

Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb

'Clients love her, she is very supportive of them. In the courtroom she is highly persuasive and can win judges over even when the client's position is not the easiest to argue.'

'Catherine Wood stands out among her fellow KCs for her humanity, wisdom, knowledge and good judgement. She is the go-to person for anything 'leave to remove'.'

'Catherine is at the top of her game, and her expertise is very high. She is an excellent advocate, using a few words to very good effect.'

Chambers and Partners, 2025 (21 years ranked)

'Catherine's advocacy is insightful, razor-sharp and brutally effective.'

Legal 500, 2025

Experience

Year of Call: 1985

Year of Silk: 2011

Practice Areas

- International Children Law
- Private Children Law

Dispute Resolution

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

Direct Access

Direct Access



Qualifications

Arbitrator (CI Arb) 2017

Education

- Queen Mary College, University of London (1983:2.1 LLB HONS)
- Inns of Court School of Law [1985]

Appointments

Benchers of the Middle Temple

Recorder 2007

Profile

Catherine is a KC specialising in private children cases.

Catherine deals with domestic and international relocation and contact issues, disputes as to living arrangements and all aspects of parenting including disputes as to education, religious or medical issues.

Catherine is frequently instructed in protracted, complicated disputes often involving alienating behaviours, sexual and physical abuse and expert evidence. Catherine is known for her ability to deal with extremely sensitive situations and to manage the client in highly emotive situations.

Catherine is recommended in Chambers and Partners and the Legal 500 directories

Catherine was one of the first barristers to qualify as an Arbitrator in children cases <https://www.ciarb.org/member-directory/?Keyword=catherine+wood+&&>

Since 2007 Catherine has sat as a Recorder on the SE Circuit where she was one of the first Recorders ticketed to sit in family cases only (public and private cases).

Catherine was a contributor to Butterworth's Family Law Service between 2017 and 2023.

Private Children Law

Catherine is highly experienced in all aspects of private law children work including:

- Child arrangements
- Internal and international relocation
- Alienating behaviours/intractable contact disputes/transfer of residence
- Domestic Abuse
- Religious, educational and medical issues
- Injunctive relief
- LGBT parenting
- Adoption and surrogacy
- Wardship

Catherine is frequently instructed in complex, high conflict cases and has represented high profile/ high net worth clients including a member of the royal family.

International Children Law

Catherine's children work includes cases with international disputes. She is a member of the International Academy of Family Lawyers.

Non-court dispute resolution

Catherine is qualified to arbitrate children cases. She is a registered Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. Catherine is available to assist parties through early neutral evaluation.

Direct Access

Catherine accepts instructions on a direct access basis, often following a referral from solicitors.

‘Catherine provided the highest level of support to me during an exhausting and challenging process. Catherine’s calm and focused presence coupled with her considerable expertise ensured that my case was listened to by the court and the professionals. Catherine truly made a difference’.

Direct Access Client 2024

Please pass on my thanks to Catherine Wood for helping me in my case and finding resolution in what has been a challenging and long drawn out year. I feel she has an exceptional way with people. Her manner and approach to the case put me at ease through one of the most stressful periods of my life”.

Lay Client 2020

Memberships

Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers [since 2009]

Chartered Institution of Arbitrators

Family Law Bar Association

Association of Lawyers for Children

Resolution (Associate Member)

Advocate

South Eastern Circuit

Testimonials

“Please pass on my thanks to Catherine Wood for helping me in my case and finding resolution in what has been a challenging and long drawn out year. I feel she has an exceptional way with people. Her manner and approach to the case put me at ease through one of the most stressful periods of my life”.

Lay Client, November 2020

Directories

‘Catherine’s advocacy is insightful, razor-sharp and brutally effective.’

Legal 500 2025

“Catherine is at the top of her game, and her expertise is very high. She is an excellent advocate, using a few words to very good effect.”

“Clients love her, she is very supportive of them. In the courtroom she is highly persuasive and can win judges over even when the client’s position is not the easiest to argue.”

“Catherine Wood stands out among her fellow KCs for her humanity, wisdom, knowledge and good

judgement. She is the go-to person for anything 'leave to remove.'

