

Hamish Dunlop

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Family

Hamish's family law practice is concerned with the financial claims of: spouses on divorce; co-habitees on separation and dependants from the estate of a deceased. In the context of financial provision on divorce, he has particular expertise in cases involving: family businesses; professional clients and farms. Given the increased popularity in digital and crypto-assets, Hamish has developed a specialism in this regard and is experienced in advising clients as to the implications that these assets have on financial remedy proceedings and is a leading presence in ultra-high-net-worth cases.

He advises and represents co-habitees, co-owners and other family members on property issues including: legal and beneficial ownerships (and the Court's powers under TOLATA); promisory and proprietary estoppel. He advises on Inheritance Act claims.

Hamish provides pragmatic advice to clients in a sympathetic manner; her is robust and dogged in their representation. He is ranked in the latest editions of Legal 500 and Chambers Partners. He is described in Chambers and Partners (2022) as: a barrister "who covers every relevant point meticulously and does not do half-measures." "He is great with clients, has a good eye for detail, flexible in his approach and has real commitment to a case."

Hamish was Head of the 3PB Family Group until January 2019. He is now Deputy Head and Head of Finance.

Private Remote FDR Hearings

Hamish is available for private remote FDR hearings. For more information on private remote FDR hearings please click here.

Recent cases

T v T
Acting for the respondent partner in a case involving a cohabiting couple. Application brought by his former partner (A) to enforce the terms of a cohabitation agreement. R was a property developer with assets exceeding £60M. 5Y relationship. In June 2019, the parties signed a cohabitation agreement by which the A was given a house and the expectation in the event of relationship breakdown of periodical payments and child maintenance for her son by a previous relationship. R reneging on agreement and challenging the enforceability of the terms of the cohabitation agreement.

Q v Q
Acting for H in FR on divorce. H's family owned a large land estate worth c.£15M. Assets of the estate owned by 2 companies with shares held by 3 family Trusts of which H was the principal beneficiary. The parties to the marriage had very limited assets. W made an application under MCA s.24(1)(c) (Variation of a Nuptial Settlement). Complexities of the case included: whether any of the Trusts were nuptial within the meaning of the Act and the extent to which the Court should reasonably expect the Trustees to make provision for H to fund a settlement. The Trust/Corporate structure was complicated requiring careful and extensive review of documents.

Y v Y

Financial remedy on divorce. Acting for H, a senior partner in an international law firm. Assets of 2.5M. H was a corporate lawyer. In that capacity, he (and through him, W) had incentive shares in 4 start-up companies. The case involved disputes about the legal and beneficial ownership of these shares. H remunerated through a complex arrangement of UK income, UK and foreign dividends and salaries from the start-ups. Factual and legal issues about child and spousal maintenance depending on H's future income.

M v M
Financial remedy on divorce. Acting for H. Total assets of £4.7M. H is the CEO of a FTSE100 company. His remuneration included a variety of incentive stock including: LTIPs, bonus shares and share save schemes. The tax and vesting arrangements in relation to the shares were factually complicated. The main issue in the case was the extent to which W should benefit from the shares that had been earned after separation.

J v J
Financial remedy on divorce. Acting for H, a farmer. Net assets of £4M comprising farmland, buildings and underlying company. Legal issues concerning the validity of land transfers worth £2M which had not been registered. These were dealt with at a trial of preliminary issue: W instructed Leading Counsel. H's father was joined as a party to the proceedings. Bitter divorce involving allegations of conduct and review of contributions to the farming business. The 5 day trial involved cross examination of expert land valuers as well as the parties and witnesses.

Kv K
Financial remedy on divorce. 50 year marriage: Trial. Asset value: £3M. Parties were joint owners & directors of a company that operated 160 service vehicles for film and TV shoots. It was agreed that the company must be sold. Main issue was the extent of the Court's powers to direct & control the sale and define the parties' roles & responsibilities for managing the company in the meantime. The case tested the boundaries of the Family Court's powers in managing corporate governance when the owners and directors of the company were spouses.

