

2022 3PB family law group rankings Chambers and Partners and Legal 500

Family rankings

Specialism	Bar	Chambers & Partners	The Legal 500
Family Children	Midlands	Tier 1	
Family Matrimonial Finance	Midlands	Tier 1	
Family/Matrimonial	Western	Tier 2	
Family and Children	Midlands		Tier 2
Family and Children	Western		Tier 2
Family and Children	South Eastern		Tier 3
Children	London		Tier 4

Number of Individual Rankings

Chambers and Partners					
Total	Silks	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4
20	5	1	5	7	2

Legal 500					
Total	Silks	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4
29	5	4	8	7	5

Individual Rankings

Barrister	Specialism	Bar	Chambers and Partners	Legal 500
Elizabeth McGrath QC	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Midlands	1	1
Elizabeth McGrath QC	Family: Children	Midlands	2	1
Vanessa Meachin QC	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Midlands	1	1
Vanessa Meachin QC	Family: Children	Midlands	2	1
Lucy Hendry QC	Family: Children	Western	New Silk	1
Aimee Fox	Family: Children	Midlands		3
Aimee Fox	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Midlands	3	2
Amy Beddis	Family: Children	Midlands		3
Amy Beddis	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Midlands		3
Amy Lush	Family: Children	Western	Up and coming	4
Dorian Day	Family: Children	Midlands	2	
Elisabeth Hudson	Family: Children	Western		1
Emma Griffiths	Family: Children	Midlands		3
Emma Harman	Family: Children	Western	2	1
Emma Southern	Family: Children	Western		3
Gemma Chapman	Family: Children	Western		3
Hamish Dunlop	Family: Matrimonial Finance	London	4	4
Hamish Dunlop	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Western	2	1
James Legg	Family: Children	South Eastern		3
Lawrence Messling	Family: Children	Midlands	1	2
Mark Elliott	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Western	3	3
Michael George	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Midlands	3	1
Nathalie Bull	Family: Children	Midlands		3
Nathalie Bull	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Midlands		3
Nicola Frost	Family: Children	Western		3
Nicola Frost	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Western		3
Nicola Martin	Family: Children	Midlands	3	2
Nicola Martin	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Midlands	3	
Nicola Martin	Family: Children	South Eastern		1
Oliver Thorne	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Western		2
Poonam Bhari	Family: Children	London		4
Poonam Bhari	Family: Children	Midlands		3
Rachael Goodall	Family: Matrimonial Finance	Western	2	2
Sarah Jennings	Family: Children	Western		4
Sarah O'Hara	Family: Children	Western	3	2
Stephen Abberley	Family: Children	Midlands	2	3
Steven Howard	Family: Children	Western	3	2
Suzanne Coleclough	Family: Children	Midlands		3

GROUP COMMENTARY

MIDLANDS BAR

Chambers and Partners

3PB Barristers is a well-regarded set with a formidable reputation in matrimonial finance and children cases, encompassing both public and private mandates. Its members act for private individuals and local authorities in children matters concerning non-accidental injuries, sexual abuse, religious indoctrination, parental alienation and placement orders.

Practitioners offer expertise in a range of matrimonial finance mandates, including financial remedies featuring complex portfolios and cross-border assets, in addition to culturally sensitive matters involving Shari'a law and dowries. A source notes that "you are offered a personal and prioritised service" at 3PB.

Client service:

"Practice director Ian Charlton is a well-known and respected clerk, often going above and beyond to assist in any way that he can." "The clerks offer the barrister they believe is genuinely right for the case." "The clerks are always helpful, polite and willing to assist." Robert Leonard and Ian Charlton are the family practice directors.

Legal 500

3PB's family and child offering has a strong group of counsel, covering both the full range of matrimonial work as well as complex public and private law child work, including cases involving the most severe allegations of abuse. Elizabeth McGrath QC's recent instructions include parental alienation and cross-border private law issues. while group head Vanessa Meachin QC also has a balanced child and financial remedy practice, frequently acting for individuals with large asset portfolios and in cases where there are accusations of harm. Aimee Fox has a specialised and praised niche practice of disability-related children disputes, with recent instructions featuring cross-border elements.

