

Chris Barnes

'Instructing him is like instructing a silk as he's really clever and really tactically astute. He's quietly formidable – when I see other barristers around him, they pale in comparison.'

'Chris is calm, intelligent and articulate. His advocacy is excellent and he is wonderfully adept at explaining complex concepts to vulnerable clients. A real go-to barrister for children work.'

Chambers and Partners, 2025



Experience

Year of Call: 2008

Practice Areas

- International Children Law
- Private Children Law
- Public Children Law

Direct Access

Direct Access





Family Law
Awards 2021
LexisNexis

Headline Partner



SHORTLISTED FOR:
FAMILY LAW CASE OF THE YEAR

Qualifications

MA (Cantab) History
GDL
BVC

Education

St John's College, Cambridge (2003-6)
City University (2006/7)
Inns of Court School of Law (2007/8)

Appointments

Law for Change legal panel

Profile

Chris is a leading family law barrister specialising in public and private children work.

Chris' core case load includes:

- Complex public law proceedings, with a focus on cases concerning alleged non-accidental injuries, and proceedings with an international component;
- In his private law work Chris is frequently instructed in cases concerning serious allegations of domestic and/or sexual abuse; and
- Applications under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, with a focus on contested adoptions, proceedings following relinquishment, and adoptions with an international dimension.

Chris is highly regarded for his appellate work and is an accomplished appeal advocate. He is frequently instructed in appeals before the Court of Appeal and High Court, often as sole, or lead, counsel. Recently Chris has had success acting for an appellant local authority challenging the refusal of a placement order application, in a significant appeal concerning reliance on hair strand testing in an application for interim removal, and the appeal against the anonymity order preventing the naming of Judges who had presided in Family Proceedings concerning Sara Sharif.

Beyond Chambers' core areas of work Chris has developed a particular expertise in applications, arising from family proceedings, under the Human Rights Act 1998 having pursued applications for declarations of incompatibility in relation to diplomatic immunity, and the irrevocability of the parental responsibility of married fathers.

Chris has extensive experience of media and reporting applications arising from family proceedings, and has appeared in many of the leading cases concerning transparency in the Family Court including:

- Representing Rights of Women, along with Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC and Charlotte Baker, in Griffiths v Tickle
- Representing freelance journalist Louise Tickle in the successful appeal in Tickle v Father & Ors [2023] leading to publication of a transcript in which a Circuit Judge expressed views on transparency;
- Representation of media organisations including the BBC, and acting for Tortoise Media Ltd in an application to report on family proceedings arising from parents investigated for murder and abortion related offences under the Offences Against the Persons Act 1861, reported by Phoebe Gates;
- Acting for the appellant journalists, Louise Tickle and Hannah Summers working in a freelance capacity, in application for disclosure and permission to publish in proceedings concerning Sara Sharif and leading James Nottage in the subsequent appeal to the Court of Appeal to challenge an order providing for judicial anonymity.

Chris' background as a family law specialist, along with his wide experience of acting for journalists and media organisations in the Family Court, leave him well placed to advise on applications for disclosure and/or permission to publish, and, where required, he can offer advice and representation on an urgent basis where matters are time sensitive.

Public Children Law

Chris has had a significant focus on public law proceedings throughout his career, and very extensive of experience of appearing in cases at all levels.

Chris is frequently instructed in complex cases with contested medical expert evidence arising from alleged non-accidental injury. Much of Chris' case loads sees him appearing in the High Court, often against leading counsel.

When acting for parents in public law proceedings:

- Chris is especially highly regarded for his work with vulnerable clients, or those requiring additional support arising from their cognitive profile, mental health diagnoses, or experience of trauma;
- Chris is committed, as far as possible, to provide consistency of representation for his clients;
- Chris has considerable experience of working as part of a team - whether with a leader, or leading - with intermediaries, interpreters, or specialist deaf interpreters to support his clients to participate fully and fairly in proceedings.

Chris has extensive experience of advising and representing local authorities and has a strong strategic focus to support his client departments in complex, and contentious proceedings. Chris has particular experience:

- Representing local authorities in heavy medical cases where is frequently instructed as sole, or lead counsel;
- In proceedings under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, including in contested adoption applications;
- Where the case has an additional international dimension;
- Advising - often as a matter of urgency - in cases in which he did not appear at first instance where an appeal is contemplated.

Chris has a particular interest in niche areas of public law work, including relinquishment for adoption, applications for authorisation of deprivations of liberty, and applications under the 1996 Hague Convention.

