

Francesca Dowse

'Francesca is truly top-notch. Her judgement is always spot on, her ability to grasp the nuances of each case is exceptional, and she provides great client care. Her advocacy is always well-pitched, constructive and robust.'

Legal 500, 2025

Experience

Year of Call: 2004

Practice Areas

- Financial Remedies
- Inheritance (provision for Family Dependents) Act 1975
- Inquests and Inquiries
- International Children Law
- Private Children Law
- Schedule One

Dispute Resolution

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

Direct Access

Direct Access



PRO BONO
RECOGNITION
LIST
ENGLAND & WALES

Qualifications

Diploma in Ayurvedic Consultancy 2014
Arbitrator (CIARB) Children 2021
Arbitrator (CIARB) Finance 2022

Education

Lancaster University BA (Hons)
Manchester University CPE/PGDL 2002
Manchester University BVC 2003

Appointments

Called to the Bar of England and Wales 2004
Called to the Bar of the Cayman Islands 2009

Profile

Francesca practises exclusively in private family and family related work. Her practice is split between Financial remedies work and private children law children work. She has expertise in dealing with Schedule 1 claims, Inheritance Act (dependents) claims and Inquests/Inquiries. Dealing with both finance and children cases as an advocate allows the client to have continuity across all areas of dispute.

Francesca developed a substantial international practice advising client's all over the world and is easily able to maintain a highly effective international practice. Francesca is often instructed in international disputes particularly in complex offshore matters involving trusts and partnerships in the context of high net worth divorce and on complex international pre-nuptial agreements. She is also often instructed on complex cases involving the movement of children around the world.

Francesca has a particular interest in all branches of NCDR and using NCDR to reach resolution. Francesca is a dual qualified arbitrator and has experience hearing both finance and children cases together. This provides a highly effective and efficient resolution.

Francesca also accepts Direct Access work, subject to suitability.

In addition to being called to the Bar of England and Wales, Francesca has also been called to the Bar of Cayman Islands. From late 2008 to late 2014 Francesca practised as an Attorney for Samson & McGrath in the Cayman Islands. During this time, Francesca appeared before the Cayman Islands Court of Appeal on numerous occasions and was involved in multiple high net worth 'offshore' financial remedy cases and international disputes regarding relocation and abduction of children.

Non-court dispute resolution

Francesca is a dual qualified arbitrator and sits regularly in both areas, and occasionally hearing applications together. Francesca also sits as a private FDR judge and undertakes early neutral evaluations.

Family Finance

Francesca is a highly regarded senior junior with a busy finance practice including matrimonial and Schedule 1 claims. Francesca also acts in cases related to family law such as Inheritance Act claims or inquests and inquiries.

Francesca has a broad spectrum of experience in complex financial remedy work with particular interest in businesses, complex company structures, non-disclosure, pensions and conduct.

Francesca is keen to advocate all forms of NCDR and is regularly involved in private FDR's, arbitrations and sits as a finance arbitrator.

Inquests and Public Enquiries

Francesca has coronial experience appearing in inquests, representing interested persons and especially bereaved families in matters examining the actions or inactions of medical professionals. She has also acted for insurance companies. Francesca has a sensitive yet robust approach.

International Children Law

Francesca represents parents in the UK and abroad in cross-jurisdictional disputes and where applications are made for permission to remove a child from the jurisdiction. Francesca has experience practising internationally from her time working in the Cayman Islands and having then brought her practice to London.

Private Children Law

Francesca practises in all areas of private children work and has a particular interest in relocation case, both internal and international.

Francesca also has expertise in representing clients involved in highly acrimonious and lengthy intractable contact and residence disputes. She is often instructed in cases involving allegations of parental alienation and where expert medical evidence is pertinent.

Francesca also has considerable experience of cases involving allegations of domestic abuse and is well versed in child protection procedure having initially undertaken public law work. Francesca represents clients seeking injunctions and responding to injunctions, and cases that lead to complex fact-finding hearings.

Memberships

Family Law Bar Association
Free Representation Unit
Bar Pro Bono Unit
Middle Temple
Association of Lawyers of Children
Institute of Family Law Arbitrators
Chartered Institute of Arbitrators

Recommendations

"Francesca is an excellent advocate with meticulous preparation making her a formidable adversary whilst at the same time being personable and professional to deal with. Her cross border experience is extensive."

Laura Hatfield, Solomon Harris

"I conducted a relocation case against Francesca at first instance and in the Cayman Court of Appeal, and found her to be effective, efficient and well-prepared."

Nicholas Cusworth Q.C

"I would recommend Francesca to anyone who is considering hiring her. Her professionalism, personable approach and attention to detail are among her notable qualities."

Claire Pettinati, Owner Kaibo, Cayman Islands:

Directories

'Francesca is truly top-notch. Her judgement is always spot on, her ability to grasp the nuances of each case is exceptional, and she provides great client care. Her advocacy is always well-pitched, constructive and robust.'

'Francesca is brilliant at money cases.'

Legal 500, 2025

'Francesca is a powerhouse when it comes to financial work. She gets to the heart of the case immediately and knows where to take the case.'

Legal 500 2024, Family (Including Divorce and Financial Remedy)

'Francesca is a very strong advocate. She is tenacious and strongly makes her client's case. She is incredibly personable, and clients love her because she installs great confidence in them.'

Legal 500 2024, Family (Including Children and Domestic Abuse)

'Francesca is fabulous with figures. She is a highly skilled finance practitioner. She is highly respected by her peers and solicitors alike.'

Legal 500 2023, Family (Including Divorce and Financial Remedy)

'Francesca is an extremely hardworking and likeable barrister who is empathetic but practical, offering sensitive advice often when it may be unpalatable for the client to hear. Her drafting skills and delivery time are exceptional, and attention to detail is impeccable.'

Legal 500 2023, (Children Law)

'An experienced advocate with expertise across the matrimonial spectrum, Francesca Dowse comes with a glowing testimony from an industry-watcher (a senior family lawyer herself). Other colleagues praise her highly persuasive advocacy, her tactical mindset and her personable approach.'

Spears Review, 2022

'A formidable advocate. Clients are reassured by her no-nonsense advice, and judges are impressed by her focus and pragmatism. She will fight for her clients but will also give tough advice if needed, and her judgement is impeccable.'

Legal 500, 2022

'An excellent advocate with a pragmatic, analytical and incisive approach. One of her many strengths is being able to put the client at ease before and during a hearing. Her cross border experience is extensive.'

Legal 500, 2021

'Is very clever and applies her intelligence most productively in analysing cases for the best and weakest points and then comes up with a strategy to deal with both.' 'One of her undoubted strengths is in being able to put the client at ease before and during a hearing and to ensure that the case is presented clearly.'

Legal 500, 2020

'She is a reassuring presence and clients trust her.' 'Provides clear and confident representation.'

Legal 500, 2019

'She has a very persuasive style in court and instils great confidence in clients..' 'She will fight for the best outcome for her clients and is a fantastic tactician..'

Cases

29/02/2024	A Father v A Mother	Francesca Dowse	[2024] EWFC 232 (B)
29/07/2020	Moutreuil v Andreewitch & Anor	Francesca Dowse	[2020] EWHC 2068 (Fam)
20/05/2020	D v D (financial remedy case)	Francesca Dowse	[2020] EWFC B24
04/12/2014	Re S (A Child) (Abduction: Hearing The Child) sub nom AM v AS (2014)	Henry Setright KC Teertha Gupta KC Francesca Dowse Michael Gration KC	[2014] EWCA Civ 1557