

Davinia Riley

Year of Call: 2004
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Overview

Davinia Riley is a family barrister and arbitrator who specialises in money and property disputes following matrimonial and other relationship breakdowns. She joined 3PB on 4 August 2025.

Davinia's experience is primarily in high value, complex financial issues often involving trust assets, businesses, multiple properties (UK- based and international) and inheritance.

Ranked since 2022 in Legal 500 as a leading junior barrister in matrimonial finance, Davinia has experience in the full range of applications and hearings in those proceedings including First Direction Appointments, Financial Dispute Resolution hearings, and final hearings in cases involving pensions, overseas assets and companies.

She also has experience in dealing with property disputes between unmarried partners under the Trust of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996 (TOLATA), applications under Schedule 1 of the Children Act 1989, Maintenance Pending Suit and applications under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975. Davinia is regularly instructed in applications for section 37 and freezing injunctions designed to prevent the dissipation of assets. She has also successfully sought committal to jail for a Respondent's failure to complete, file or serve their Form E.

Davinia is experienced in disputes over wills, trusts and probate and therefore familiar with civil litigation and the Civil Procedure Rules. Her diverse legal knowledge enables her to provide rounded advice and a remedies-based approach for enforcement of orders such as third-party debt orders and applications for judgment summons.

Davinia prides herself on providing clear, strategic advice to both professional and lay clients. Known for building a strong rapport with those whom she represents, Davinia combines a practical approach with substantial advocacy experience gained through appearances at various levels of court (including being led in the Court of Appeal), ensuring a strategic and results-driven approach tailored to the needs of the client.

Davinia is regularly instructed in cases involving farming assets, including those requiring specialist valuation and liquidity assessments. She has significant experience in matters concerning company and business interests, from valuation disputes to the division of multi-million-pound companies.

Her practice includes cases with substantial property portfolios, both in the UK and overseas, as well as disputes involving non-matrimonial assets such as inherited wealth, pre- and post-marital contributions to companies, and family trusts.

Davinia is able to conduct in-house training upon request. She is the author of a recent review of the Supreme Court ruling in *Standish v Standish [2025] UKSC 26* and its clarification on the operation of the sharing principle in financial remedy cases, particularly in relation to non-matrimonial property.

In her spare time, Davinia enjoys racing around Donnington Park And Mallory Race Track on her Kawaski ZX6-R motorbike.

Recommendations

"Great with clients, very down to earth, giving sound practical advice. Advocacy is strong - she will fight your corner confidently. Paperwork is clear and detailed."

Legal 500 2027/Family:Divorce and Financial Remedy/Midlands

'Davinia is straight talking and extremely personable. She goes above and beyond to help clients.'
Legal 500 2026/Family:Divorce and Financial Remedy/Midlands

"Davinia has excellent client care skills and can quickly find a rapport with clients and put them at ease. She is thorough in her case preparation and an excellent advocate, presenting her case in a calm and persuasive manner."
Legal 500 2025/Family:Divorce and Financial Remedy/Midlands

"Davinia is very good with clients. She can build rapport quickly and understand their concerns. She is an excellent advocate. She always prepares thoroughly, is calm and reasoned before the court and can make points succinctly and with impact."
Legal 500 2024/Family:Divorce and Financial Remedy/Midlands

"Davinia is an all-round star performer. She works tirelessly for clients and is able to argue their cases robustly while demonstrating a thoughtful and creative approach to problem-solving and negotiation. She very swiftly gets to the heart of her instructions and engages with instructing solicitors before, during and after a hearing to provide invaluable support and advice."
Legal 500 2023/Family:Divorce and Financial Remedy/Midlands

"Davinia's paperwork is first-class and ahead of time. She establishes an early rapport with clients."
Legal 500 2022/Family:Divorce and Financial Remedy/Midlands

"Davinia – Professional, focussed, tenacious yet personable. Davinia came onto my case at the last minute for a final hearing in Liverpool. It had been a long and expensive divorce over 4 ½ years. She quickly grasped the financial aspects of the case with the help of my legal team (again who came on last minute). She was personable, tenacious yet remaining polite at all times. A no-nonsense attitude but with a focus on the key matters, she obtained for me a settlement which was significantly better than I expected. I cannot recommend her highly enough if you are in need" **Jonathan, Lay Client, Liverpool, 2024**