Chambers & Partners 2025

"She is exceptionally prepared and can give difficult advice in an authoritative but kind way. Clients are never left in any doubt as to what the advice is."

"She is an excellent and persuasive advocate who has enormous authority."

"A calm and knowledgeable presence in even the most fraught cases."

Chambers and Partners 2024

'Catherine is a brilliant advocate. She makes everything look effortless. She rolls her sleeves up, listens to the client and solicitors and then gets on with it. Judges listen to her too. She is not afraid of a fight but is so pragmatic.'

Legal 500, 2024 - Tier 2

"A doughty opponent, who is very sensible and very listenable to if you're a judge too."

"An excellent advocate, who doesn't waste words and gets her point across pithily and cleverly."

Chambers and Partners, 2023

'Catherine very capably handles difficult cases and gives the best advice and service to the clients.'

Legal 500, 2023

Recognised for her expert international children practice, and has an impressive record when it comes to matters concerning abduction, parental alienation and sexual abuse. She often handles matters with complex issues attached. Sources praise her calm, sensitive approach to cases and clients.

"Effortless in the courtroom and has the ability to kill a case with kindness." "She has a lovely manner with clients and is at the top of her game." "Able to deliver difficult advice with warmth and compassion, Catherine has just the right balance of robustness and charm."

Chambers & Partners, 2021

Band 1

'Incredibly accomplished advocate with a clear, persuasive and strong command of the courtroom.'

Legal 500, 2021

Recognised for her expert international children practice, and has an impressive record when it comes to matters concerning abduction, parental alienation and sexual abuse. She often handles matters with complex issues attached. Sources praise her calm, sensitive approach to cases and clients.

"She just cuts through all the documentation and gets straight to the point. You just feel that you couldn't be better placed for success." "Catherine is brilliant. She brings calmness and clarity to the most combative of cases and is incredibly persuasive. She immediately understands all of the issues in the case and how to get to the bottom of them. Clients love her and she is a joy to work with."

Chambers & Partners 2020

Band 1

'Her cross-examination lights up the courtroom.'

Legal 500, 2020

Recognised for her expert international children practice, particularly when it comes to matters

concerning abduction, parental alienation and sexual abuse. She brings her experience as a judge to bear when handling complex cases. She is experienced at representing high net worth and high-profile individuals.

Strengths: "The doyenne of the RCJ. I have never known anyone who can command the attention of the high court like she can. Polished, persuasive and someone who promotes sense in all around her. Her judgement is unquestionable."

Chambers & Partners 2019

Band 1

'Commands the court room effortlessly.'

Legal 500, 2019

Recognised for her expert international children practice, particularly when it comes to matters concerning abduction, parental alienation and sexual abuse. She brings her experience as a judge to bear when handling complex cases. She is experienced at representing high net worth and high-profile individuals.

Strengths: "She is a delight to work with. She is so calm and considered and it's very reassuring to have her on your side. Catherine has meticulous attention to detail and an impressive ability to hold and then recall the smallest details among the myriad facts in a complex case."

Chambers & Partners 2018

Band 1

'Commands the respect of everyone, both in and out of the courtroom.'

Legal 500, 2017

Recognised for her expert international children practice, particularly when it comes to matters concerning abduction, parental alienation and sexual abuse. She brings her experience as a judge to bear when handling complex cases.

Strengths: "An excellent advocate with superb judgement who is at home dealing with complicated children's cases. She never gets it wrong; she absolutely nails it in one sentence."

Chambers & Partners 2017

Band 1

She is an extremely reassuring presence in the courtroom and fights hard for her clients.

Legal 500, 2016

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."

Chambers & Partners 2016

Has a deeply respected children practice focusing principally on complex and very contentious private law proceedings. Her cases often relate to the relocation and abduction of children.

Expertise: "She is very sharp-witted and her advocacy is very skilful. She's a rising star and a lot of people here like her approach." "She has a fantastic bedside manner with clients, and an incredible eye for detail. Also, in the nicest possible way, she can destroy someone in cross-examination."

Chambers & Partners 2015

Band 1

'A fantastic silk who is trusted by the court.'