Private Children Law

Since acting in the seminal case of *Re H-N* (for the appellant mother in *Re T*, who he continued to represent in the remitted proceedings following the successful appeal) Chris has continued to develop a wide ranging private law practice with a particular focus on contentious private law proceedings in which contested allegations of abuse arise. Chris' directory entries highlight his experience with vulnerable clients, and his sensitive and supportive approach to clients.

Chris has acted in private law appeals across the Family Court, Family Division, and Court of Appeal. He is frequently brought in to advise on appeal given his experience, technical approach, and knowledge of the law, and is committed to providing consistency of representation where a successful appeal results in a retrial and/or remitted proceedings.

Chris is often instructed in private law proceedings which are technical, or concern novel applications of the law where his tactical advice, and strong written and oral advocacy, make him a go-to barrister.

International Children Law

Chris has particular experience in public law cases with an international dimension having acted in cases concerning in-bound and out-bound applications under Article 15 BIR.

Chris has been instructed in a number of cases under the 1996 Hague Convention, including:

- Acting for the Child and Family Agency of Ireland in *Child and Family Agency v Ireland v AB* [2021] EWHC 1774 (Fam), the first transfer request under Article 8
- *Re D (Care Proceedings: 1996 Hague Convention: Article 9 Request)* [2021] EWHC 1970 (Fam) one of the first occasions when the provisions of Articles 8 and 9 were given substantive consideration
- Representing a father seeking a request to transfer jurisdiction to the Courts of England and Wales in *E v D (Child: Transfer of Proceedings Art. 9 of Hague Convention 1996)* [2024] EWHC 2422 (Fam)

Chris has appeared in many of the leading cases concerning the risk of radicalisation in the Family Court. He has experience of cases concerning returnees from Syria, and has acted, as part of a wider multi-disciplinary team to seek to secure the repatriation of British Nationals.

Memberships

Honourable Society of Gray's Inn
Family Law Bar Association
Association of Lawyers for Children

Directories

"Chris is a brilliant advocate, who goes over and above for his clients. His calm, confident and robust approach means his client's case is put in the best possible way."

"Instructing him is like instructing a silk as he's really clever and really tactically astute. He's quietly formidable - when I see other barristers around him, they pale in comparison."

"Chris is calm, intelligent and articulate. His advocacy is excellent and he is wonderfully adept at explaining complex concepts to vulnerable clients. A real go-to barrister for children work."

Chambers and Partners, 2025

'Chris is a compelling advocate. He builds strong relationships with clients, and can explain the most complex of issues in a straightforward way.'

Legal 500, 2025

"He is an absolute powerhouse, who is willing to go out of his way for clients."

"He is creative in his thinking and doesn't miss an opportunity to challenge the other side's position."

"Chris is an excellent all-rounder. His knowledge of the law is flawless, but it is his compassion and care with clients that is most impressive."

Chambers and Partners, 2024

'Chris is academically sharp, thoughtful and insightful with his cases. He relishes the law and is committed to making sure it progresses to reflect society. He is excellent to work with as part of a team – pleasant yet oozing confidence.'

Legal 500, 2024

"A very bright and extremely impressive junior, who has very good client skills and is really good on the law. He's nice to work with."

"Chris is an excellent barrister, who's incredibly knowledgeable about the law and has a personable, calm and sensitive approach with clients, including very vulnerable people."

Chambers and Partners, 2023

'Chris is a very experienced and highly effective children's junior with a formidable track record of experience and success in dealing with complex, cutting-edge public law cases with an international dimension. His knowledge of the law and procedure is encyclopedic, and his intellectual agility is matched by a forceful yet pragmatic approach that makes him attractive to specialist solicitors, not least to those at local authorities and other institutional clients.'

Legal 500, 2023

"He's hard-working and absolutely dedicated to his clients." "He handles detailed, complex cases with alacrity and ease." "Chris is clever, calm, approachable and collaborative. He always responds to queries or requests for help as quickly as he can."

Recent work: Represented the local authority in an appeal concerning a child who was vaccinated while in care. The main issue was whether a local authority with a care order could vaccinate a child despite parental objections.

Chambers & Partners, 2022

'A talented junior unafraid to take on cases from which others might shy away.'

Legal 500, 2022

A well-respected junior who is increasingly well versed in matters concerning the overlap between public law and international children issues. He has additional experience in cases involving radicalisation and also enjoys particular renown for his work in abduction cases.

