

Joy Brereton KC

'Joy is a powerhouse. Her advocacy is tremendous, her preparation is meticulous, and she combines peerless judgement with an incredibly human touch. She is a go-to silk for complex children's cases.'

Legal 500, 2025

Experience

Year of Call: 1990

Year of Silk: 2022

Practice Areas

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

Dispute Resolution

- Early Neutral Evaluation





Education

LLB (Hons)

LLM

William Mc Nair Scholarship Grays Inn

Appointments

Recorder 2019

Profile

Joy is a leading silk who specialises in all aspects of the law relating to children . She has particular expertise in complex children matters encompassing both public and private law proceedings.

She is regularly involved in cases concerning non-accidental injury, sexual abuse, factitious disorder, physical and emotional abuse of children acting for all parties at all levels.

In addition, she is a specialist in private law matters where there are protracted and highly contentious disputes and she is particularly specialist in the international relocation and movement of children including adoption.

She has experience of appellate work in all areas.

Public Children Law

Joy is regularly involved in cases involving complex issues including conflicting medical evidence, non-accidental injury and death of children, sexual abuse, physical and emotional abuse.

The majority of her cases are running in tandem with parallel criminal proceedings involving serious criminal offences. She is regularly instructed on behalf of all parties and represents children regularly.

Private Children Law

Joy is a specialist in all private law matters that touch on the welfare of children. She has particular expertise in entrenched/high conflict issues embracing specific issues such as education, religion and medical treatment and emotional harm created by alienating behaviours.

Having appeared in RE H-N, she frequently deals with cases of domestic abuse at all levels including appellate work, fact-finding and welfare hearings. She regularly speaks on the issue of domestic abuse including at the South Africa HCCH Forum this year and as a panellist at IAFL chapters.

International Children Law

Joy's work frequently includes an international element, and she is a specialist in the movement of children particularly international and internal relocation. She is a contributing author on the Chapter in respect of Relocation in the sixth edition of "The International Family Law Practice".

Joy also undertakes complex international adoption work which often includes aspects of surrogacy law.

These cases often include issues of immigration and cross-jurisdictional return of children as well as placing children abroad as part of care planning.

Non-court dispute resolution

Joy sits as a Recorder and can conduct Early Neutral Evaluation.

Publications/Training

Contributing author to “The International Family Law Practice” Sixth Edition on the subject of international/ internal relocation of children.

Memberships

Family Law Bar Association

Member of the FLBA Executive committee (2016-) and Chair of the FLBA Scholarship Committee

Association of Lawyers for Children

Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL)

South Eastern Circuit

Gray’s Inn

Joy previously sat as a member of the Disciplinary Tribunal

Directories

‘Joy is a powerhouse. Her advocacy is tremendous, her preparation is meticulous, and she combines peerless judgement with an incredibly human touch. She is a go-to silk for complex children’s cases.’

Legal 500, 2025

“Joy is a fearless and excellent advocate who is able to read the court extraordinarily well.”

“Joy is outstanding at cross-examination at trial. If something is not going the client’s way, she is bold and will do what it takes to turn things around during a final hearing.”

“She is direct and directs her advocacy like a bullseye and it reaches its target every time. She is a standout in this generation. I feel so privileged to know her.”

Chambers & Partners, 2025

‘Joy is a superlative advocate who can take a case by the scruff of the neck and turn it around. She is empathetic, user-friendly and the total package.’

Legal 500, 2024

“Has a very forceful style of advocacy which she uses to great effect in the most tricky of children cases.”

“She will leave no stone unturned when fighting her case, and is particularly good with vulnerable clients.”

“Joy is unparalleled in terms of her wisdom, grasp of a case and ability to deliver the right outcome no matter how complex the case is.”

“Joy Brereton is very highly rated; she provides sensible and realistic advice and, where necessary, gives the client significant reassurance about their case.”

Chambers & Partners 2024

‘Joy is a brilliant advocate who brings great clarity of thought to her work, gives clients enormous confidence and is always well prepared and meticulous in her analysis.’