Academic qualifications

- Bar Vocational Course, Very Competent, Nottingham Law School
- Post Graduate Diploma in Law, Birmingham University
- BSc Psychology (2:1), University of East London

Scholarships

- Inner Temple Exhibition Award
- Duke of Edinburgh Scholarship
- The Struben Bequest

Professional qualifications & appointments

- Accredited Family Law Arbitrator (Financial Remedy)

Professional bodies

- Family Law Bar Association (FLBA)
- Midland Chancery and Commercial Bar Association (MMCBA)
- Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb)
- Institute of Family Law Arbitrators (IFLA)

Expertise

Family

Davinia Riley is a family law barrister and arbitrator who specialises in money and property disputes following relationship breakdowns. Davinia's experience is primarily in high value, complex financial issues often involving trust assets, businesses and multiple properties (UK-based and international) and inheritance.

Recent Cases

JPM v CEM: Davinia appeared as a led junior for the husband in a successful appeal of a final order in financial remedy proceedings, after the judge at first instance proceeded in the absence of the husband and attributed company assets to the husband personally in the computation exercise. As a result of the successful appeal, the order was overturned.

W v W: case where H claimed that W controlled assets left in a discretionary trust and thus should be part of the matrimonial pot. Davinia successfully argued for contribution costs towards and an order that W pay a portion of H costs towards the proceedings.

H v H: Davinia acted for the respondent in a case where the matrimonial assets were valued at over £2.5m. The case involved arguments over inherited funds and whether or not they should be ringfenced, and a complex pension scheme for the husband who had a significant pension worth over £1m

M v M: Davinia represented respondent husband in a case where the assets are worth over £3.6m. The case involved a dispute over a significant property portfolio both in the UK and in Europe. The case also involves a dispute as to whether it is a needs, or sharing based case.

K v K: Davinia acts for the respondent husband in a case involving a business with a turnover of over £3m with several shareholders including the married couple. There have been several forensic accountants' reports and there is a significant dispute as to the value of the business, and whether H can claim 'special contribution'. There is also a complex issue regarding H's pension as it is linked to the business and SJE reports in respect of the true pension value.

W v W: Davinia represented the applicant in a case where the assets were worth over £2.8m in an enforcement application, whereby the respondent had failed to set up a trust fund for £300,000 was over £7,000 in arrears for maintenance, and had failed to pay the full periodical payments of £1500 per month. The issues that arose included whether or not the arrears ought to be remitted; whether or not the respondent ought to be committed to prison and costs. Davinia was successful in the application and obtained 90% of the costs sought.

Local Authority v B and B: Davinia was instructed to advise and represent a Large Local Authority who sought to be joined to proceedings in respect of a Proceeds of Crime Act Order against one of the parties where the assets were worth over £2.5m.

Property and Estates

Davinia Riley specialises in a diverse range of property and probate-related legal work, with a focus on achieving practical and favourable outcomes for clients.

Davinia has significant expertise in representing both claimants and defendants in contested probate and estate disputes, including issues of undue influence, forgery, and proprietary estoppel claims. Recently, Davinia successfully secured a favourable judgment in a contentious estate matter which spanned a five-day hearing, involving the validation of a will and the dismissal of a counterclaim under proprietary estoppel.

Davinia has also been involved in a long-standing estate matter where allegations of forgery of a will were found against the

defendant, and her clients successfully defended claims of undue influence.

Having extensive experience in Financial Dispute Resolution (FDR) hearings, Davinia regularly secures settlements for clients and achieves favourable outcomes through roundtable settlement discussions and mediations.

Davinia regularly provides written advice on the full range of contested probate matters including allegations of lack of testamentary capacity, undue influence and the validity of wills and claims under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975. Additionally, Davinia advises on cohabitation disputes and property claims under TOLATA (Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996) and and is able to sit as a FDR judge in cohabitee disputes.

Articles

Davinia Riley reviews Reid-Roberts v Mei-Lin [2026] EWHC 49 (Ch), a case that highlights the impact of bankruptcy on financial remedy proceedings and considers what is accepted as a 'signature' in the digital age.

Davinia includes a useful checklist for practitioners to avert disaster.

View Article

In Standish v Standish [2025] UKSC 26, the Supreme Court has offered timely and much-needed clarification on the operation of the sharing principle in financial remedy cases, particularly in relation to the matrimonialisation of non-matrimonial property. For practitioners, this is now essential reading.

View Article