

Chambers & Partners 2016

29th October 2015

We are delighted to announce record numbers of our barristers being ranked in the latest Chambers & Partners Guide. We are the only chambers ranked in band 1 for children and our family finance team are ranked in band 2.

THE SET

"A clear example of how excellence breeds excellence. I know I will find the right expert counsel there for all types of children law cases, be they care, abduction, medically complex, or international in nature." It offers market-leading depth and expertise in all aspects of children law, and also commendable experience in financial matters. Members have acted in some of the most high-profile children matters including the recent Supreme Court case of *Re LC*.

Client service: "The clerking is second to none. I know that I can call any of the clerks there, describe the case and they will find the perfect match. Fees are never an issue and they go out of their way to help. Nothing is too much trouble." Michael Reeves heads the team.

SILKS

Henry Setright QC

A name that immediately springs to mind when one talks of cross-border children cases. Peers respect him due to his utter command of the area.

Strengths: "He is a star. There it is. Full stop." "For difficult international cases he is the top dog at the Bar." "He's really looked to by judges when they need an explanation of what's going on. He's an absolute repository of knowledge."

Alex Verdan QC

His reputation in private law children work is rivalled only by his reputation in the public sphere. Peers are quick to praise not only his technical ability but his great client manner.

Strengths: "He manages to combine outstanding legal knowledge and experience with exceptional client care." "He has complete mastery of the law and procedure, and creates time to cover all the human aspects too." "He's just superb and flawless."

Jo Delahunty QC

Specialises in serious cases where sexual and physical abuse are alleged. She is the only family law practitioner to be involved in the Hillsborough Inquest.

Strengths: "She is deservedly pre-eminent. She has a brilliant mind, and is one of the few who is as good a fearsome cross-examiner as she is arguing the law in the Supreme Court." "She is very detailed in her approach and has an immaculate knowledge of the papers."

Recent work: Has been acting on behalf of 75 families in the Hillsborough Inquest to try and determine whether the medical response was acceptable.

Teertha Gupta QC

One of the most eminent silks for cross-border children matters, and has a particular reputation for his work in child abduction. Sources consistently praise his friendly and approachable manner, and admire his technical abilities.

Strengths: "A great tactician when it comes to international children work." "Clients absolutely love him. He's very friendly and they all report back they have massive confidence in him and really feel he's listening to them."

David Williams QC

Known for his willingness to push the boundaries of international private law children work. He is "respected for pursuing novel points of law and not taking the easy route."

Strengths: "He is brilliant with clients, very calm and very insightful, and has an encyclopaedic knowledge of children law. He is a very good advocate." "He is just extraordinarily brilliant at international cases, and thinks outside the box."

Recent work: Involved in *Re E*, the first Hague Convention case to have gone to the Supreme Court. The Court gave a judgement on the 'best interest' aspects of the convention.

Catherine Wood QC

Is highly respected by some of the most prominent names in family law for her work in private children law matters with serious complicating factors.

Strengths: "She cuts through witness prevarication." "An outstanding advocate, she says only what's necessary and what she says is extremely effective. She also has a real sense of responsibility for a case, and is empathetic, friendly and approachable."

Charles Hale QC

A barrister with "gravitas," who brings an authoritative approach to both private children and money cases. People are also quick to emphasise his ability to empathise and engage with clients.

Strengths: "Handles children and money with equal aplomb and efficiency. A powerful advocate, he brims with authority and common sense. Clients adore him for his calmness and unflappability. He is a shrewd negotiator and can be steely when needed. Judges trust his judgement and instinct."

Marcus Scott-Manderson QC

Deals with private law children work with an international element.

Strengths: "He's the sort who is lovely in conference, and is also a very good academic lawyer."

Jonathan Cohen QC

Specialises in financial work but is also an experienced private children law practitioner. He sits as a deputy High Court judge and brings this judicial expertise to his practice.

Strengths: "A superb advocate. Never takes a bad point and always has the ear of the court." "Absolutely charming and extremely able."

Michael Sternberg QC

An experienced silk specialising in both money work and private law children matters. His peers single him out for his "incredible attention to detail." He is also a qualified mediator and arbitrator.

Strengths: "His preparation for cases is second to none and he gives very, very clear advice. You know the advice you get from him is going to be listened to by clients. They can see very clearly the preparation he puts into a case."

Alison Grief QC

A new addition at silk this year, who shows real passion for her client's cause. Her practice covers both

public and private children law and she is highly regarded for her medical knowledge.

Strengths: "She has the ability to get straight to the heart of complex matters, particularly those involving medical issues. She is meticulous in her preparation and her attention to detail."

Christopher Hames QC

Has taken silk this year as a result of his work handling international family law on both the financial and private children side. He is a lawyer who displays forcefulness and tenacity.

