

Justine Johnston

“Justine is absolutely fearless. She fights incredibly hard for her clients, is a highly skilled advocate, and I have seen her change a judge’s mind with the force of her arguments.”

Chambers & Partners, 2025

“Justine is tenacious and brilliant. She fights tirelessly for clients.”

Legal 500, 2025 □



Experience

Year of Call: 1997

Practice Areas

- International Children Law
- Private Children Law

Direct Access

Direct Access



Education

LLB (Hons) (Lond)

BA Communications (Sydney)

Profile

Justine specialises in complicated and high-conflict private law cases, often with an international element, with particular emphasis on applications for permission to remove children permanently from the jurisdiction. She is frequently instructed in cases featuring implacable hostility, intractable child arrangement disputes and allegations of parental alienation. Her cases are often complicated by serious domestic abuse, drug and alcohol issues. Justine is consistently recommended in the major legal directories as an excellent barrister (Chambers and Partners and the Legal 500).

Private Children Law

Justine specialises in complicated and high-conflict private law cases, often with an international element, with particular emphasis on applications for permission to remove children permanently from the jurisdiction. She is frequently instructed in cases featuring implacable hostility, intractable child arrangement disputes and allegations of parental alienation. Her cases are often complicated by serious domestic abuse, drug and alcohol issues.

International Children Law

Justine has extensive experience in international relocation cases and is a skilled and effective advocate, whether that's for a parent trying to prevent the removal of a child, or seeking permission to remove.

Memberships

Family Law Bar Association
Association of Lawyers for Children
South Eastern Circuit
Middle Temple

Directories

'Justine is tenacious and brilliant. She fights tirelessly for clients.'

Legal 500, 2025

"A powerhouse who can quickly and effectively get her point across."

"An extraordinarily gifted advocate."

"Justine is absolutely fearless. She fights incredibly hard for her clients, is a highly skilled advocate, and I have seen her change a judge's mind with the force of her arguments."

Chambers & Partners, 2025

"Her client care is excellent and she provides robust advice."

"An incredibly effective advocate."

"She is formidable."

Chambers and Partners, 2024

'Justine is always incredibly well-prepared and clear and direct in her advice. She knows the law and procedure inside out and strives to achieve the best possible outcome for all her clients.'

Legal 500, 2024

"Tactically fantastic in difficult children cases, she's very convincing and tenacious - judges really listen to her."

"If you need a fighter and someone who will robustly pursue an argument, she's the barrister to go for."

Chambers and Partners, 2023

'Justine is a firm and incredibly effective advocate. She knows her subject matter inside out, pays great attention to detail, and is clear and concise in her delivery and drafting.'

Legal 500, 2023

Top Tier

"A formidable advocate who is forceful in her arguments. She has particular expertise in leave to remove

cases and cases with serious allegations of harm.” “She’s fearless, clear and concise in her submissions, proving unflappable and reassuring with clients.” “Justine is well prepared, focused in her advocacy and good at cross-examination.”

Chambers & Partners, 2022

‘ An excellent advocate and a go-to barrister for difficult and challenging private Children Act cases. She is no-nonsense and stands up for her clients with steely determination. ’

Legal 500, 2022

Renowned for her strong courtroom performances in complex private children matters. She also handles issues flowing from relationship breakdown. Johnston has particular experience in international leave to remove cases, and is commended for her no-nonsense and direct approach.

Strengths: “An excellent tactician who is respected by clients for her straight-talking advice. She is always across every detail of a case.” “You want Justine in your corner in any family dispute. She is persistent, robust, and someone who can change the view of any judge.”

Chambers & Partners, 2021

‘Is an absolutely fantastic advocate. She reads her audience incredibly well and her arguments are always perfectly pitched. She is the person you want in your corner when the chips are down.’

Legal 500, 2021

Top Tier

Renowned for her court performances in both family finance and complex private children matters, she handles all issues flowing from relationship breakdown. She has particular experience in international leave to remove cases. Sources commend her no-nonsense and direct approach.

Strengths: “Brave, committed and someone who will fight every inch of the case for her clients.” “She’s straight-talking, which clients appreciate, and she’s fearless in court.”

Chambers & Partners 2020

‘Is a ferocious advocate. She has the full confidence of her clients and instructing solicitors.’

Legal 500, 2020

Top Tier

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: “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.”

Chambers & Partners 2019

Band 1

‘She is a fighter who knows how to win.’

