

Barbara Mills KC

Head of Chambers

'Barbara is a consummate tribunal. She can cut through intractable disputes, listen to everyone, and delivers the decisions and awards with clarity and precision.'

Legal 500, 2025

'A measured, calm voice of reason in the most stormy of cases. She shows exemplary patience and calmness when trying to unlock really knotty problems.'

Chambers and Partners, 2025



Experience

Year of Call: 1990

Year of Silk: 2020

Practice Areas

- International Children Law
- Private Children Law
- Public Children Law

Dispute Resolution

- Arbitration
- Collaborative Law
- Mediation
- Private FDR and Early Neutral Evaluation

Direct Access

Direct Access

Education

LLB (Hull)

Accredited Family Mediator (offering Child Inclusive Mediation)

Arbitrator (children)

Qualified Collaborative Lawyer

Appointments

Chair of the Bar Council of England and Wales 2025
Vice Chair of the Bar Council of England and Wales 2024
Deputy High Court Judge
Governing Bencher for Inner Temple
Recorder

Profile

I am a barrister specialising in difficult, complex and sensitive cases concerning children. My work primarily involves high conflict cases featuring allegations of serious abuse and parental alienation representing parents- often where the outcome has life-changing consequences for the family. I am committed to non-court solutions and I have established a successful mediation and arbitration practice. I receive referrals from High Court judges, KCs and other professional colleagues. My recent mediations include a dispute between two internationally acclaimed musicians and another where I assisted a foreign royal couple to reach resolution over the arrangements for their children across two countries.

I am an accredited mediator and qualified to consult children over 8 years whose parents are in mediation.

I am described as providing “gilt edged expertise” in mediation in HNW circles.

Publications/Training

- Article for Singapore Law Gazette “Arbitration in Family Law”
<https://lawgazette.com.sg/practice/practice-support/arbitration-in-family-law/> July 2024
- Article for The Lawyer Africa on arbitration February 2024
- Article in The Guardian Newspaper about improving diversity and inclusivity in the profession 6 January 2022
- Race at the Bar – A Snapshot Report November 2021
- April 2021 – an article for Counsel Magazine – about retention and progression of Black talent at the Bar;
- In November 2019, wrote an article “Separating Amicably : Easing the financial and emotional cost of divorce” for The Money Pages;
- In October 2019 drafted amendments to the Domestic Abuse Bill on behalf of Women’s Aid and Rights of Women for submission to the Parliamentary Table Office;
- In February 2019, together with Alex Verdan QC, commented on the Guidelines issued by Cafcass in relation to Parental Alienation for The Times newspaper.

Most recent speaking:

- Sir Mota Singh Memorial lecture at Lincoln’s Inn 14 November 2024
- Women in Family Law “In conversation with the Lady Chief Justice of England and Wales and Barbara Mills KC” March 2024
- Chaired the Inns of Court Alliance for Women panel discussion on “Tackling the Gender Pay Gap” March 2024

- Keynote speaker with The President of the Family Division at the Resolution National Conference in May 202
- Trained arbitrators in South Africa March 2023
- Several speaking engagements about Race report and improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity at the Bar (January 2022 and ongoing). Separate meetings with BSB, Circuit leaders and heads of chambers
- March/April 2021 - Prepared and delivered talks on Equality and Diversity issues at the Bar to The Middle Temple Young Bar Association, Inner Temple's BAME Network Society, ALBA E&D Committee as well as law students at Durham University and Hull University
- October 2020 - Prepared and delivered the Private Law Children Update for the FLBA
- October 2019 - Speaker (on the benefits of ADR) and participant at a 2 day symposium in Tokyo between 4PB and the Tokyo Family Bar
- 2019 - date - Prepared and delivered: "Staying out of court: using mediation and arbitration to resolve domestic and cross border disputes involving children" a seminar for a number of leading London based solicitors firms. During the current public health crisis, with the assistance of Zoom, this seminar is being rolled out to a number of firms which have offices nationwide as well as offices abroad.

