

Alex Verdan KC

"An excellent barrister, who has encyclopaedic knowledge of the law relating to children, which he applies in a very easy-to-understand way for those in very difficult circumstances. He listens very carefully and provides a very good service – he makes himself available for everything that arises."

Chambers & Partners 2024

Experience

Year of Call: 1987

Year of Silk: 2006

Practice Areas

- Inquests and Inquiries
- International Children Law
- Private Children Law
- Public Children Law

Dispute Resolution

- Arbitration
- Mediation
- Private FDR and Early Neutral Evaluation

Direct Access

Direct Access



Awards



Qualifications

MIAMS trained Mediator
Arbitrator (CIArb)

Education

BA (Hons)
Diploma Law

Languages

French

Appointments

Deputy High Court Judge 2009
Recorder 2004
Arbitrator 2016
Head of Chambers 2012-2022
Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers 2010-to date
Bar Standards Board Conduct Committee 2004 – 2009
Trustee of the charity Children and Families Across Borders 2008-2012
Family Law Bar Association Committee 2003-2005; 2008-2010
Centre for Child and Family Law Reform 2009 – 2012
Editor Butterworths Family Law Service

Profile

Alex specialises in complex and serious children cases; both private law and public law. In particular those involving; intractable child arrangements disputes, internal relocations and leave to remove from the jurisdiction, serious emotional abuse, child fatalities and significant injuries and serious abuse with disputed medical evidence and often with linked criminal proceedings; allegations of sexual abuse; including false allegations; and factitious illness.

He also has extensive experience in Inquiries both Public and Part 8, e.g. currently representing Lambeth BC and Leicestershire CC in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), representing one of the local authorities in the Climbié Inquiry, being Counsel to the Isle of Man Commission of Inquiry into the Care of Young People.

He was instructed by the children in reputedly the longest running care case in English legal history; the threshold hearing lasting for some 5 months.

He regularly advises local authorities on policy issues.

Alex also advises the media in relation to various aspects of family law.

He has been in practice for over 30 years and in that time has built up extensive experience in all types of children cases. Although the majority of his practice is now in London, he travels regularly to courts across the country and to various International jurisdictions.

Alex regularly lectures at family law conferences eg at Dartington Hall. for Jordans and at seminars and provides training for judges (through the Judicial Studies Board), solicitors, psychiatrists and social workers.

He writes for various publications including Family Law Week, Solicitors Journal, New Law Journal, and is currently one of the editors for Butterworths Family Law Service

Memberships

Family Law Bar Association

Association of Lawyers for Children

Affiliate Member of Resolution

Fellow of International Academy of Family Lawyers

Barrister of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, British Virgin Islands Circuit

Recommendations

Alex Verdan QC is without doubt one of the best, if not the best, barrister specialising in high calibre private children law cases.

"A calm, almost laconic exterior camouflages a razor-sharp intellect, encyclopaedic knowledge of the law and a rapier-like Court technique.

Alex is much loved by his clients Also by many of their spouses: until they realise that they have been gently mugged by his subtle, deadly cross-examination technique.

Thoroughly to be recommended."

Jeremy Levison

"Alex Verdan is superb at what he does. At his level one expects his knowledge of the law to be very good but what he offers in addition is:

1. A very approachable style. As a solicitor one feels welcome to contact him as and when needed without having to send formal instructions. He is flexible, responsive, and easy to contact. At the same time he is respectful of the solicitor's role and relationship with the client.

2. His client handling skills are very good / superb. He is gentle and sensitive but doesn't pull his punches where needed in explaining risks / possible adverse outcomes etc.

3. His written work is good and he appears measured and thoughtful in court which is a gift in children work."

Pamela Collis

"Alex is top of the premiere division in terms of advocacy. An excellent 'bed side' manner with clients and a great eye for detail. A calm and measured approach and an ability to achieve unlikely results."

Sean McNally

"Alex has an excellent client manner and is superb in cross examination."