Strengths: "An extraordinarily prolific advocate who appears in cases against silks unled. He has a demon brain and is a superb cross-examiner."

Recent work: Represented an appellant father in an effort to restrict disclosure to the police of information arising from family proceedings. The information concerned alleged radicalisation of a family who had returned from Syria.

Chambers & Partners, 2021

'A highly intelligent, knowledgeable barrister who is a skilled advocate.'

Legal 500, 2021

A well-respected junior who is increasingly well-versed in matters concerning the overlap between public law and international children issues. He has additional experience in cases involving radicalisation and also enjoys particular renown for his work in abduction cases.

Strengths: "He's highly intelligent and brilliant with clients."

Chambers & Partners 2020

'Highly intelligent and meticulous, he will not leave any stone unturned; a fearless and eloquent advocate.'

Legal 500, 2020

A well-respected junior who is increasingly well versed in matters concerning the overlap between public law and international children issues. He has experience in cases involving contested adoption and relinquished children. He enjoys particular renown for his work in radicalisation cases, and often appears in the High Court.

Strengths: "He's a very good lawyer and an excellent advocate. If there isn't an answer, he'll find one."

Recent work: Represented the local authority in proceedings concerning the risk of radicalisation with regard to a mother and baby who had just returned from Syria.

Chambers & Partners 2019

'His paperwork is exceptional.'

Legal 500, 2019

A well-respected junior who is increasingly well versed in matters concerning the overlap between public law and international children issues. He has experience in contested adoption, relinquished children and radicalisation cases.

Strengths: "He's very intelligent and has picked things up and taken cases to places you wouldn't think they could go. He's definitely a rising star."

Chambers & Partners 2018

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	F, Re (A Child) (Future Welfare: Post-Adoption Contact: Unconscionable Delay)	Chris Barnes	[2025] EWFC 13

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)
16/12/2024	London Borough of Merton v E & Ors	Chris Barnes	[2024] EWFC 391 (B)
23/10/2024	H, Re (Children: Uncertain Perpetrator: Lies)	Chris Barnes	[2024] EWCA Civ 1261
17/09/2024	E v D (Child: Transfer of Proceedings Art. 9 of Hague Convention 1996)	Chris Barnes Harry Langford	[2024] EWHC 2422 (Fam)
29/08/2024	M (A Child), In the Matter Of	Chris Barnes	[2024] EWCA Civ 1000
23/08/2024	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham v G & Ors	Alison Grief KC Chris Barnes	[2024] EWHC 2200 (Fam)
10/05/2024	D, Re (Children: Interim Care Order: Hair Strand Testing)	Chris Barnes	[2024] EWCA Civ 498
18/04/2024	X & Y, Re (Domestic Abuse: Participation Directions: Obligation to Consider)	Chris Barnes	[2024] EWFC 121 (B)
04/03/2024	Tortoise Media Ltd v A Local Authority & Ors (Rev1)	Chris Barnes	[2024] EWFC 50
05/10/2023	Tickle v Father & Ors	Chris Barnes	[2023] EWHC 2446 (Fam)
14/08/2023	The Mother v The Father	Charles Hale KC Barbara Mills KC Chris Barnes	[2023] EWHC 2078 (Fam)
16/06/2023	A, Re (Parental Responsibility)	Mark Jarman KC Chris Barnes	[2023] EWCA Civ 689
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)
18/11/2022	Re AG (A Child)	Chris Barnes	[2022] EWCA Civ 1505
02/11/2022	Re B (A Child)	Chris Barnes Charlotte Baker	[2022] EWCA Civ 1439
13/07/2022	Re CK, (A Child: Fact-Finding)	Joy Brereton KC Chris Barnes	[2022] EWCA Civ 952
15/02/2022	MZ v FZ & Ors	Mark Jarman KC Chris Barnes	[2022] EWHC 295 (Fam)