Memberships

Family Law Bar Association
 Association of Women Barristers
 Association of Lawyers for Children
 Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers
 South Eastern Circuit
 Affiliate Member of Resolution

Directories

"Barbara is thoroughly well prepared and really thinks about the case. She's somebody who just gets it done."

"A measured, calm voice of reason in the most stormy of cases. She shows exemplary patience and calmness when trying to unlock really knotty problems."

"A great all-rounder, who takes time to dig deep into the psychology of a case and examine the driving factors."

"Barbara Mills is outstanding and has the most amazing manner with clients."

Chambers and Partners, 2025

'Barbara is a consummate tribunal. She can cut through intractable disputes, listen to everyone, and delivers the decisions and awards with clarity and precision.'

Legal 500, 2025

"She grapples with really difficult and challenging issues, and is not someone to shy away from making difficult decisions."

"She arbitrated very judicially - she was very even-handed and grasped the issues very well."

"Barbara is extremely professional and child focused."

Family/Matrimonial: ADR - Chambers and Partners, 2024

"Barbara is a heavyweight, who is really punchy and completely lives and breathes the work."

"Barbara is truly a one-of-a-kind advocate. Her impressive experience and clear strategy come together to deliver excellent results."

Family: Children - Chambers and Partners, 2024

Barbara is extraordinarily insightful and has an unmatched ability to identify the real issues in a case and address them head-on. Her written and oral advocacy is forceful and persuasive, and she always has the respect and ear of any tribunal.'

'Barbara thoroughly prepares for cases and has a clear grasp of complex issues. She is an expert in children's law and empathetic to parents in difficult and stressful situations.'

Legal 500, 2024

"Barbara Mills is a phenomenal advocate for clients, who is all over the details."

"She's incredibly emotionally intelligent and represents her client's best interests at all times."

Chambers and Partners, 2023

'Barbara is always well prepared and able to get to grips with the issues quickly. Her advocacy is wonderfully clear and concise. She is not scared to say difficult things to powerful people when required.'

Legal 500, 2023

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

Strengths: "She is laser-sharp with her questioning of the client and is all over the papers." "Incredibly good at children work involving parties with emotional or psychological difficulties." "Barbara has excellent judgement and is compassionate with clients while delivering clear advice to them."

Chambers & Partners, 2021

'Unflappable, measured and incisive. Warm and naturally intuitive, she is liked and admired by opponents and Judges as well as her instructing solicitors and clients. A powerful court presence, and a smooth, clear and punchy advocate.'

Legal 500, 2021

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

Strengths: "Barbara is utterly incredible. She really knows her stuff and she gives excellent advice in difficult and emotional circumstances. Clients take it from her because she knows what she's talking about." "She's a tenacious, effective advocate and a match for anyone of a similar call."

Chambers & Partners 2020

Band 1

'Is wholly reliable and a silk in the making.'

Legal 500, 2020

Top Tier

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.

Strengths: "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."

Chambers & Partners 2019

Band 1

'Great on detail but never loses sight of the bigger picture.'

Legal 500, 2019

Top Tier

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."

Chambers & Partners 2018

Band 1

'She couples the ability to be appropriately tenacious with a down-to-earth pragmatism.' **Legal 500, 2017**

Top Tier

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.

Strengths: "Her preparation is excellent, her cross-examination is second to none and she is absolutely magical in court."

Recent work: Represented the father in contested proceedings concerning the future care of a seven year old girl. The case involved allegations of maternal mental health, drug misuse, and both domestic and physical violence against the girl.

Chambers & Partners 2017 - Band 1

"She has an ability to quietly destroy the other side's case."

Legal 500, 2016 - Top Tier

A senior junior of choice for complex private children matters, who wins plaudits from sources for her commitment and client empathy. She is also a collaborative lawyer offering mediation and early neutral evaluation.

Strengths: "She really is leader quality at junior prices." "Enormously capable when it comes to complex Children Act matters at all levels; she's measured, sensible and tells it how it is."

Chambers & Partners 2016 - Band 1

'Very persuasive on her feet.'

The Legal 500 2015

Has great experience and a deservedly strong reputation for her work in private law children

proceedings. She deals principally with international relocations and cases relating to same-sex families.