Strengths: "He is a master strategist, and has a great analytical mind. He's very eloquent in his advocacy, and is really formidable, ruthless."

John Tughan QC

Equally adept at dealing with both public and private law children cases. His expertise includes serious physical abuse and child abduction matters. He is respected by his peers for his work ethic and tenacity.

Strengths: "He is a very capable opponent, who is a good cross-examiner and persuasive in negotiations. He's a very reasonable opponent and a good person to do business with." "Dedicated and tenacious. He will leave no stone unturned."

JUNIORS

Justine Johnston

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."

Samantha King

Highly regarded for her willingness to take on the most challenging cases in both the public and private children law sphere. She has particular expertise in cases with complex medical issues and those concerning alternative family structures.

Strengths: "She holds enormous gravitas in court and is a superb advocate." "She's extremely good, very energetic, committed and knowledgeable about the law."

Barbara Mills

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."

Jacqueline Renton

Widely regarded as one of the rising stars of private children work, she often handles cases with an international element. Her peers value the enthusiasm and maturity she brings to her practice.

Strengths: "Really hard-working, very bright and extremely knowledgeable. She's got an aura of being a lot more senior than she is. She is going to be one of the big names in family law."

Judith Murray

Someone who is able to put clients at ease with her confident and straightforward approach. She is often instructed in cases that involve both money and private law children issues.

Strengths: "She's got an incredibly good way of getting the client on board and gives clear, sensible advice."

Joy Brereton

Has an enviable reputation for taking on some of the most challenging children cases. She specialises in both public and private matters, and is singled out for her resolute nature and willingness to fight.

Strengths: "Not many people are prepared to have a fight in the way she is. There's not many who fight things they might lose. She is prepared to take sensible risks for her clients, and is a fearless advocate."

Recent work: Joy went to the High Court in a public law children case. The grandparents of a child were accused of being complicit in the international abduction of a child by its parents. The case included an international police effort to locate the missing child.

Michael Gratton

Sources are quick to point out his "encyclopaedic knowledge" and sharp legal mind. He specialises in international children matters and is "undoubtedly a junior of choice for cross-border work."

Strengths: "He is a very, very talented junior. He's like a computer as he remembers absolutely everything. Judges love him because he's a very, very good advocate and he knows the law inside out."

Rebecca Foulkes

Has gained experience at all levels of the appellate court system, dealing with complex private and public law children matters. She receives praise from some of the highest-profile instructing solicitors.

Strengths: "She is extremely good and understands the interplay between public and private law. She'll be thinking about how something might play out in four years' time if we pursue a line of argument. She has an eye on the longer-term issues as well as the matter at hand."

Recent work: Involved in the recent Court of Appeal case of *Re G*. The topic of parental responsibility and how that relates to residency issues between same-sex couples was explored.

Mark Jarman

An experienced practitioner who deals with cross-border children issues. These include child abduction and relocation matters.

Strengths: "He has huge experience and is strong in court." "He is very knowledgeable and highly personable."

Brian Jubb

A very senior junior with a great deal of experience who focuses his practice on private and public children matters. He is also experienced at dealing with community care issues as well as judicial review proceedings.

Strengths: "One of my favourite barristers of all time. He is such a gentleman. He listens to you, he rings you and talks you through what he plans on doing."

Hassan Khan

Specialises in a broad range of fields within private children law work. These include cross-border issues such as abduction and international adoption as well as surrogacy and forced marriages.

Strengths: "He is a delight to instruct. He is very knowledgeable and has an excellent manner with both clients and solicitors. He gives sensible and practical advice. He is approachable, responds quickly and shows genuine enthusiasm and a clear commitment to his work."

Stephen Lyon

A financial remedy specialist who is "able to get straight to the point and really narrow the issues down." He has developed a particular expertise in jurisdictional issues.

Strengths: "If I want somebody to be given a hard time in the witness box he's the person to do it. He's persistent, without being overly aggressive and unpleasant. He has a good way of pushing his point and getting what he wants out of the witness."

Samantha Woodham

Regarded by her peers as a rising force in the field. She previously qualified as a solicitor and focuses her practice on matrimonial finance and private children work. Sources are quick to praise her preparation and work ethic.

Strengths: "She prepares thoroughly and produces very high-quality documents. She has got a very engaging, lively personality and even though she is young she radiates authority. The clients trust her."

Michael Edwards

Draws glowing reports from peers, who regard him as someone with "a bright future." He has a broad-based practice that takes in private and public children law proceedings, including those with an international element.

Strengths: "It is unusual for such a young advocate to be instructed in cases so complex. He is instructed because he can be trusted, has a very strong intellect, and has a capacity for compassion."