Lisa Jones

"Calm and authoritative in advice (instinctively you know that you can cleave to his advice and assessments);

Focused and effective in court (reads the court, says what is needed with conviction and moves on);

Highly available and supportive (very user friendly for briefing solicitors);
Definitely a rock for when you are in a hard place.”

James Pirrie

“Alex is a meticulous campaigner who provides advice and results in a calm and authoritative manner. On his feet Alex delivers lethal cross examination often cloaked in such reasonable terms that few can see the storm coming. The children’s silk of choice for any complex case.”

Mark Freedman

“I have had the pleasure of working with Alex on a number of difficult and complicated children cases over the last few years. He has a calm and measured court room manner which makes him a firm favourite with the Judges. He knows the law, does not take bad points, is always very well prepared and is very good at empathising with clients. He has a good sense of humor and is a pleasure to work with. I am confident that if I instruct Alex on a case my client will receive a first class service. Alex is one of the best QC’s at the Family Bar who specialise in this area of law and I commend him to anyone who is in need of his expertise.

Julian Ribet

“I had the good fortune to be recommended Alex Verdan’s professional services via a legal adviser.

During what proved to be a highly complex and extremely difficult case, Alex was faultless in every sense. His understanding of the matters at hand, grasp of the case load overall and management of all professionals concerned was commendable.

From day one, I was put at ease as a client – at no point did I doubt for an instant that Alex was anything less than 100% in control – in private conference his manner is reassuring and comforting, whilst always laying out the balance of issues, giving an overview to me as the client.

“I would unreservedly recommend Alex in this very specialist area of Child Law. We worked on a very complex, high profile case, that had previously proved very difficult. His guidance and insights were both proactive and pragmatic. He is a dream advocate and achieved every milestone he set for our client.”

Richard Harbord

“I have no hesitation in recommending Alex as a barrister in Family Law work. He has assisted me in several cases and been great to work with. He is proactive, an excellent advocate and always willing to go the extra mile for the client. I am truly impressed!”

Suzanne Kingston

“A cool head, an exceptional advocate and a great tactician.

Michael Rowlands

“Alex is a dream barrister. He is expert in his subject of children law, he speaks with authority, he wins his clients’ trust and he is very easy to work with. What I most enjoy about working with Alex, and there are many things, is the attentiveness which he brings to cases. Ideas are treated with respect, questions promptly responded to, expectations managed sensitively, and clients made to feel that they and their views are important.

Alex is also trained as a mediator and a collaborative lawyer, the skills of which he transfers with ease to his work as an advocate.

I cannot recommend him highly enough.”

Gillian Bishop

"Having instructed and worked alongside Alex, I have been very impressed by his impeccable knowledge and skill in the Court room. His ability to handle the most sensitive and complex cases with ease is a great attribute. Alex is gracious and inspiring to watch in the Court room. He is able to manage the client's expectations to the highest standard. It has been a pleasure to work with Alex and I would not hesitate to instruct him again."

Laura Burrows

Directories

"An excellent barrister, who has encyclopaedic knowledge of the law relating to children, which he applies in a very easy-to-understand way for those in very difficult circumstances. He listens very carefully and provides a very good service – he makes himself available for everything that arises."

"Clients come away thinking they have been listened to, which is half the battle."

"Alex has a calm, strategic and authoritative air about him. Clients feel very reassured by him."

"Alex Verdan is a wonderful advocate with huge experience."

"Alex is always reliable and responsive, but, most of all, he gives clear, sound advice in language that clients can understand. He is a real presence in the courtroom."

"Alex Verdan is the crème de la crème of children KCs and arbitrators. Extremely impressive, he's at the very top of his game, hugely experienced and someone with impeccable judgment. He's an arbitrator unafraid to grapple with the issues of a case and give a strong, fair and prompt determination. Alex has a wonderful manner with clients and witnesses when sitting as an arbitrator. He is very pragmatic, organised and efficient, and quickly gets to the nub of the issues. His determinations when sitting as an arbitrator are clear, well delivered and well reasoned."