Set

'3PB is a spectacular set of chambers with so much strength and depth.'

'Very good set for family law, with some very experienced counsel. A number of training programmes have been provided and these are always very engaging and informative.'

'The set exudes calm, personable professionalism. Second to none training and CPD programs for solicitors.'

Clerking

'The clerks are always keen to work within client's budgets whilst ensuring the client maintains an excellent level of service.'

'Extremely good service from the clerks and especially Ian Charlton there who is always there to assist and discuss cases to find the right counsel for the job.'

'Superb customer care and going the extra mile to support my clients. Very responsive, friendly, and helpful.'

WESTERN BAR

Chambers and Partners

3PB has a well-recognised family and matrimonial practice which takes in both children and finance work. Its barristers routinely undertake children law mandates involving sexual and domestic abuse and non-accidental injury, and also handle relocation and adoption matters often before the High Court. Members also receive instructions in complex financial disputes. One source reports: "The set has great depth of counsel and so there is always someone available with the right skills and experience. All the counsel provide excellent client care."

Client service:

"They are the most approachable clerking team I have ever worked with and hugely helpful with regard to communications and management of papers and arrangements." "They have a very efficient clerking team. Always on the ball and never let you down." Robert Leonard and Ian Charlton are the family practice directors.

Legal 500

3PB's members have solid expertise across the range of family law matters. The 'very charming' Hamish Dunlop has established strength in matrimonial finance work, with a particular focus on cases involving inherited wealth and family businesses. Emma Harman is experienced in private children law matters, including cases involving child abduction and applications to permanently remove a child from the jurisdiction. Elisabeth Hudson is sought-after for her expertise in Children Act work; Sarah O'Hara is regularly instructed in cases involving allegations of non-accidental injuries. In September 2020 Melissa Barlow was appointed to the circuit bench, and in March 2021 Lucy Hendry QC took silk.

Set

'A highly professional set.'

'A good set of chambers for care proceedings.'

'A good, solid set.'

'The quality of counsel at all levels is always excellent.'

Clerking

'The clerks are very friendly and approachable.'

'Robert Leonard is an excellent role model for his team of clerks and is very supportive.'

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTARY - Silks

Elizabeth McGrath QC

Chambers and Partners

An expert family law practitioner with a broad range of experience. In children work, she has handled cases of abduction and relocation, as well as serious injury and sexual abuse. She also takes on complex financial remedy cases concerning high net worth individuals. She is sought out for her experience in cases with valuation issues.

"She is a force to be reckoned with. Her preparation is second to none." "She really gets to the bottom of matters quickly and is supportive but firm with clients and their families."

Legal 500

'Elizabeth is able to make clients feel at ease and understood. Clients really feel that their case has been fought.'

Vanessa Meachin QC

Chambers and Partners

Prominent family law specialist whose practice spans matrimonial finance, care, adoption and private children work. Her cases often concern serious allegations including non-accidental injuries and fabricated illnesses.

"She has great attention to detail, a lovely manner with clients and she's very good on her feet and is very clear, measured and unflappable." "She's very forensic and cool-minded."

"She'll ensure that no stone is left unturned while also being the nicest barrister you'll come across."

Legal 500

'Vanessa is a stellar advocate with an unerring ability to distill the most complex of cases into an easily digested, straightforward, and persuasive narrative.'

Lucy Hendry QC

Chambers and Partners

Experienced children law specialist whose expertise extends across public and private law. She is active in highly sensitive matters involving allegations of sexual abuse and non-accidental injuries, often with linked issues of drugs and alcohol abuse. Sources laud her patience and ability to deal with vulnerable clients.

"She's conscientious and calm with a very good style of advocacy." "She is excellent at preparing for cases, is very thorough with a great presence in court."

Legal 500

'Lucy is incredibly hard-working, clever and has exceptional attention to detail. Her cross-examination is precise, thorough, pertinent and relentless, and her written submissions are both analytical and flawless.'