The Legal 500 2015

Has gone from strength to strength since taking silk in 2011 and is particularly noted for her efforts in serious private law children cases, especially those concerning sexual abuse and parental alienation.

Expertise: "A great advocate. She manages clients' expectations and achieves good results. She's very focused, very organised – the all-round package."

Chambers & Partners 2014

Catherine Wood QC has thrived since taking silk in 2011. One instructing solicitor said that "she is incredibly helpful and authoritative – she is my go-to person when I don't know what I'm doing." Wood specialises in private law children work, including Hague Convention cases.

Chambers & Partners 2013

Catherine Wood QC, who is "superb on every level, technically brilliant, relaxed and reassuring with clients." She was regarded as "the best junior private children lawyer in the country," and is expected to continue to impress in silk.

Chambers and Partners 2012

Recently appointed silk Catherine Wood QC is also highly recommended.

The Legal 500 2011

Catherine Wood handles private children work with an emphasis on contact and residence disputes. According to commentators "she has an assured manner with clients and an excellent instinct for the right approach in any given case."

Chambers and Partners 2011

Band 1

Catherine Wood, a private law children expert who is "a determined opponent who is prepared to the nth degree."

Chambers and Partners 2010

Band 1

Recommended as a Children Law Leading Junior

The Legal 500 2010

"A dogged opponent who is guaranteed to be well prepared," Catherine Wood moves up the table this year after receiving a welter of positive feedback: "She is destined for the High Court Bench, she is that good." Peers laud Wood's "ability to inspire real confidence," noting that her "apparently laid-back style masks a wolf in sheep's clothing."

Chambers and Partners 2009

Catherine Wood who has 'excellent instincts' and 'an assured touch with clients and judges alike'.

The Legal 500, 2009

"Calm and understated," according to interviewees, Wood "does not add personal drama to already charged situations." Matters in question include private law disputes over contact and residence, as well as public law disputes concerning neglect, abuse and the continuation of medical treatment.

Chambers & Partners 2008

“Effective, hard-hitting style” brings her a strong solicitor following. As one source mused: “It would be hard to find a more pleasant barrister to do your case well.”

Chambers & Partners 2007

Catherine Wood is ‘a children specialist with excellent instincts, and an assured touch with clients and judges alike’.

The Legal 500, 2008

Cases

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|------------|--|---|--|
| 23/02/2022 | Re A, B and C (Children: Nesting Arrangement) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb Charlotte Baker | [2022] EWCA Civ 68 |
| 03/02/2022 | A, B and C (Children: Nesting Arrangement) | Charlotte Baker Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [2022] EWCA Civ 68 |
| 29/01/2020 | Re A, B and C (Adoption: Notification of Fathers and Relatives) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [2020] EWCA Civ 41 |
| 13/12/2017 | M (A Child) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [2017] EWCA Civ 2356 |
| 27/03/2009 | A (Applicant) v H (Respondent) & (1) Registrar General for England & Wales (2) Secretary of State for Justice (Interveners) (2009) | Henry Setright KC Private: Marcus Scott-Manderson QC Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb Teertha Gupta KC | [2010] 1 FLR 1; [2009] EWHC 636 (Fam) |
| 27/10/2006 | K v K (2006) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [2007] 1 FCR 355 |
| 21/12/2005 | Re A (Abduction: Habitual Residence: Consent) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [2006] 2 FLR 1 |
| 24/02/2005 | Re U (Re-opening Appeal) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [2005] 2 FLR 444 |
| 08/12/2004 | Re Uddin (A Child) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [2005] 1 WLR 2398 |
| 09/11/2004 | Re S (A Child) (Financial Provision) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [2005] 2 WLR 895 |
| 27/04/2001 | Harris v Harris; Attorney-General v Harris | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [2001] 2 FLR 895 |
| 29/11/2000 | Re G (Care Proceedings: Spilt Trials) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb Paul Hopher | [2001] 1 FLR 872 |
| 27/06/2000 | Re H (A Child) (Contact) (2000) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | LTL 27/6/2000 EXTEMPORE |
| 24/01/1994 | Re DH (A Minor) (Child Abuse) | Catherine Wood KC, MCI Arb | [1994] 1 FLR 679 |