Chambers & Partners 2024

'Alex is always very well-prepared and the clients love him. He has a great bedside manner and is able to explain relatively complex issues in a very easy-to-understand way.' Tier

Legal 500, 2024

"Alex Verdan is calm and collected at all times. He's measured, astute and someone with excellent judgement."

"A superb silk, judge and arbitrator, he has an energy unmatched by others and really drives a case forward. Excellent tactically, he's willing to take calculated risks on complex children work."

Chambers and Partners, 2023

Star Individual

'Alex is an authoritative and persuasive advocate, absolutely brilliant with clients. His judgment is consistently spot on.'

Legal 500, 2023

Top Tier

Head of chambers and indubitably a force in the field of children law. His caseload sees him handling matters concerning the most severe and complex of children issues. He has expertise in everything from the most serious public law issues to the placement of high-profile people's children.

Strengths: “He does relocations day in and day out, pitching cases at exactly the right level and proving extraordinarily empathetic. He is committed to getting the best possible outcome for clients and children.” “A brilliant cross-examiner who has full command over the detail of his cases.” “He’s responsive and good at instilling confidence in his clients.”

Chambers & Partners, 2022

Star Individual

‘A very skilled advocate who is tenacious and very well prepared. Alex will always go the extra mile. Super to work with, clients love him and he has excellent court room presence. ’

Legal 500, 2022

Top Tier

Head of chambers and indubitably a force in the field of children law. His caseload sees him handling matters concerning the most severe and complex of children issues. He has expertise in everything from the most serious public law issues to the placement of high-profile people’s children.

Strengths: “Extremely attentive, thorough, pragmatic and a pleasure to work with. His technical ability is second to none.” “Alex offers a Rolls-Royce service to solicitors and clients. He consistently impresses with his commitment to cases and his availability between, and in the build-up to hearings. His cross-examination is clinically prepared and razor-sharp, and he is a top-choice silk for high-conflict children cases.”

Chambers & Partners, 2021

Star Individual

‘Is most people’s No. 1 silk for tricky private children cases. He is incredibly good with clients, super bright and also has amazing judgement.’

Legal 500, 2021

Top Tier

Head of chambers and indubitably a force in the field of children law. His caseload sees him handling matters concerning the most severe and complex of children issues. He has expertise in everything from the most serious public law issues to the placement of high-profile people’s children.

Strengths: “Judges and advocates hang on his every word, and he’s an absolute joy to listen to either in court or in conference. He gives common sense, wise advice and is brilliant both in writing and orally.” “So accomplished, he just doesn’t put a foot wrong.”

Recent work: Acted for the Family Rights Group as intervener in Williams v Hackney, a highly significant Supreme Court case about the use of Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 pertaining to the voluntary accommodation of children by local authorities.

Chambers & Partners 2020

Star Individual

‘Deserves all the plaudits that he gets.’

Legal 500, 2020

Top Tier

Head of chambers and indubitably a force in the field of children law. His caseload sees him handling matters concerning the most severe and complex of children issues. He has expertise in everything from the most serious public law issues to the placement of high-profile people’s children.

Strengths: "Outstanding in his field." "An exceptional advocate and strategist. His client care is faultless, his documents are succinct and persuasive, and his advocacy is second to none."

Chambers & Partners 2019

Star Individual

'He is fantastic at calming clients and is incredibly well-prepared.'

Legal 500, 2019

Top Tier

Head of chambers and indubitably a force in the field of children law. His caseload sees him handling matters concerning the most severe and complex of children issues. He has expertise in everything from the most serious public law issues to the placement of high-profile people's children.

Strengths: "Perhaps the number one silk for private children work. His bedside manner with clients is superb, and his position statements are succinct, precise and no longer than necessary. His advocacy skills are second to none and he never makes a bad point. He is listened to by judges and invariably gets the desired result. A classy operator and outstanding team leader. The complete package."