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTARY - Juniors

Aimee Fox

Chambers and Partners

Draws on expertise in both family and education law to advise in a range of financial remedy cases, including high-value matters. She is highly praised for her detailed preparation and quality advocacy.

"Her preparation is fantastic. She takes time outside hearings to call and keep an eye on the case." "Her cross-examination of professional witnesses is particularly impressive." "She is great with the clients and gets to the bottom of what's important in the case very quickly."

Legal 500

'Aimee has great empathy with clients, a tremendous advocate and has technical knowledge. That is an amazing combination to have as a barrister and as a result I frequently instruct her to represent my clients.'

Amy Beddis

Legal 500

'My clients are happy with the service Amy provides. She is an amazing advocate and a true fighter for my clients.'

Amy Lush

Chambers and Partners

An up-and-coming barrister advising on a range of children matters including both public and private law issues. She handles a broad spectrum of issues including relocation, non-accidental injuries and sexual abuse cases.

"She's really tactical in her advice and will look at things from many perspectives." "She's a capable barrister with a good, hard-working approach to her cases."

Legal 500

'Amy has a fantastic manner with clients and has a way of easing their anxieties and worries almost immediately. She is always well-prepared.'

Dorian Day

Chambers and Partners

An experienced advocate with a strong childcare practice. He frequently acts in matters concerning serious physical and sexual abuse, as well as non-accidental injury cases. "He's absolutely brilliant and has impeccable knowledge." "He's a very robust advocate."

Elisabeth Hudson

Legal 500

'Elisabeth's advocacy in contested matters is focused and calm. She is excellent with clients, particularly young, vulnerable clients.'

Emma Griffiths

Legal 500

'Excellent advocate with impeccable preparation. Generous with her time and supportive of vulnerable clients.'

Emma Harman

Chambers and Partners

Respected for her advocacy in public and private family law cases. Her caseload includes sensitive matters concerning sexual and domestic abuse, as well as non-accidental injuries. She represents both parents and local authorities.

"Emma is meticulous in her preparation and particularly skilled in dealing with complex children matters when there are serious allegations of domestic violence or sexual allegations." "She is very thorough, good with clients and makes sensible decisions proportionate to the issues which override the case."

Legal 500

'Emma is extremely client focused, approachable and well-organised. She focuses on the key issues in a case, is always well-prepared and thinks outside of the box in order to progress the client's case.'

Emma Southern**Legal 500**

'A very persuasive advocate who has the ear of the court. Very measured and calm under pressure. She is well-attuned to the needs of her clients.'

Gemma Chapman**Legal 500**

'A strong, well-prepared, methodical advocate who provides frank, firm advice.'

Hamish Dunlop**Chambers and Partners****Western 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.

"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."

London Bar

Heads the 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 a good negotiator on matrimonial finance matters."

Legal 500**Western 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.'

London Bar

'Hamish is a very capable advocate who maintains his composure in pressurised situations. His technical ability and analysis of complex matters is first-rate.'

James Legg**Legal 500**

'James is insightful and incisive. His knowledge far exceeds his year of call. Calm and collected, he knows when to argue a point and when to advise to step back. Clients love him.'

Lawrence Messling**Chambers and Partners**

Senior junior who focuses exclusively on serious public law children cases, in which he is regularly instructed by local authorities, parents and guardians. His caseload includes complex fact-finding cases, fabricated illnesses and multi-jurisdictional aspects. He is skilled at dealing with matters involving mental health issues.

"He's good with clients and has fantastic attention to detail." "He's top-drawer. Really good."

Legal 500 **Ranked in Tier 2****Mark Elliott****Chambers and Partners**

Offers a respected family law practice covering areas such as financial remedy disputes, TOLATA proceedings and private law children cases. He deals skilfully with matters involving high net worth clients.

"He is a real presence in court - a good advocate who judges really like. He's well prepared, has a good client manner and is very approachable." "He has a fantastic bedside manner with clients and will fight tooth and nail for them."

Legal 500

'A formidable advocate who demonstrates great client rapport.'

Michael George

Chambers and Partners

An accomplished junior with experience in a range of matrimonial finance cases, including those that involve high-value assets such as farms and pensions. He is well equipped to deal with matters where offshore assets are involved.