C v C
H and W had limited assets. H's father had non-pension assets in excess of £10M. FMH owned by H's father. H worked as director in his father's company. W making a claim on H's father's assets by virtue of a beneficial interest and/or estoppel. W also arguing that there was a nuptial settlement which was capable of variation under s24(1)(c) MCA. The family company and H's father were both joined as parties to the action.

J v J
Assets of £3M including 4 properties, a company, shares in a vineyard and expensive motorcars. The husband alleged that he had c.£1.7M of debts owed principally to HMRC because of historic tax avoidance schemes; these were poorly evidenced. The complexities were: (1) investigating and assessing the true extent of the husband's debts which distorted the overall financial picture; and (2) the lack of liquidity in the available assets for distribution. The case was concluded pragmatically with a series of lump sums which protected the wife from efforts by the husband later to reduce what he had agreed to pay.

R v R
Assets of £3.5M including 6 properties co-owned with the husband's family. The main asset was a business inherited by the husband and developed during the marriage with his brother. There were issues of pre-marital assets and the extent to which the company could provide liquidity for the financial settlement. The negotiated order was complex but avoided the need for members of the husband's family to be joined to the litigation.

A v A
Representing the wife on her application for financial provision on divorce. There were assets of c.£11M following sale of a start-up company at the end of the marriage. These included foreign assets (a European holiday home). The wife alleged reckless & wanton dissipation of assets by the husband. The husband alleged stellar financial contributions to the marriage. The wife was psychologically vulnerable. The case involved 2 separate injunctive proceedings (s.37 MCA and FLA).

K v K
Application for financial provision on divorce. Hereditary Farming case. Farm worth £3.25M. The farm assets (including horses) were worth a further £1M. The case involved joining 2 additional members of the husband's family to the action. There were preliminary issue hearings concerning the legal and beneficial ownership of the land and horses. The parties had 2

companies involved in the farming enterprise and there were issues concerning the mingling of income from other related businesses. The husband had competency issues and was represented by a litigation friend.

Owens v Owens ([2017] EWCA Civ 182) ([2018] UKSC 41)
Acting for a Husband who successfully contested his Wife's petition for divorce based on grounds of unreasonable behaviour. The Court of Appeal and Supreme Court both rejected the Wife's appeal.

MB v The Executors of EB (Deceased)
Representing a widow on her application for financial provision from her deceased husband's estate. Her husband's estate left nothing to the widow save an entitlement to remain at her family home for life.

C v C
Acting for a Wife in her claim for financial provision from Husband. Although the parties themselves had modest assets, Wife was defending Husband's attack on a family trust in which she had an interest: both in relation to income (until her father's death) and thereafter capital. The Trust was valued at £3.5M.

B v B
Financial Provision on Divorce before Roberts J. Parties own and Husband operated a successful general trading business from a site in Oxfordshire. The parties thereby acquired and retained a portfolio of UK investment properties. Value of assets = c.£14M. Husband disposed of a number of the properties into offshore trusts which Wife is attacking. The Oxfordshire business site is currently under development for residential housing and there are complicated tax issues.

A v V
Applications for: a declaration of paternity and relief under Schedule 1 of the Children Act 1989. Representing a UK resident mother in her applications against a Dubai- based businessman father. Father was extremely wealthy and ran a millionaires' defence. The case involved issues of: jurisdiction and the extent to which a previous agreement reached by the parties should be binding on them.

D-C and ors v The Personal Representatives of N-C
Inheritance Act claim. The claim was bought by a number of dependants against the estate of the deceased who was a property developer on the South Coast. The estate included a number of properties and the shares in the deceased's company.

S v D
Financial claims between a Cohabiting Couple. Competing claims to various interests in the parties' family home; farming business and associated farmland.

C v R
Financial claims over Dynastic Wealth within a Family. Competing TOLATA claims concerning 2 existing properties but involving tracing financial interests through a 3 further houses.