Chambers & Partners 2018

Star Individual

'He influences the court effortlessly.'

Legal 500, 2017

Top Tier

Head of chambers and indubitably a force in the field of children law. His expertise encompasses all issues, including the most severe and complex of children issues, and he is routinely instructed by the top family firms.

Strengths: "A fierce advocate who is very efficient on his feet and whose cross-examination is off-the-scale impressive: he already knows the answers to all his questions."

Chambers & Partners 2017

Star Individual

"Confident and Classy"

Legal 500, 2016

Top Tier

Negotiates a highly touted children law practice, and receives great praise from his peers. He has more than two decades' experience in both private and public law proceedings, and has handled numerous cases involving complex international considerations, allegations of significant physical injury, and the death of children.

Expertise: "He's a gifted advocate who can turn the impossible into the possible."

Recent work: Represented appellant parents in the Supreme Court in a case relating to risks of future psychological and emotional harm.

Chambers & Partners 2016

Star Individual

'A masterful advocate with great client care skills; he never puts a foot wrong.'

Legal 500 2015

Top Tier

'Very sharp, commanding and organised.'

Legal 500 2014
Top Tier

Alex Verdan QC remains one of the most celebrated barristers doing children work and is well versed in the most complex private & public law cases. "He is sublime. He is fantastic in court and his bedside manner is second to none. If he has a difficult children case, he is very caring and understanding. Added to this, he is an absolute fighter in court."

Chambers & Partners 2014
Star Individual

Alex Verdan QC exhibits 'emotional intelligence when dealing with clients'.

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

Legal 500 2013

Top Tier

Alex Verdan QC is one of the undisputed stars of the Children Bar. He is regularly instructed by magic circle firms in private law cases concerning issues such as false allegations, intractable contact and shared residence, while on the public law side he deals with cases of serious abuse or significant injury. Sources suggest that "his handling of any client is exceptional," and note that his advocacy is "charming, well prepared and silky."

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in Chambers & Partners 2013

(Star Individual)

Alex Verdan QC is instructed in the most complex children cases, both public and private in nature.

Observers applaud the "clarity of thought and delivery" of this barrister.

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in Chambers & Partners 2012 (Ranked Band 1)

Alexander Verdan QC is much sought after for both public and private children work. Sources praise "his clear delivery in court and his sympathetic manner with clients."

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in Chambers and Partners 2011 (Ranked Band 1)

Recommended as a Leading Silk in the area of Children Law in Legal 500 2011

Alexander Verdan QC, "does high-level children work, both private and public, and is regarded as a rising star among family silks." "He is a class act who talks such obvious good sense."

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in Chambers & Partners 2010

The "calm and measured" Alexander Verdan QC is widely admired for the "clear and articulate advocacy" he applies to his children-related work. Although grounded in public law work, he is handling increasing amount of private children work.

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in the area of Children in Chambers & Partners 2009

"Alexander Verdan QC is sensible....and does a very good job."

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in the area of Children in Chambers & Partners 2008.

"Alexander Verdan QC is an approachable and effective advocate who can deal with conflict in a non-adversarial way. He undertakes work in care proceedings and public inquiries."

Recommended as a Leading Family Silk in the areas of Children in Chambers & Partners 2007

“Complex cases are all to familiar to Alex Verdan QC...he was involved in the Climbe Inquiry and is the toast of many a local authority and guardian”.

