

Ruth Kirby KC

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Legal 500, 2025

'She is a pretty phenomenal woman. She is tenacious, hard-working and always welcomes the instructing solicitor's opinion in the case. She has an incredible knowledge for case law.'

Chambers and Partners, 2025

Experience

Year of Call: 1994

Year of Silk: 2021

Practice Areas

- Court of Protection - Vulnerable Adult
- International Children Law
- Private Children Law
- Public Children Law
- Sports Law

Dispute Resolution

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

Awards





PRO BONO RECOGNITION LIST

ENGLAND & WALES

Qualifications

Arbitrator CI Arb (2022)
Certificate in Sports Law (2014)
Mediator (Family) (2004)
Barrister in Republic of Ireland (2004)
Commercial Mediator (2004)
Collaborative Lawyer

Education

University College Cork, Ireland BCL
London School of Economics, LLM
London Metropolitan University, CPE
Inns of Court School of Law, BL
BL (Irl) Kings Inns, Dublin 2004
DeMontford University 2014

Languages

Working knowledge of French and Irish

Appointments

Bencher of Middle Temple
Assessor for AdvocateBar Council Ethics Committee member
Bar Council Ethics Committee member
Bar Council general member
Middle Temple Advocacy trainer

Profile

Ruth's practice is primarily in children and Court of Protection work. She also undertakes sports law cases and disciplinary tribunal work including advising stars of the rugby world. The unusual breadth of her practice is reflected in the variety of her reported cases.

Ruth has particular experience in representing high profile families and individuals and of representing very religiously-observant families and families embroiled in political and cross-jurisdictional issues, sometimes with their own Governments. She deals with all aspects of private and public family law – both domestic and international

Ruth is dual qualified in the Irish Republic and has rights of audience before the Irish courts. She also is instructed as an expert witness in Irish and European family law cases.

International Children Law

Ruth has specialised in children law with an emphasis on international aspects for more than 20 years. The bulk of her practice has been in the Family Division including: abduction, jurisdictional disputes and wardship/inherent jurisdiction cases. Many of her reported cases have been in this area of family law.

Private Children Law

Ruth has specialised in children law for more than 20 years. Private law children has formed the bulk of her practice which has been in the Family Division including:

- Abduction and other unlawful movement of children and adults;
- Wardship and Inherent Jurisdiction cases (publicity/privacy cases and stranded spouses);
- Complex disputes concerning children and vulnerable adults; and
- Jurisdictional issues

Court of Protection

Ruth has always practised in both privately-funded and legally-aided cases in this area of her work especially in complex COP cases. She has, in one case secured a costs order for close to £1 million. She tends to specialise in the complex welfare aspects of cases working with her Chancery colleagues on the financial aspects but can do both in modest cases.

Sports Law

Public Children Law

Ruth has specialised in children law for more than 20 years. She has acted for all parties in public law proceedings throughout her career. The bulk of her practice has been in the Family Division including:

- Disputes about jurisdiction;
- Care proceedings overlapping with wardship and Inherent Jurisdiction cases;
- Complex care proceedings; and
- Radicalisation cases.

Non-court dispute resolution

Qualifying as a commercial mediator in 2004, Ruth has had a longstanding belief in all forms of non-court dispute resolution (NCDR). She is collaboratively trained as well as being a Family Mediator for more than 10 years. She also practises as a children law arbitrator since 2022.

Inquests and Public Inquiries

Ruth brings her forensic cross examination, analytical and advocacy skills to this growing part of her practice.

Publications/Training

Ruth has lectured for the London Safeguarding Children's Board, the Counter Terrorism Unit at the Met Police (SO15), Gresham College; and the Family Law Bar Association. She has also lectured in various academic environments including at the LSE. She has trained the Irish Judiciary on diversity and ethnic issues and trains students and junior barristers in advocacy at Middle Temple.

Memberships

Family Law Bar Association
Association of Lawyers for Children
Court of Protection Bar Association
Administrative Law Bar Association
London Irish Lawyers' Association

Directories

“Clients love Ruth because they always feel listened to, and she will fight incredibly hard for them. She is creative at coming up with solutions and strategies for complex cases.”

“She is brilliant with client’s and an exceptional advocate and strategist.”