Articles

3PB's specialist family law barrister Hamish Dunlop authors Divorce for a modern age: The divorce, dissolution and separation bill [HL] 2019-21.

View Article

Read Hamish Dunlop's lecture notes on Owens v Owens, a groundbreaking divorce case scheduled to go to the Supreme Court. Hamish's analysis explains why this case could lead to the introduction of no-fault divorce in the UK.

View Article

3PB's family law barrister Hamish Dunlop provides insightful commentary on the Sharland and Gohill cases.

View Article

Head of 3PB's Family Law Group Hamish Dunlop draws conclusions from The Blue Cross and others v. Heather Ilot [[2017] UKSC 17].

On 15th March 2017, the Supreme Court gave judgment in the appeal of The Blue Cross and others –v- Heather Ilot [[2017] UKSC 17]. The case concerns Mrs Ilot's application brought under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975 ('the Act').

Although the Act is now over 40 years old, it has never received substantive review by the most senior Court in the country. This appeal has therefore been eagerly awaited by practitioners in the expectation of guidance in particular in relation to: managing the frequent tension between a Claimant's needs and the testator's wishes; and the definitions of reasonable financial provision and maintenance under the Act.

The case concerns the class of Claimant whose dependency arises in a context of being other than a spouse or civil partner. It obviously remains to be seen whether the Court will now find an opportunity to review the law in cases involving a spouse as Claimant. In the meantime, this case provides specific assistance in relation to 'non-spouse' cases and some general jurisprudence in relation to all claims under the Act.

View Article

Recommendations

Hamish Dunlop heads the sub-set and focuses his practice on all financial cases arising from the dissolution of relationships, including hereditary cases and Schedule 1 matters. His particular areas of expertise include cases involving family businesses and property-based assets.
Strengths: "Hamish is an expert financial remedy barrister, who is great for complex cases with intricate issues and difficult technical aspects of the law."
Chambers UK 2025/Family/Matrimonial Finance/London Bar

Hamish Dunlop is head of the family finance group at 3PB Barristers and an authority in the field of finance-based family law. He routinely assists with cases involving land ownership, properties, businesses and inherited wealth.
Strengths: "Hamish is very well prepared and he has an eye for detail."
"Hamish is an expert financial remedy barrister and his expertise is welcomed on complex cases with intricate issues and difficult technical aspects of the law."
Chambers UK 2025/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Western Bar

Hamish Dunlop of 3PB Barristers continues to manage a broad clinical negligence practice that encompasses cases concerning obstetric and orthopaedic injuries, including negligence stemming from general surgery. He offers a wealth of experience in complex dependency claims, as well as claims involving housing requirements and lifetime care.
Strengths: "His client care skills are second to none."
"Hamish always prepares cases thoroughly and gets to grips with the details and nuances of claims."
Chambers UK 2025/Clinical Negligence/Western Bar - ranked in Band 1

Strengths: "He's very well prepared and has an eye for detail and a nice client manner. He is a very good advocate with a nice forensic mind."
Chambers UK 2024/Family/Matrimonial Finance/London Bar

Strengths: "Hamish is very experienced and his client care skills are no doubt second to none."
"He's a smooth advocate."
"He has a nice forensic mind, is excellent and persistent about the right points."
"Hamish Dunlop is very well prepared, with an eye for detail."
Chambers UK 2024/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Western Bar

Strengths: "Hamish is a charming and persuasive advocate."
Chambers UK 2024/Clinical Negligence/Western Bar

Hamish Dunlop heads the sub-set and focuses his practice on all financial cases arising from the dissolution of relationships, including hereditary cases and Schedule 1 matters. His particular areas of expertise include cases involving family businesses and property-based assets.
Strengths: "He's got huge experience and a very sensible manner; clients feel very comfortable with him. A personable, measured, diligent and impressive barrister."
"Hamish Dunlop is always courteous, insightful and never rushed. A joy to work with as an instructing solicitor, he is popular with judges and well respected by other advocates."
Chambers UK 2023/Family/Matrimonial Finance/London Bar