Recommended as a Leading Family junior in the areas of Children in Chambers & Partners 2006

Cases

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|------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| 07/12/2023 | G (Children) (Supervised Contact) | Ruth Kirby KC Charlotte Baker Alex Verdan KC Frankie Shama | [2023] EWCA Civ 1453 |
| 15/07/2022 | LKM v NPM | Frankie Shama Alex Verdan KC | [2022] EWHC 140 (Fam) |
| 17/07/2020 | MY v FY (Contact) | Piers Pressdee KC Alex Verdan KC | [2021] 1 FLR 883 |
| 17/06/2020 | SX (A Child) (2020) | Alex Verdan KC John Tughan KC Sam King KC Sally Bradley Greg Davies | [2020] EWHC 1573 (Fam) |
| 05/05/2020 | A Local Authority v Mother & Ors (2020) | Alex Verdan KC John Tughan KC Sam King KC Sally Bradley Greg Davies | [2020] EWHC 1086 (Fam) |
| 27/01/2020 | AI M (Publication) | Alex Verdan KC Deirdre Fottrell KC | [2020] EWHC 122 (Fam) |
| 17/01/2020 | AI M (Assurances And Waiver) | Alex Verdan KC Deirdre Fottrell KC | [2020] EWHC 67 (Fam) |
| 11/12/2019 | AI M (Factfinding) | Alex Verdan KC Deirdre Fottrell KC | [2019] EWHC 3415 (Fam) |
| 02/07/2019 | AB v CD & C (2019) | Alex Verdan KC Sam King KC Jacqueline Renton Michael Edwards | [2019] EWHC 1695 (Fam) |
| 18/07/2018 | Williams v Hackney [2018] (UKSC 37) | Alex Verdan KC Michael Edwards Indu Kumar | [2018] (UKSC 37) |
| 16/01/2018 | AB (A Child) (2018) | Alex Verdan KC Cyrus Larizadeh KC | [2018] EWFC 3 |
| 20/12/2017 | Re L (Children) (2017) | Alex Verdan KC | [2017] EWCA Civ 2173 |
| 31/03/2017 | Re C (A Child) (No 2) (Application for Public Interest Immunity) (2017) | Alex Verdan KC Chris Barnes | [2017] EWHC 692 (Fam) |

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| 11/01/2017 | Re C (A Child) (2016) | Alex Verdan KC Chris Barnes | [2016] EWHC 3171 (Fam) |
| 08/12/2016 | Re C (A CHILD) sub nom Tower Hamlets London Borough Council v (1) M (2) F (3) C (A Child by his Guardian Ad Litem) (4) Secretary Of State For The Home Department (2016) | Alex Verdan KC Chris Barnes | [2016] EWHC 3171 (Fam) |
| 14/10/2016 | Re RA (Baby Relinquished for Adoption) (2016) | Alex Verdan KC Kate Branigan KC Chris Barnes | [2016] EWFC 47 |
| 08/09/2016 | Re R (Children) (2016) | Alex Verdan KC Teertha Gupta KC Christopher Hames KC Dorothea Gartland KC | [2016] EWCA Civ 1130 |
| 21/07/2016 | Re S (Children) (2016) | Alex Verdan KC | [2016] EWCA Civ 1020 |
| 22/03/2016 | Sutton London Borough Council v (1) MH (2) RH (3) NH (2016) | Alex Verdan KC Teertha Gupta KC Robin Barda | [2016] EWHC 1375 (Fam) |
| 21/03/2016 | Ciccone v Ritchie (No 2) [2016] | Alex Verdan KC Henry Setright KC Private: David Williams QC Jacqueline Renton Michael Gratton KC | Ciccone v Ritchie (No 2) [2016] EWHC 616 (Fam) |
| 22/12/2015 | Re B (Children) 2015 | Alex Verdan KC Charles Hale KC | [2015] EWCA Civ 1302 |
| 13/10/2015 | Re A (Children) (Adoption/Long Term Foster Care) sub nom H Borough Council v CDP & 8 Ors (2015) | Alex Verdan KC | [2015] EWCA Civ 1021 |
| 22/07/2014 | Re B (Child Evidence) (2014) | Alex Verdan KC | [2014] EWCA Civ 1015 |
| 26/03/2014 | Re D (A Child) (2014) | Alex Verdan KC | [2014] EWCA Civ 315 |
| 03/03/2014 | Re R (Children: Temporary Leave to Remove from Jurisdiction) [2014] | Alex Verdan KC | [2014] EWHC 643 (Fam) |
| 06/11/2013 | Re W (Fact Finding: Hearsay Evidence) (2013) | Alex Verdan KC | [2013] EWCA Civ 1374 |
| 05/11/2013 | LA v (1) FM (2) MA (3) A (4) B (2013) | Alex Verdan KC | [2013] EWHC 4672 (Fam) |
| 20/09/2013 | M (Children) (2013) | Alex Verdan KC | [2013] EWCA Civ 1147 |
| 17/09/2013 | Re B-S (Children) (2013) | Alex Verdan KC | [2013] EWCA Civ 1146 |