10/12/2021	Griffiths v Tickle & Ors	Deirdre Fottrell KC Chris Barnes Charlotte Baker	[2021] EWCA Civ 1882
07/12/2021	A Mother v Derby City Council & Anor	Chris Barnes	[2021] EWCA Civ 1867
03/11/2021	Derby CC v CK & Ors (Compliance with DOL Practice Guidance) (Rev1)	Chris Barnes	[2021] EWHC 2931 (Fam)
30/07/2021	Griffiths v Tickle & Ors	Chris Barnes Charlotte Baker	[2021] EWHC 3365 (Fam)
20/07/2021	Re D (Care Proceedings: 1996 Hague Convention: Article 9 Request)	Henry Setright KC Chris Barnes	[2021] EWHC 1970 (Fam)
23/06/2021	Child And Family Agency of Ireland v AB	Henry Setright KC Chris Barnes	[2021] EWHC 1774 (Fam)
28/05/2021	Re Q R and S (Children) (RRO Application)	Chris Barnes	[2021] EWHC 1492 (Fam)
13/05/2021	London Borough of Barnet v AG & Ors	Jo Delahunty KC Chris Barnes Lucy Logan Green	[2021] EWHC 1253
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
18/12/2020	A Local Authority v A Mother & Ors	Andrew Powell Chris Barnes Harry Langford	[2020] EWHC 3496 (Fam)
27/11/2020	LB v LB	Chris Barnes	[2020] EWHC 3840 (Fam)
24/08/2020	Re N (Children) (Interim Care)	Chris Barnes	[2020] EWCA Civ 1003
10/07/2020	Z (A Child) (DOLS: Lack of Secure Placement)	Chris Stevenson Sam King KC Chris Barnes	[2020] EWHC 1827 (Fam)

10/07/2020	Z (A Child : DOLS: Lack of Secure Placement)	Dorothea Gartland KC Chris Barnes Sam King KC	[2020] EWHC 1827 (Fam)
04/06/2020	Re B-T (A Child) (Threshold Conditions)	Alison Grief KC Chris Barnes	[2020] EWCA Civ 697
28/05/2020	A Local Authority v AG (No. 2)	Jo Delahunty KC Chris Barnes Lucy Logan Green	[2020] EWHC 1346 (Fam)
22/05/2020	Re H (A Child) (Parental Responsibility: Vaccination)	Alison Grief KC Rob Littlewood Chris Barnes Harry Langford	[2020] EWCA Civ 664
20/04/2020	A, B and C (Children) (Appeal: Practice Direction 12J) (Rev 1)	Chris Barnes	[2020] EWFC B53
07/04/2020	London Borough of Tower Hamlets v Mother & Ors	Rob Littlewood Chris Barnes Harry Langford	[2020] EWHC 832 (Fam)
03/04/2020	Prospective adopters v LB Tower Hamlets	Rob Littlewood Chris Barnes Harry Langford	[2020] EWFC 26
01/04/2020	Re T (A Child)	Alison Grief KC Chris Barnes Harry Langford Rob Littlewood	[2020] EWHC 220 (Fam)
03/03/2020	A Local Authority v AG	Jo Delahunty KC Chris Barnes Lucy Logan Green	[2020] EWFC 18
28/02/2020	Re I (Children: Child Assessment Order)	Chris Barnes	[2020] EWCA Civ 281
07/02/2020	Re T (A child)	Chris Barnes	[2020] EWHC 220 (Fam)
23/01/2020	Re T (A Child)	Rob Littlewood Chris Barnes Harry Langford	[2020] EWFC 4
17/12/2019	S and T (Children: care orders)	Jo Delahunty KC Chris Barnes Private: Joanne Porter	[2019] EWHC 3851 (Fam)
20/11/2019	A City Council v A Mother & A Father & Ors (Care Proceedings Radicalisation)	Cyrus Larizadeh KC Chris Barnes Brian Jubb Mani Singh Basi	[2019] EWHC 3076 (Fam)
20/11/2019	Z (A Child)	Chris Barnes	[2019] EWFC B90
31/07/2019	M (Children)	Chris Barnes	[2019] EWCA Civ 1364