Legal 500, 2023

“User-friendly and responsive, she works incredibly hard and prepares thoroughly. Her advocacy is excellent and she always pitches it correctly based on the status of the case.” “She has amazing skills in court and her client care is second to none. She demolishes the other side in cross-examination.” “A workhorse who is wonderful with clients and fierce on her feet.”

Chambers & Partners, 2022

Band 1

‘ A leading advocate and hugely skilled in international relocation cases. Formidable cross-examination skills. Very much in demand. ’

Legal 500, 2022

Top Tier

Highly experienced barrister who is recognised for her work in complex children cases. She exhibits strength in international matters, and has additional expertise in disputes concerning issues of criminal offences and abuse. Her expertise spans both private and public cases.

Strengths: “Hugely reassuring and sensitive to clients, she is an incisive and powerful advocate.” “Clients can rest assured that she has thoroughly prepared their cases and has completely understood them.” “Joy inspires confidence and is unbelievably committed to what she does. She is a pleasure to work with and fearless in court.”

Chambers & Partners, 2021

Band 1

‘Incredibly user-friendly and accessible. She is also a powerful and persuasive presence in court on her client’s behalf.’

Legal 500, 2021

Top Tier

Highly experienced barrister who is recognised for her work in complex children cases. She exhibits strength in international matters, and has additional expertise in disputes concerning issues of criminal offences and abuse. Her expertise spans both private and public cases.

Strengths: “Joy fights for her clients and is a passionate advocate. She is an excellent strategist and has wonderful client care skills.” “Joy is able to pick up cases and grasp the detail very quickly. Excellent in court and a very strong advocate, she’s able to gauge the correct tone to take and which arguments to run.”

Chambers & Partners 2020

Band 1

‘Knows every detail of her cases and is a formidable presence in court.’

Legal 500, 2020 Family Junior of the Year

Top Tier

“She is the best children law junior in London and better than most silks. She has an extraordinary ability to win round judges with a powerful but highly intelligent advocacy style.”

Legal 500 2019 Family Junior of the Year

Highly experienced children law barrister who is recognised for her work in cases concerning the movement of children internationally. She additionally exhibits strength in matters concerning issues of criminal offences and abuse. Her expertise spans both private and public cases.

Strengths: "The modern-day equivalent of a knight in shining armour for difficult children cases, she is robust enough for the most difficult of clients and cases." "She is a force of nature and a go-to barrister for tricky private children work."

Chambers & Partners 2019

Band 1

'Judges love her – she is firm and persuasive in court.'

Legal 500, 2019

Top Tier

Highly experienced children law barrister who is recognised for her work in cases concerning the movement of children internationally. She additionally exhibits strength in matters concerning issues of criminal offences and abuse. Her expertise spans both private and public cases.

Strengths: "She's just always very available, a very persuasive advocate and very good with the clients. She has it all."

Chambers & Partners 2018

Band 1

'She works ridiculously hard and is meticulous on paper and clever on her feet.'

Legal 500, 2017

Highly experienced children law barrister who is recognised for her work in cases concerning the movement of children internationally. She additionally exhibits strength in matters concerning issues of criminal offences and abuse.

Strengths: "She's marvellously authoritative, and can deal with both clients and the judge beautifully."

Chambers & Partners 2017

Band 1

'Her preparation is top notch.'

Legal 500, 2016

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.

Chambers & Partners 2016

Undertakes both private and public law children proceedings, and has a particular affinity for cases with an international angle to them, particularly those concerning international abduction, relocation and serious injury to children.

Expertise: "Very sensible, very realistic and incredibly effective as an advocate."

Chambers & Partners 2015

'Utterly fearless and a superb advocate'

The Legal 500 2015

Highly experienced in private and public law children work and is especially recognised for her work regarding adoption and child relocation. She also handles cases involving issues for consideration such as education and religion.

Recent work: Featured in a high-profile case involving a decision concerning the upbringing of five children from the Chassidic community. This concerned a disagreement between the parents over the education of the children which would entirely affect their whole way of life and rules for living.

Chambers & Partners 2014

Another favourite amongst solicitors as is Joy Brereton, a “tough, no-nonsense” advocate who handles all aspects of children law with a particular focus on complex private law disputes such as international relocation.