"He is experienced and insightful, as well as approachable and thoughtful." "He's very concise and gets to the point quickly. His knowledge of business is also strong and he knows relevant papers back to front."

Legal 500

'Michael is a robust negotiator and an excellent advocate and drafts-man, who repeatedly achieves excellent outcomes for clients.'

Nathalie Bull

Legal 500

'Nathalie is extremely professional at all times. She is well prepared, highly knowledgeable and presents her well reasoned arguments calmly but firmly. She immediately grasps the issues and presents a case plan that can be followed.'

Nicola Frost

Legal 500

'She always has a total command of the papers and is a robust advocate.'

Nicola Martin

Chambers and Partners

An experienced junior barrister with expertise in both private and public family law proceedings. Her cases range from complex children matters concerning serious injuries to financial remedy disputes.

"She can build a rapport with clients very quickly and can empathise with them even when delivering something they won't want to hear." "She is a good communicator, very thorough in her preparation and has sound knowledge of the law relating to local authorities."

Legal 500

Midlands Bar

'I have nothing but praise for Nicola Martin. She is truly a wonderful barrister. She has helped me with some really tricky cases and she always goes above and beyond what could reasonably be expected from her.'

South Eastern Bar

'Nicola is a wonderful barrister: robust in cross-examination, with superb analytical skills. She has good client empathy but is able to give clear, realistic advice, even if it will be unwelcome.'

Oliver Thorne

Legal 500 Ranked in Tier 2

Poonam Bhari

Legal 500**London – Ranked in Tier 4****Midlands Bar**

'Poonam is a brilliant and effective communicator, not just on a professional level with Instructing Solicitors and the other parties but also with the lay clients and any relevant support networks that they have.'

Rachael Goodall

Chambers and Partners

An expert in matrimonial finance who acts on a range of matters including issues of non-disclosure and dissipation, as well as pre-matrimonial businesses, assets and pensions. She is also able to advise on private children matters and is increasingly active on cross-border mandates.

"She is fantastic at making the most complicated of matters very simple for those instructing her and clients to understand. She has considerable skills and it is always reassuring to see that she has the ear of the court." "She is very well prepared, good with clients and has a nice feel to her approach in court. She is sensible and pragmatic."

Legal 500

'She is extremely thorough, a robust advocate when needed and fantastic with clients.'

Sarah Jennings

Legal 500 - Ranked in Tier 4

Sarah O'Hara

Chambers and Partners

Well respected for her expertise in complex public children law cases, including those in which there are allegations of serious injuries. She regularly acts for guardians and local authorities, but also acts for parents and family members.

"A really solid advocate." "Her tour de force is representing guardians."

Legal 500

'Sarah is extremely sensible, thorough, and persuasive. She is strong and argues well in court.'

Stephen Abberley

Chambers and Partners

Respected for his undertaking of public and private children law work in particular. He represents parents, children and authorities, advising them on care, placement and adoption proceedings as well as factitious illness, sexual abuse, inflicted injuries and non-accidental injuries.

"His legal analysis, arguments, and knowledge in public law children work are consistently impressive."

Legal 500

'Incredible legal knowledge and research ability. Stephen superb detailed and highly persuasive written documents. A thorough and careful advocate with real attention to detail.'

Steven Howard

Chambers and Partners

A children law barrister recognised for his advocacy skills and ability to deal with vulnerable clients. Howard represents parents and guardians in complex cases involving the death of a child, sexual abuse and non-accidental injuries. He is also experienced in handling contested adoption cases.

"He excels in the most complex of cases, delivering first-class cross-examination whilst providing accessible advice to clients from a variety of backgrounds."

Legal 500

'Steven is always impeccably prepared and is always on top of the case. He has a good way of identifying the points that will make a difference in the case, then pursuing them with an unassuming but persistent manner which makes a real difference to the outcome. A silk of the future.'

Suzanne Coleclough**Legal 500**

'Always very well prepared to the point she has impressed our, professional, client with her thoroughness.'