12/06/2019	Re T (A Child)	Chris Barnes	[2019] EWHC 1572 (Fam)
07/03/2019	Re Q (Child – Interim Care Order – Jurisdiction)	Chris Barnes	[2019] EWHC 512 (Fam)
14/01/2019	TAN (a child) (child death; fact finding)	Alison Grief KC Chris Barnes	[2019] EWFC B78
22/08/2018	NW (Care Proceedings)	Chris Barnes	[2018] EWFC B83
19/07/2018	Re ABCDE	Sam King KC Ruth Kirby KC Chris Barnes	[2018] EWHC 1841 (Fam)
10/07/2018	The Child and Family Agency (Ireland) v M & Ors (Article 15(5) BIIA Transfer Request : CJEU Preliminary Reference: Care Jurisdiction)	Henry Setright KC Chris Barnes	[2018] EWHC 1581 (Fam)
22/06/2018	A Local Authority v A Mother & Ors (Radicalisation Welfare)	Chris Barnes Cleo Perry KC	[2018] EWHC 2056 (Fam)
06/06/2018	Secretary of State for the Home Department v IM & Ors	Ruth Kirby KC Chris Barnes	[2018] EWHC 1664 (Admin)
01/05/2018	CFA (Ireland) v F	Henry Setright KC Chris Barnes	[2018] EWHC 939 (Fam)
05/03/2018	A Local Authority v Mother & Ors (Radicalisation Fact Finding)	Alison Grief KC Chris Barnes Cleo Perry KC	[2018] EWHC 2054 (Fam)
08/12/2017	A Local Authority v X, Y and Z (Permission to Withdraw)	Sam King KC Chris Barnes	[2017] EWHC 3741 (Fam)
12/07/2017	W (A Child – No 4)	Chris Barnes	[2017] EWHC 1760 (Fam)
27/06/2017	C (A Child : Application for dismissal or withdrawal of proceedings) (No. 3)	Chris Barnes	[2017] EWFC 37
26/05/2017	A Local Authority v HB (Alleged Risk of Radicalisation and Abduction)	Private: Oliver Jones Chris Barnes	[2017] EWHC 1437 (Fam)
17/04/2017	Re W (A Child) (No 2)	Chris Barnes	[2017] EWHC 917 (Fam)
12/04/2017	Re W (A Child)	Chris Barnes	[2017] EWHC 829 (Fam)
31/03/2017	Re C (A Child) No. 2 – (Application for Public Interest Immunity)	Alex Verdan KC Chris Barnes	[2017] EWHC 692 (Fam)
31/03/2017	Re C (A Child) (No 2) (Application for Public Interest Immunity)	Alex Verdan KC Chris Barnes	[2017] EWHC 692 (Fam)

21/03/2017	HB v A Local Authority and Anor (Wardship – Costs Funding Order)	Charles Hale KC Teertha Gupta KC Private: Oliver Jones Chris Barnes	[2017] EWHC 524 (Fam)
06/03/2017	Re W (A Child)	Chris Barnes	[2017] EWHC 829 (Fam)
11/01/2017	Re C (A Child)	Alex Verdan KC Chris Barnes	[2016] EWHC 3171 (Fam)
10/01/2017	M, Re (relinquished baby, threshold, habitual residence and Art 15)	Chris Barnes	[2017] EWFC B6
08/12/2016	C (A Child)	Alex Verdan KC Chris Barnes	[2016] EWHC 3171 (Fam)
14/10/2016	Re RA (Baby Relinquished for Adoption)	Alex Verdan KC Kate Branigan KC Chris Barnes	[2016] EWFC 47
09/09/2016	Re M (Children)	Chris Barnes Jane Rayson	[2016] EWCA Civ 937
13/07/2016	London Borough Tower Hamlets v B	Alison Grief KC Sam King KC Rebecca Foulkes Chris Barnes	[2016] EWHC 1707 (Fam)
03/03/2016	JL, Re (Rev 1)	Henry Setright KC Chris Barnes	[2016] EWHC 440 (Fam)
11/12/2015	Re H (A Child)	Chris Barnes	[2015] EWCA Civ 1284
21/08/2015	London Borough of Tower Hamlets v B	Deirdre Fottrell KC Chris Barnes	[2015] EWHC 2491 (Fam)
20/08/2015	Re S	Chris Barnes	[2015] EWHC 4159 (Fam)
22/07/2015	W (Adoption- Reunification)	Chris Barnes	[2015] EWHC 2039 (Fam)
02/07/2015	Re R (A Child)	Henry Setright KC Sally Bradley Chris Barnes	[2015] EWCA Civ 674
11/06/2015	Re H (Children)	Kate Branigan KC Chris Barnes	[2015] EWCA Civ 583
27/03/2015	Tower Hamlets London Borough Council v M & Others	Chris Barnes	[2015] EWHC 869 (Fam)
19/03/2015	SR (A Child: Habitual Residence)	Henry Setright KC Sally Bradley Chris Barnes	SR (A Child : habitual residence) (Rev 4)
03/12/2014	X (Discharge of Care Order)	Chris Barnes	[2014] EWFC B217

20/06/2014	Local Authority 1 & Others v AF (Mother) & Others [2014]	Sally Bradley Chris Barnes	[2014] EWHC 2042 (Fam)
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