“She is a pretty phenomenal woman. She is tenacious, hard-working and always welcomes the instructing solicitor’s opinion in the case. She has an incredible knowledge for case law.”

Chambers and Partners, 2025

‘Ruth is a high-quality KC who fights fiercely for her clients. She is an exceptional tactician and strategist.’

Legal 500, 2025

‘Ruth is a force of nature. She quickly grasps the most complex matters – absorbing the paperwork like a sponge. She goes the extra mile in court to pursue points for her clients, and her advocacy is slick, persuasive and, when needed, fiery.’

Legal 500, 2024

“Ruth is the best advocate I have ever worked with and she is great with clients. She works exceptionally hard and, no matter what her schedule, she will always make time for you.”

Chambers and Partners, 2024

“A joy to instruct as she really gets stuck in and makes her arguments forcefully. Every point she makes, she just builds and builds upon to create a compelling submission.”

Chambers and Partners, 2023

‘Ruth is a force of nature and an incredible strategist. Her advocacy style is punchy, considered and direct, and she never left a stone unturned.’

Legal 500, 2023

“A good fighter who is powerful in the courtroom and empathetic towards clients.” “She articulates powerful arguments in a persuasive manner. She is 100% ready to deal with the pressures presented in cases, and has the ability to think two steps ahead.” “Ruth has a natural, easy rapport with clients which puts them at ease.”

Chambers & Partners, 2022

“A formidable advocate who provides punchy thinking, she deserves her elevation to silk this year.”

Legal 500, 2022

Strengths: “Holds her own in complex cases and fights her client’s corner. She wants to achieve the best result for the children involved in the case.” “Concentrates on the bigger points and puts her whole heart into both legal aid and private cases.”

Chambers & Partners, 2021

Cases

30/10/2024	R (Child Abduction: Parent's Refusal to Accompany) (Rev1)	Teertha Gupta KC Ruth Kirby KC Mani Singh Basi Frankie Shama	[2024] EWCA Civ 1296
07/12/2023	G (Children) (Supervised Contact)	Ruth Kirby KC Charlotte Baker Alex Verdan KC Frankie Shama	[2023] EWCA Civ 1453
06/12/2023	C v M (A Child) (Abduction: Representation of Child Party)	Ruth Kirby KC Adele Cameron-Douglas Miriam Best Mark Jarman KC Mani Singh Basi Christopher Hames KC Indu Kumar Charlotte Baker Deirdre Fottrell KC Henry Setright KC Harry Langford	[2023] EWCA Civ 1449
18/05/2023	C v M & Anor	Ruth Kirby KC Mark Jarman KC Mani Singh Basi Charlotte Baker Adele Cameron-Douglas	[2023] EWHC 1182 (Fam)
18/05/2023	LKM v NPM	Alex Verdan KC Ruth Kirby KC Frankie Shama	[2023] EWFC 118
02/02/2022	Re KM (A Child) (Jurisdiction: Habitual Residence)	Henry Setright KC Ruth Kirby KC Harry Langford	[2022] EWFC 132
26/11/2021	T v T & Ors	Frankie Shama Ruth Kirby KC	[2021] EWHC 3231 (Fam)
03/08/2020	RE M (A Child) (2020)	Teertha Gupta KC Cliona Papazian Ruth Kirby KC Michael Edwards Ralph Marnham	[2020] EWCA Civ 922
02/03/2020	A (A Child) (Inherent Jurisdiction: Parens Patriae, FMPO And Passport Orders) (Rev 2) (2020)	Cliona Papazian Ruth Kirby KC	[2020] EWHC 451 (Fam)
27/02/2020	Re A (A Child) (Inherent Jurisdiction: FMPO)	Cliona Papazian Ruth Kirby KC	[2020] EWHC 451 (Fam)
12/11/2019	PQ v RS & Others (Legal Parenthood: Written Consent)	Dorothea Gartland KC Ruth Kirby KC	[2019] EWFC 65