Hamish Dunlop is head of the family finance group at 3PB and an authority in the field of finance-based family law. He routinely assists with cases involving land ownership, properties, businesses and inherited wealth.
Strengths: "Hamish is an exceptional and eloquent advocate. His client manner is superb, and his ability to communicate with the client is very well measured."
"He is incredibly knowledgeable and thorough."
"Hamish is an exceptional barrister, especially on technical matters involving complex assets."
Chambers UK 2023/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Western Bar

Strengths: "He has a good eye for detail."
"Hamish is diligent and thorough in getting to grips with issues in the most complex of clinical negligence cases. He has a friendly and approachable manner with clients."
Chambers UK 2023/Clinical Negligence/Western Bar

Strengths: "He's a good negotiator on matrimonial finance matters."
Chambers UK 2022/Family/Matrimonial Finance/London Bar

Head of the family finance group at 3PB and an authority in the field of finance-based family law. He routinely assists with cases involving land ownership, properties, businesses and inherited wealth. He is noted by sources for his experience in financial proceedings and his court manner.
Strengths: "Hamish is a very thorough and diligent barrister who covers every relevant point meticulously and does not do half-measures." "He is great with clients, has a good eye for detail, flexible in his approach and has real commitment to a case."
Chambers UK 2022/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Western Bar

Strengths: "Very personable and good with clients. He sets out a clear and detailed approach to the evidence and issues in a case."
Chambers UK 2022/Clinical Negligence/Western Bar

Strengths: "Supremely clever and a great communicator." "Able to take on board a lot of information in a short amount of time, he is an astute advocate."
Chambers UK 2021/Family/Matrimonial Finance/London Bar

Strengths: "He has an amazing ability to take on board a lot of information in a short amount of time and is such a sharp and astute advocate."
Chambers UK 2021/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Western Bar

Strengths: "He is very user-friendly, approachable and happy to talk through the issues in a case."
Chambers UK 2021/Clinical Negligence/Western Bar

Strengths: "Brilliant in court and knows when to speak and when not to. He's a careful planner, who's meticulous with everything and covers all bases."
Recent work: Appeared in Owens v Owens, representing the respondent husband in a petition for divorce.
Chambers UK 2020/Family/Matrimonial Finance/London Bar

Head of the national family group at 3PB and an authority in the field of finance-based family law. He concentrates on litigating claims relating to separation, divorce and inheritance and deals with assets of all kinds, often in multiple jurisdictions. He is noted for his knowledge of wider commercial and military issues.

Strengths: "Hamish Dunlop is a formidable barrister with the ability to think laterally and give practical, simple options in the most complex of cases. He has great attention to detail and is always well prepared. He can cut through the detail and gives pragmatic and sensible advice." "He's very measured and clear in his approach and advice. He is an excellent team player for complex matters requiring careful and considered attention."
Chambers UK 2020/Family Matrimonial/Western

Strengths: "He's got a very analytical brain: he tends to cut to the chase and is very good on damages and finances." "He is extremely thorough and very careful in everything he says and does."
Chambers UK 2020/Clinical Negligence

"Hamish is outstanding with numbers; he's like a human calculator." "He is very well prepared, and has a nice client manner and good judgement. He's analytical and possessed of a good mind."
Recent work: Represented the respondent in a petition for divorce in the case of Owens v Owens. After Mrs Owens's appeal was dismissed by the Court of Appeal, the case has now gone to the Supreme Court.
Chambers UK 2019/Family Matrimonial Finance/London Bar

"Thorough, meticulous, pragmatic and a great advocate on his feet."
Recent work: Represented the respondent in Owens v Owens, a much-publicised petition for divorce based on allegations of unreasonable behaviour.
Chambers UK 2019/Family Matrimonial/Western