Legal 500, 2019

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.”

Chambers & Partners 2018

'She is hugely experienced, and brings real authority and gravitas to a case.'

Legal 500, 2017

Renowned for her expertise in both complex family finance and children matters, she handles all issues flowing from relationship breakdown. She is recognised in particular for international leave to remove cases.

Strengths: "She is a real fighter and a ferocious advocate who is incredibly well thought of. Her advocacy and preparation skills are extremely good."

Chambers & Partner 2017

'She is a real fighter and someone you definitely want on your side in a difficult dispute.'

Legal 500, 2016

Specialises in complex private law children cases but is also frequently instructed in cases which involve finance issues. She is a go-to senior junior for cases which require expertise in both areas.

Strengths: "As well as being client-friendly, she has an incredibly deep knowledge of some really technical legal issues. She's a really impressive advocate in court."

Chambers & Partners 2016 - Band 1

'She is fantastic with clients: empathetic but also authoritative.'

Legal 500, 2015

Has a wide practice dealing principally with complex private law children proceedings and overlapping matrimonial finance disputes, including high-value ancillary relief cases and international relocation matters.

Expertise: "She's relatively junior and up against people a lot more senior than her. A tenacious advocate, she's very strong in court, and can go up against anyone."

Chambers & Partners 2015 - Band 1

Justine Johnston - 'She will go the extra mile for clients and does not take any nonsense.'

Recommended as a Leading Junior in the area of Child Law

Legal 500, 2014

Although highly proficient in matrimonial finance work, Justine Johnston is best known for her work in the children law world. She handles Schedule 1 Children Act 1989 cases and complex private law children matters concerning residence and contact. Her practice is international in scope as illustrated by a recent matter she undertook where she appeared on behalf of a mother seeking to permanently remove a then 12-month-old boy to Russia. "Justine provides an exceptionally skilled all round service at the very highest level. Her exceptional practical and pragmatic approach ensures that the client is fully prepared at all times and is always strategically well positioned."

Chambers 100 List UK Bar

The Chambers Bar 100 ranks the top barristers practising at the Bar of England and Wales.

Justine Johnston represents a fine choice of counsel for matters pertaining to residence and contact, and is widely respected for her expertise on international matters.

Expertise: "She is absolutely fantastic. She is very thorough in the way she prepares and executes her arguments. I always walk into court in the knowledge that with Justine as my barrister I will get first-class representation."

Chambers & Partners 2014 - Band 1

Justine Johnston has a broad family law practice and is widely recognised as a leading junior in complex private children law cases. Her specific areas of excellence include matters concerning residence and contact. Sources relay that she is a “tough negotiator” and a “hard hitter.” One instructing solicitor further comments that she does first-class work for clients bullied by their former partners.

Chambers & Partners 2013

Ranked Band 1

Recommended as a Leading Junior in the area of Child Law

Legal 500, 2013

Recommended as a Leading Junior in The **Legal 500, 2011**

Much in demand, Justine Johnston, who is highly sought after for her expertise in private children law matters, particularly those involving relocation. “She organises cases excellently and thoroughly, and secures first-rate results,” say instructing solicitors.

Chambers & Partners 2012

Justine Johnston is highly regarded for cross-jurisdictional children work.

Chambers & Partners 2011

Justine Johnston undertakes a mixture of finance and children work.

Chambers & Partners 2010

Justine Johnston is “bright and astute,” which helps her maintain a large following for her private law children practice.

Chambers & Partners 2009

Recommended as a Leading Junior in **Chambers & Partners** Guide to the Legal Profession 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009

Cases

07/12/2012	S v T (Permission to relocate to Russia) (2012)	Justine Johnston	[2012] EWHC 4023 (Fam)
30/03/2011	Golubovich v Golubovich (2011)	Justine Johnston	[2011] 2 FLR 1193 : [2011] Fam Law 935: [2011] EWCA Civ 479
03/03/2011	Elena Golubovich v Ilya Golubovich (2011)	Justine Johnston	[2011] EWCA Civ 528
08/12/2010	Golubovich v Mirinskaya (2010)	Justine Johnston	[2010] EWCA Civ 1519
16/12/2003	Re O (Children) (Residence)	Justine Johnston	[2004] 1 FCR 169
27/11/2002	Re S (A Child: Abduction)	Henry Setright KC Justine Johnston	[2003] 1 FLR 1008