceedings concerning alleged sexual abuse.

“She is steely but with great charm.” “She has very good client skills and gives clear advice. In addition she’s a proper litigator who’s good in the fight.”

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.

“A very hard-working, excellent and tenacious advocate. You would want her to fight your case every time.” “She’s exceptionally good and very assiduous about her work.”

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.

“The doyenne of the RCJ. I have never known anyone who can command the attention of the high court like she can. Polished, persuasive and someone who promotes sense in all around her. Her judgement is unquestionable.”

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.

“You know she’ll do a case beautifully, transparently and professionally. She’s a brilliant cross-examiner.”

Rebecca Foulkes

Manages a diverse children practice which spans both public and private law proceedings. She has a growing reputation with regard to cases concerning assisted reproduction. Her particular expertise includes serious public law issues centring on complex non-accidental injuries. “She carries gravitas beyond her years, and gives sound, well-judged advice.” “She fully prepares cases of the utmost complexity with great skill, and is reliable and thorough.”

Dorothea Gartland

Private and public law lawyer focusing on complex children issues, domestically and abroad. She is particularly active in matters involving the international movement of children, and has a growing reputation in surrogacy and jurisdictional dispute work.

“She is an exceptional barrister, who takes on a brief and immediately seems to alleviate the anxieties of her client. Her comprehensive knowledge, finely tuned empathy and pragmatic judgement allow her to swiftly get to the heart of a complex issue, and more often than not she finds a resolution to problems.”

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. His practice includes international child abductions and jurisdiction disputes.

“Razor sharp and unflappable, he’s consistently good, and can always be relied upon to rise to the occasion. He is able to deliver advice, even in very difficult circumstances, in a calm, measured and client-focused way.”

Recent work: Acted in an appeal to the Supreme Court regarding the concept of ‘anticipatory breach’ in Hague Convention proceedings.

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.

“He has exceptional judgement, and gets straight to the heart of what one is trying to achieve. He is tremendously tough in court, and works very well under exceptional pressure.”

Recent work: Intervened on behalf of a legal charity into a Supreme Court appeal. The issue in question was anticipatory breach in retention cases.

Alison Grief QC

Children law specialist who offers her services for the most complex cases. She demonstrates noted expertise in those matters requiring expert medical evidence, and has a particular specialism in cases regarding head injuries. 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.

“She has excellent analytical skills, a great grasp of complex medical evidence and is someone who deals with clients in a sensitive and calm manner. She is helpful to those instructed, goes out of her way for the client, and produces advocacy that is amazing to watch.”

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.

“He is a rock upon which you know you can build a solid case. Nothing fazes him. When you have him on your side, you feel that added layer of confidence in the way you would if you had a sword and shield to hand.”

Brian Jubb

Brings extensive experience to bear in complex children proceedings. He has a specialism in public law cases representing vulnerable adults, and is also experienced in Hague Convention cases.

“He is a phenomenal barrister with very good client care skills and great legal knowledge.”

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, surrogacy and cross-border child abduction among other areas.

“He is always calm, and a great strategist.” “Always up for a scrap yet charming and persuasive with it.”

Recent work: Successfully represented a mother who sought committal of a father to prison for retaining a child in Nigeria for 4 years. The father received 15 months’ imprisonment.

Stephen Lyon

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

“He has a fantastically down to earth approach with clients.” “His intelligence shines through in his advocacy, and he really inspires confidence in his clients.”

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 effective in matters concerning allegations of fabricated illness, risk assessment and medical issues.

“His unique selling point is his ability to deliver mesmerising, meticulously prepared, compelling and superbly executed written and oral submissions. He is calm, intelligent and approachable, and has stellar client care skills.”

Justin Ageros

Experienced junior who acts across both public and private law child proceedings. He has a particular specialism in public law matters, including adoption, and acts on behalf of local authorities as well as parents and guardians.

“His ability to manage complex evidence while ensuring lay clients are on board is commendable. He is a creative and inspiring advocate, forensically attacking the evidence in pursuit of the client’s best interests.”

Henry Clayton

Family finance junior who handles a range of matters including maintenance orders and Schedule 1 cases. He routinely services high net worth clients in financial remedy proceedings and is commended for his grasp of complex issues.

“He is a go-to junior with a wise head, who gives strategic advice and has excellent attention to detail. He is immensely bright and hard-working, and is someone who punches above his weight.”

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.

“A very persuasive advocate. He has an enormous breadth of experience for a barrister of his seniority, and puts that experience to extremely good use in a number of different cases.”

Recent work: Led by Alex Verdán QC for the London Borough of Sutton in the widely publicised inquest into the death of Ellie Butler.

Harry Gates

A finance junior with an established practice in financial remedy cases, including those with an international element. Particularly noted for his experience dealing with complex asset structures and hidden assets, including offshore trusts and companies.

“He is a gentleman and has a lovely approach with clients. He has a confident manner that belies his comparative youth, and is convincing in his explanations to solicitors, clients and the court.”

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 clients in court. Her expertise includes the representation of very religiously observant families, and she is proficient in cases concerning radicalisation and international issues.

“A real fighter and a feisty advocate, who is someone you’d want on your side in court.” “She is exceptionally bright and very on the ball.”

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 those concerning leave to remove applications, and also has a growing practice in radicalisation cases.

“She is always impeccably prepared, and is a subtle and effective advocate in court.” “She’s a very calming and charming practitioner.”

Recent work: Led by Alex Verdán in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse, representing the London Borough of Lambeth.

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 into developing problems before proceedings are issued.

“Samantha is enormously hard-working and dedicated. She deeply cares about her clients, and produces excellent written documents which are of great advantage to the case.”

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 cases involving contested adoption and relinquished children. He enjoys particular renown for his work in radicalisation cases, and often appears in the High Court.

“He’s a very good lawyer and an excellent advocate. If there isn’t an answer, he’ll find one.”

Recent work: Represented the local authority in proceedings concerning the risk of radicalisation with regard to a mother and baby who had just returned from Syria.

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.

“A warm and persuasive advocate with a real passion and enthusiasm for his work, which shines through in all he does. He has a detailed knowledge and reassuring manner which clients warm to instantly.”

Samantha King QC

Renowned family barrister 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, including those concerning issues of alleged radicalisation and sexual abuse, and also has experience in private law issues relating to non-traditional families and surrogacy.

“She’s a brilliant advocate who is really good at handling vulnerable clients in sensitive cases, whilst also being very tenacious in court.” “Her cross-examination skills are legendary, and she is equally formidable and at ease on her feet making submissions on complex issues of law.”