12/04/2019	MB v TB (Art 13 Alleged Risk of Oppressive Litigation) (2019)	Paul Hepher Ruth Kirby KC	[2019] EWHC 1019 (Fam)
27/03/2019	RJ v Tigipko (2019)	Michael Gration KC Sam King KC Ruth Kirby KC Mark Jarman KC	[2019] EWHC 448 (Fam)
19/07/2018	A Local Authority v (1) A Mother (2) A Father (3) A, B, C, D & E (By their Children's guardian) (2018)	Sam King KC Ruth Kirby KC Chris Barnes	[2018] EWHC 1841 (Fam)
06/06/2018	Re IM sub nom Secretary of State for the Home Department v (1) LG (2) IM (3) JM (2018)	Ruth Kirby KC Chris Barnes	
10/05/2018	Re J (Children) (2018)	Ruth Kirby KC Michael Edwards	[2018] EWCA Civ 1372
13/11/2017	A Local Authority v M & 5 Ors (2017)	Ruth Kirby KC Private: Zoe Taylor	[2017] EWHC 2851 (Fam)
06/03/2017	Re SU and SA (Children) (2017)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2017] EWHC 441 (Fam)
12/10/2016	X (Number 3 : Division of Religious Festivals) (2016)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2016] EWFC B91
25/08/2016	F v (1) M (2) C (By Her Children's Guardian) (2016)	Ruth Kirby KC	
01/07/2016	A Local Authority v M & 5 Ors (2016)	Ruth Kirby KC Private: Zoe Taylor	[2016] EWHC 1599 (Fam)
09/05/2015	X (Number 2 : Orthodox Schools) (2015)	Ruth Kirby KC	EWFC B237
27/01/2015	Re M (Republic of Ireland) (Child's Objections) (Joinder of Children as Parties to Appeal) [2015]	Christopher Hames KC Ruth Kirby KC Dorothea Gartland KC	[2015] 2 FLR 1074; [2015] EWCA Civ 26
02/04/2013	SK v (1) HD (2) SD (3) UD (4) MD (5) FD (2013)	Ruth Kirby KC Private: Hassan Khan	[2013] EWHC 796 (Fam); [2014] Fam Law 22
28/11/2011	J v J (Relinquishment of Jurisdiction) (2011)	Henry Setright KC Ruth Kirby KC Michael Gration KC	[2012] 1 FLR 1259 : [2012] Fam Law 399; [2011] EWHC 3255 (Fam)
13/10/2011	C (Care: Contact)	Ruth Kirby KC Michael Edwards	[2012] 2 FCR 325; [2011] EWCA Civ 1774
08/07/2011	H v H (Jurisdiction to grant Wardship)	Ruth Kirby KC Teertha Gupta KC	[2012] 1 FLR 23; [2011] EWCA Civ 796

21/06/2011	A v P (Habitual Residence)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2012] 1 FLR 125; [2011] EWHC 1530 (Fam)
25/05/2010	Re J (A Child) (2010)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2010] EWCA Civ 946
10/07/2009	Re C (Children) (2009)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2009] EWCA Civ 959; (2010) 1 FLR 895
18/05/2009	Re Stedman [2009]	Ruth Kirby KC	[2009] EWHC 935 (Fam); [2009] 2 FLR 852
11/02/2009	Re H (Abduction) [2009]	Teertha Gupta KC Mark Jarman KC Ruth Kirby KC	[2009] 2 FLR 1513; [2009] EWHC 1735 (Fam)
31/07/2006	Susan Wilkinson V (1) Celia Kitzinger (2) Attorney-General (Respondents) & Lord Chancellor (Intervener) (2006)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2006] EWHC 2022 (Fam); (2007) 1 FLR 295 : (2006) HRLR 36 : (2007) UKHRR 164 : Times, August 21, 2006
12/04/2006	Susan Wilkinson (Petitioner) V (1) Celia Kitzinger (2) Attorney-General (Resondents) & Lord Chancellor (Intervenor) (2006)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2006] EWHC 835 (Fam); (2006) 2 FLR 397
16/03/2006	Re X (A Child) sub nom Re X (Emergency Protection Orders) (2006)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2006] EWHC 510 (Fam); (2006) 2 FLR 701 : Times, April 21, 2006
27/02/2006	Re U (Care Proceedings: Criminal Conviction: Refusal to give Evidence) (2006)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2006] EWHC 372 (Fam); (2006) 2 FLR 690
16/12/2005	Re K sub nom A Local Authority v N & Ors (2005)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2005] EWHC 2956 (Fam); (2007) 1 FLR 399
21/09/2004	Re S (Children) (2004)	Ruth Kirby KC	[2004] EWCA Civ 1397; (2005) 1 FLR 469