Chambers & Partners 2013

Joy Brereton draws particular praise for her work relating to child relocation. “She is very approachable, very persuasive in court and has a fantastic manner with the clients,” say those that use her.

Chambers & Partners 2012

Joy Brereton, “a gifted advocate with in-depth knowledge of all aspects of children law. Her reassuring manner always plays well with clients,” say sources.

Chambers & Partners 2011

Cases

24/01/2025	Tickle & Anor v The BBC & Ors	Alex Verdan KC Deirdre Fottrell KC Cyrus Larizadeh KC Joy Brereton KC Rebecca Foulkes Amean Elgadhry Chris Barnes Clarissa Wigoder	[2025] EWCA Civ 42
19/12/2024	Tickle & Ors v Surrey County Council & Ors	Deirdre Fottrell KC Cyrus Larizadeh KC Joy Brereton KC Rebecca Foulkes Amean Elgadhry Chris Barnes Clarissa Wigoder	[2024] EWHC 3330 (Fam)
26/07/2023	Re C (Child: Ability to Instruct Solicitor)	Joy Brereton KC Frankie Shama	[2023] EWCA Civ 889
21/02/2023	Re C (‘Parental Alienation’; Instruction of Expert)	Barbara Mills KC Charles Hale KC Joy Brereton KC Chris Barnes Charlotte Baker Frankie Shama	[2023] EWHC 345 (Fam)

13/07/2022	Re CK, (A Child: Fact-Finding)	Joy Brereton KC Chris Barnes	[2022] EWCA Civ 952
30/03/2021	Re H-N and Others (Children) (Domestic Abuse: Finding of fact hearings)	Christopher Hames KC Charlotte Baker Jo Delahunty KC Chris Barnes Charles Hale KC Adele Cameron-Douglas Rebecca Foulkes Miriam Best Teertha Gupta KC Matthew Persson Clarissa Wigoder Mark Jarman KC Michael Gration KC Barbara Mills KC Joy Brereton KC Emma Spruce	[2021] EWCA Civ 448
29/09/2020	K (Threshold – Cocaine Ingestion – Failure to give evidence)	Cyrus Larizadeh KC Joy Brereton KC Lucy Cheetham	[2020] EWHC 2502 (Fam)
15/05/2020	A Local Authority v The Mother & Ors	Cyrus Larizadeh KC Joy Brereton KC Lucy Cheetham	[2020] EWHC 1233 (Fam)
05/11/2018	A (Foreign Adoption Recognition)	Joy Brereton KC	[2018] EWHC 3468 (Fam)
24/02/2017	A Local Authority & Anor v MC & Ors (Care proceedings) (Inherent Jurisdiction)	Joy Brereton KC	[2017] EWHC 370 (Fam)
31/01/2014	Harrow v Afzal [2014] (sentencing remarks)	Mark Jarman KC Joy Brereton KC Private: Oliver Jones	[2014] EWHC 303 (Fam)
07/11/2012	Re G (Children) (2012)	Joy Brereton KC Michael Gration KC	[2012] EWCA Civ 1434
04/10/2012	Re G (Children) (2012)	Joy Brereton KC	[2012] EWCA Civ 1233
08/04/2010	Re D (A Child) 2010	Joy Brereton KC	[2010] EWCA Civ 593 : (2010) 106(16) LSG 13
16/08/2007	DM v (1) EJC (2) KJM & HPM (By their Guardian) (2007)	Joy Brereton KC	[2007] EWHC 2343 (Fam)
29/07/2007	RE S (A CHILD) (2008)	Joy Brereton KC	
20/07/2007	Re L (Adoption: Contacting Natural Father) (2007)	Joy Brereton KC	[2007] EWHC 1771 (Fam); (2008) 1 FLR 1079

04/04/2007	H v (1) D (2) X & Y (By Their Guardian AD Litem, O) (2007)	Henry Setright KC Private: Marcus Scott-Manderson QC Joy Brereton KC	[2007] EWHC 802 (Fam)
31/01/2006	Re G (A Child) (2006)	Stephen Lyon Joy Brereton KC	[2006] EWCA Civ 348
09/03/2005	F & J (Children) [2005]	Joy Brereton KC	[2005] EWCA Civ 349