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| 09/09/2013 | In the matter of A (Children) (2013) | Alex Verdan KC Baroness Scotland KC Alistair G Perkins Private: Hassan Khan Michael Gration KC Jacqueline Renton Rachel Chisholm | [2013] UKSC 60 |
| 29/07/2013 | LA v (1) FM (2) MA (3) A (4) B (2013) | Alex Verdan KC | 2013] EWHC 4671 (Fam) |
| 05/07/2013 | Hertfordshire County Council v H [2013] | Alex Verdan KC Sam King KC Alison Grief KC | [2013] EWHC 4049 (Fam) |
| 12/06/2013 | In the matter of B (A Child) [2013] | Alex Verdan KC Julia Townend | [2013] UKSC 33 |
| 06/06/2013 | A Council v (1) M (2) A (3) B (3) C (By Their Children's Guardian) sub nom Re B (Children) (Foreign Adoption: Refusal of Recognition) (2013) | Alex Verdan KC | [2013] EWHC 1501 (Fam) |
| 23/04/2013 | Re N (Children) (2013) | Alex Verdan KC Private: Marcus Scott-Manderson QC | AC9501952 |
| 18/07/2012 | Re A (Children) (2012) | Alex Verdan KC Alison Grief KC | [2012] EWCA Civ 1278 |
| 01/06/2012 | A Local Authority and C and D and A & B (by their Childrens Guardian) | Alex Verdan KC John Tughan KC | [2012] EWHC 1975 (Fam) |
| 14/03/2012 | A v B and C [2012] | Alex Verdan KC Charles Hale KC | [2012] EWCA Civ 285 |
| 11/11/2011 | A London Borough v O and Others [2011] | Alex Verdan KC Jo Delahunty KC | 2011 EWHC 2754 (Fam) |
| 18/10/2011 | D L & another v London Borough of Newham 2011 | Alex Verdan KC | [2011] EWHC 2666 (Admin) |
| 07/09/2011 | R (on the application of (1) DL (2) ML) (Claimants) v Newham London Borough Council (Defendant) & Secretary of State for Education (Interested Party) (2011) | Alex Verdan KC | [2011] EWHC 1890 (Admin) |
| 11/02/2011 | A Local Authority v C (2011) | Alex Verdan KC Kate Branigan KC John Tughan KC | [2011] EWHC 231 (Fam) |
| 01/12/2010 | T v T (2010) | Alex Verdan KC Sam King KC | [2010] EWCA Civ 1366 |
| 12/04/2010 | A London Borough Council v K & others | Alex Verdan KC Sally Bradley | [2009] EWHC 850 |

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| 14/11/2008 | S v Slough Borough Council & Ors (2008) | Alex Verdan KC Henry Setright KC Private: Marcus Scott-Manderson QC Teertha Gupta KC Mark Jarman KC | [2008] EWHC 3013 (Fam) |
| 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 |
| 19/03/2008 | Re IC (2008) | Alex Verdan KC | [2008] EWCA Civ 198: (2008) 2 FLR 267 : (2009) 2 WLR 185 |
| 08/02/2008 | City of Westminster v IC (By His Litigation Friend the Official Solicitor) and KC and NNC | Alex Verdan KC | [2007] EWHC 3096 (Fam) |