Expertise: "She clearly knows the law well and has a good, sensible down-to-earth approach. She works very well with clients." "She's measured and sensible, and tells it how it is."

Chambers & Partners 2015 - Band 1

Barbara Mills – 'An excellent strategist, and a joy to work with.'

Recommended as a Leading Family Junior in the area of Children Law

The Legal 500, 2014

Excels in international children cases and is especially noted for her expertise in matters relating to surrogacy and adoption.

Expertise: "Tells it exactly how it is: she is very straight, very sensible and calm." "Her attention to detail is great."

Recent work: Successfully acted for a father who is the respondent in a private law case brought by a mother who wanted to relocate to Brazil with the parties' child. The matter involved issues concerning a shared residence order for the child, as well as religious and cultural factors, the impracticality of contact and a review of the case law.

Chambers & Partners 2014 - Band 1

Barbara Mills is 'frighteningly intelligent'.

Recommended as a Leading Family Junior in the area of Children Law

Legal 500, 2013

The "utterly superb" Barbara Mills concentrates her family law practice on children cases, and has a noted specialism in matters concerning surrogacy and adoption. Interviewees note that she can "carry clients with her and persuade them of the right course," and describe her as being excellent when handling "stressful, nasty disputes."

Chambers & Partners 2013

Barbara Mills is 'first port of call on contact, residence and relocation disputes'

The Legal 500 2012

Barbara Mills, "a very calm and clear player" who regularly handles international children matters including leave to remove cases. Sources applaud her sensible and practical approach.

Chambers & Partners 2012

Barbara Mills is "a high-class performer" who is often instructed by blue-chip solicitors in complex Children Act disputes. She is emblematic of the quality at a set.

Chambers & Partners 2011

Cases

14/08/2023	The Mother v The Father	Charles Hale KC Barbara Mills KC Chris Barnes	[2023] EWHC 2078 (Fam)
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21/02/2023	Re C ('Parental Alienation'; Instruction of Expert)	Barbara Mills KC Charles Hale KC Joy Brereton KC Chris Barnes Charlotte Baker Frankie Shama	[2023] EWHC 345 (Fam)
30/03/2021	Re H-N and Others (Children) (Domestic Abuse: Finding of fact hearings)	Christopher Hames KC Charlotte Baker Jo Delahunty KC Chris Barnes Charles Hale KC Adele Cameron-Douglas Rebecca Foulkes Miriam Best Teertha Gupta KC Matthew Persson Clarissa Wigoder Mark Jarman KC Michael Gration KC Barbara Mills KC Joy Brereton KC Emma Spruce	[2021] EWCA Civ 448
18/12/2015	C (Older Children: Relocation) (Rev 1)	Barbara Mills KC Judith Murray KC	[2015] EWCA Civ 1298
04/03/2015	Re R (A Child – Relocation)	Barbara Mills KC	[2015] EWHC 456 (Fam)
01/09/2010	R (A Child)	Barbara Mills KC	[2010] EWCA Civ 1137
10/09/2008	Re F-H (Children) (2008)	Alex Verdan KC Alistair G Perkins Barbara Mills KC	(2009) 1 FLR 349; [2008] EWCA Civ 1249
30/07/2008	Re A (Joint Residence: Parental Responsibility)	Kate Branigan KC Barbara Mills KC	[2008] 2 FLR 1593
20/05/2008	Re W (Children) (2008)	Barbara Mills KC	[2008] 2 FLR 1170 [2008] EWCA Civ 538
16/11/2005	K and S (Children) (2005)	Barbara Mills KC	[2005] EWCA Civ 1660
21/10/2005	Portsmouth NHS Trust v Wyatt	Barbara Mills KC	[2006] 1 FLR 652
22/12/1998	Re G (A Child) (1999)	Barbara Mills KC	[2000] 2 FLR 259
27/10/1997	A v L (Contact)	Barbara Mills KC	[1998] 1 FLR 361
15/08/1997	Re R (Disclosure)	Barbara Mills KC	[1998] 1 FLR 433