

Rachael Kelsey

Associate Tenant

"Rachael is the leading practitioner in the field in Scotland. Truly untouchable." Chambers Family/Matrimonial Finance: High Net Worth UK-Wide 2024

Experience

Year of Call: 1996

Practice Areas

- Financial Remedies
- International Children Law
- Private Children Law
- Public Children Law

Dispute Resolution

- Arbitration
- Collaborative Law
- Mediation

Education

Culloden Academy, Inverness; University of Edinburgh (LLB; Dip LP).

Languages

French

Appointments

- Appointed to Scottish Civil Justice Council, Family Law Committee (2016- to date)
- Scottish Law Commission Arbitration Advisory Group for the Review of Contract Law: Third Party Rights (2016).
- Observer Hague Conference on Private International Law Experts' Group and subsequent Working Group on Parentage and Surrogacy (2019- to date).
- Appointed to International Family Law Committee (2018- to date)
- Elected President IAFL (Sept 2023).

Profile

Rachael is a founding Partner of SKO- the largest niche Family Law firm in Scotland. She won 'Private Client Lawyer of the Year' at the inaugural Legal 500 Scottish Law Awards in 2023, is the only 'Star Individual' in the current Edition of Chambers and Partners, the only Scottish lawyer in band one of the UK-wide, Chambers High Net Worth Guide (2024) and was the first Scottish lawyer in the Spears 500 Family Lawyers Guide.



Rachael was elected President of the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL) in 2023- the first Scot and the only woman from the UK in the thirty-seven year history of the Academy.

Chambers and Partners and The Legal 500 have both described Rachael as, “the doyenne of Scots family law”. She was The Times Scottish Lawyer of the Week in July 2020 and is accredited as a Specialist in Family Law and as a Family Mediator by the Law Society of Scotland.

The Legal 500 report that “Rachael Kelsey is a superstar and I just don’t know how she does everything she does in the hours there are. She is so engaging, very pragmatic and no-nonsense, yet also sensitive and responsive as her clients and the circumstances require.”

Rachael has cases in both the Court of Session and the Sheriff Court. She also provides expert opinions on Scots law for courts outwith Scotland. Many of her cases have international or intra-UK jurisdictional issues, an area of specialism for which she is particularly well known and in respect of which she has built up a UK-wide practice. She has a particular interest in the issues that arise when acting for individuals in same-sex relationships.

Rachael is known as someone who is adept at using her considerable knowledge of the law to deliver novel, yet practical, solutions for clients. She is particularly experienced in acting for individuals for whom there are privacy concerns and is used to managing the issues that flow from people’s private lives being in the public eye. Rachael has lectured widely- nationally and internationally- on pure family law issues as well as on dispute resolution (DR) generally. She enjoys writing, and talking, about Scots family Law, both for lay-people and other lawyers, and is widely published and regularly appears on the broadcast media.

In 2022 Rachael was re-appointed by the Lord President to the Family Law Committee of the Scottish Civil Justice Council for a third term of office. She participated in the Hague Conference in Private International Law Parentage and Surrogacy Project Experts’ Group for 3 years and is now participating in the follow-up Working Group. She is a FLAGS (Family Law Arbitration Group Scotland) Arbitrator and trainer, is the only Scottish Arbitrator on the IFLAS (International Family Law Arbitration Scheme) panel.

Rachael is a past Chair of the Family Law Association; was Chair, a Director and Trustee of Family Mediation Lothian for eight years, until 2017 and was Treasurer of CALM (the organisation of accredited family solicitor mediators in Scotland) for nine years until 2016. She was the co-author in 2020 and 2024 of the Scottish Chapter of the ‘Blue Book’- the most widely read international comparative family law guide) published by Thomson Reuters. In 2016 Rachael was on the Scottish Law Commission Arbitration Advisory Group for the Review of Contract Law: Third Party Rights.

Memberships

- IAFL (fellow, counsel 2013-14, secretary 2014-2020, President European Chapter 2020-2021, President-Elect 2022- 2023 and President 2023- to date)
- FLAGS (Family Law Arbitration Group Scotland) (founding member, Trainer and past Treasurer)
- Accredited Family Mediator Law Society Scotland (member and past Treasurer)
- Family Law Association (member and past Chair)
- Family Mediation Lothian (Past Chair, director and trustee);
- Consensus Collaboration Scotland

Testimonials

Legal 500 2024- “Hall of Fame”

"The highly regarded **Rachael Kelsey**, a 'towering figure in family law', has considerable expertise advising on both Scottish and international family law"

'Rachael Kelsey: The matriarch of Scottish law; the 'go-to' Scottish lawyer for international work.'

'Rachael Kelsey stands far above her peers in this area - her legal expertise and client skills are second to none - she is indefatigable - this, alongside her contribution to international family law, is nothing short of staggering.'

Chambers and Partners Family/Matrimonial Finance: High Net Worth UK-Wide 2024- "Band 1"

"Rachael is the leading practitioner in the field in Scotland. Truly untouchable."

"Rachael is just outstanding in every way - you feel such confidence when she is working on your case. She's also kind and insightful and has a great ability to see things from the client's perspective."

Chambers and Partners Family/Matrimonial- Glasgow, Edinburgh and surrounds 2024- "Star Individual"

"She is one of the leading figures of family law in Scotland."

"She has a thirst for knowledge. She has an incredible skill and connections with people. She's an absolutely brilliant lawyer."

"Rachael's frank and honest approach, coupled with the breadth and depth of legal knowledge she has, are a real benefit to her clients."