"Exceptionally good advocate and very skilled in negotiations." "He is excellent with clients and experts, knowledgeable and experienced in a variety of matters from complex orthopaedic claims to laparoscopic surgery." "Very good in court and does not get fazed if information is provided at the last minute."
Chambers UK 2019/Clinical Negligence

'A popular choice among claimants for challenging cases, he is especially renowned for his strength in cauda equina matters. He also handles catastrophic brain injury and birth injury cases stemming from failures in general practice.'
Strengths: "He's very good at breaking things down and getting to the root of legal and medical issues. In conferences he reins clients in, manages their expectations and explains the area in a way they can understand." "He handles tricky cases very well. He's good with the client and is good on detail."
Chambers UK 2018/Clinical Negligence

'Recognised for his approach to complex cases, he demonstrates particular expertise in handling cauda equina matters. He provides additional support on care and housing requirements, as well as on dependency claims.
Strengths: "He is very thorough and approachable." "His real strength is in the testing of evidence. He can focus on factual evidence and chronology very well."
Chambers UK 2017/Clinical Negligence

'Has a strong practice focus on clinical negligence work, with complementary experience in the related areas of care and housing requirements for the afflicted. He particularly specialises in dependency claims being brought by spouses, children and partners.
Strengths: "His strengths are the way he handles sensitive clients with serious injuries, emotional clients, and his technical ability." "His attention to detail, responsiveness and client care are the best of the best."'
Chambers UK 2016/Clinical Negligence

'Undertakes a wide range of work, with proficiency in cases relating to accommodation needs and lifetime care. In addition, he specialises in dependency claims brought forward by partners and children.
Expertise: "He's extremely user-friendly and clicks very well with clients."'
Chambers UK 2015/Clinical Negligence

'...barrister with a significant reputation in the field. He is noted for his expertise in high-value serious injury and fatality claims.
Expertise: "He has extreme attention to detail and exceptional client care skills." "He is brilliant. I always recommend him as my first choice for clients."'
Chambers UK 2014/Clinical Negligence

Hamish Dunlop heads the family finance group and is praised for `meticulous preparation, careful attention to detail' and longstanding experience of handling financial remedy cases involving family businesses and farms.

3PB `Hamish is an assured and competent barrister. He is excellent on his feet and a great negotiator.'
Legal 500 2025/Family/(Divorce and Financial Remedy)/Western Circuit - Tier 1

Hamish Dunlop has an established clinical negligence practice, handling complex matters involving claims against hospital specialists and cases concerning the failure to identify and adequately treat the onset of such life-changing conditions and has `strong interpersonal and communication skills'.

`Hamish is an exceptional barrister with excellent attention to detail. He is extremely eloquent, and his advocacy skills are brilliant.
Legal 500 2025/Clinical negligence/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit - Tier 1

'Hamish is very thorough and well-prepared.'
Legal 500 2025/Family/(Divorce and Financial Remedy)/London Bar

Hamish Dunlop, with particular expertise in cases involving family businesses and inherited wealth, has a `very persuasive manner in court'.
`Hamish is well-prepared, takes a pragmatic approach and his delivery is always spot on. He is a smooth operator and a real star in his field.'
Legal 500 2024/Family/(Divorce and Financial Remedy)/Western Circuit - Tier 1

3PB `Hamish is a strong advocate who is entirely comfortable in front of any judge at any level. He is persuasive and authoritative, and his gravitas earns him the respect of the bench and opponents alike.'
Legal 500 2024/Family (Including Divorce and Financial Remedy)/London Bar

The `precise, insightful, and organised` Hamish Dunlop is regularly instructed in relation to high-value and medically complex claims and has recently acted in cases concerning the failure to identify and adequately treat the onset of such life-changing conditions as cauda equina lesions and subarachnoid haemorrhages.
`He is personable and tactful with clients and diligent and committed to achieving the best outcome.'
Legal 500 2024/Clinical Negligence/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit - Tier 1

The `strong advocate` Hamish Dunlop is instructed in cases involving negligent surgical procedures, missed or delayed diagnoses, and cerebral palsy.
'Hamish is diligent and calm, and has a very good manner of dealing with clients and experts. He is logical, personable, approachable, and knowledgeable.'
Legal 500 2023/Clinical Negligence/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit - Tier 1

Family finance team head Hamish Dunlop is `always exceptionally well-prepared`, with an excellent track record in advising on complex matrimonial finance cases.
'Hamish can charm the birds from the trees. His empathy and ability to deal with emotional clients is brilliant. He is caring, kind and considerate, but can deliver firm advice robustly yet sensitively. His knowledge of the law is formidable, and his attention to detail is fabulous. It is clear that he is always prepared.'
Legal 500 2023/Family/Divorce and Financial Remedy)/Western Circuit - Tier 1

`Hamish is a superb advocate. He juggles complex facts with ease and exudes confidence in court.'
Legal 500 2023/Family (Including Divorce and Financial Remedy)/London Bar

`He has a meticulous eye, and handles complex issues in a way clients understand.'
Legal 500 2022/Clinical Negligence/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

`Hamish is a very capable advocate who maintains his composure in pressurised situations. His technical ability and analysis of complex matters is first-rate. '
Legal 500 2022/Family (Including Divorce and Financial Remedy)/London Bar

` Hamish brings a wealth of legal experience when dealing with financial matters. Clients are immediately put at ease by his

knowledge but also by his warm and friendly disposition. ’
Legal 500 2022/Family/Divorce and Financial Remedy)/Western Circuit

‘Hamish has a real eye for detail and is excellent with clients. He is excellent on financial divorce cases and TOLATA, one of the teams go to barristers. Very clear, excellent advocate, fantastic preparation and a sparkling personality.’
"Hamish Dunlop is noted for his expertise in financial cases involving family businesses and inherited wealth."
Legal 500 2021/Divorce and financial remedy/Leading Juniors

‘Provides excellent in-depth analysis with an eye for the key facts of the case, and is superb with clients, opponents and judges.’
Legal 500 2021/Clinical negligence/Leading juniors

‘A lateral thinker who is always meticulously prepared.’
Legal 500 2020/Family and children law/Leading juniors

‘Commands attention in court.’
Legal 500 2020/Clinical negligence/Leading juniors

‘Highly recommended for financial provision cases.’
Legal 500 2018/19/Family and children law/Leading juniors

‘Well known for his expertise in clinical negligence matters.’
Legal 500 2018/19/Personal injury and clinical negligence/Leading juniors

‘He builds affinity with clients and wins their confidence very quickly.’
Legal 500 2017/Family and children law/Leading juniors

‘Very experienced across the spectrum of personal injury law.’
Legal 500 2017/Personal injury and clinical negligence/Leading juniors

'He has excellent rapport with clients and is truly knowledgeable in the complex field of financial remedy.'
Legal 500 2016/Family and children law & Personal injury and clinical negligence/Leading juniors

'He has a fantastic rapport with clients and really knows his stuff'
Legal 500 2015/Family and children law & Personal injury and clinical negligence/Leading juniors

'Highly skilled in respect of pleadings, court presence and dealing with experts.'
Legal 500 2014/Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence

‘Precise and thorough’
Legal 500 2014/Family

‘always conducts himself with the utmost professionalism’
Legal 500 2013/Family

‘court demeanour is controlled and eloquent'.
Legal 500 2012/Family

''I engaged Hamish on a Direct Access Basis from Canada. His attention to detail, consideration, intelligence, and thoughtfulness was outstanding in the case to a successful outcome, in winning the case. I recommend him highly and I believe you would be lucky to secure his services.''
Shamila Mackie, Direct Access Client

Professional qualifications & appointments

- Accredited Mediation Advocate

Professional bodies

- Family Law Bar Association
- Western Circuit