



Family Law in Transition – Disputes Across Borders

Tuesday, 16th September 2025

[Capital Club, DIFC](#)

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| 10:30 – 10:45 | Arrival and Coffee |
| 10:45 – 10:55 | Opening Remarks |
| 10:55 – 12:00 | Panel 1 - Current issues: securing jurisdiction and enforceability. Financial cases in England and Wales and the UAE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderator: Charles Hale KC, 4PB• Duncan Brooks KC, Queen Elizabeth's Building• Jennifer Lee, Pump Court Chambers• Byron James, Expatriate Law• Dr Hassan Elhais, Awatif Mohammad Shoqi Advocates & Legal Consultancy |
| 12:00 – 12:20 | Break |
| 12:20 – 13:20 | Panel 2 – Financial provision across the jurisdictions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderator: Maria Scotland, 5SAH• Nazmun Ismail, Central Chambers, No 5 Chambers• Tadhgh Barwell O'Connor, 1KBW• Niamh Wilkie, 5SAH• Dipali Maldonado, Al Tamimi & Co• Madeleine Mendy, Bin Sevan Advocates |
| 13:20 – 14:20 | Lunch |
| 14:20 – 14:35 | Speech from the British Embassy in Dubai and British Community Assistance Fund |

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| 14:35 – 15:45 | Panel 3 – Children, welfare, relocation and the (lack of) Hague Convention, 1980 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator: Clarissa Wigoder, 4PB • Gemma Kelly, 1GC • Natasha Khalique, Exchange Chambers • Ruth Kirby KC, 4PB • Tadhgh Barwell O'Connor, 1KBW • Diana Hamade, Diana Hamade Attorneys at Law |
| 15:45 – 16:55 | Panel 4 – Family disputes across borders: the NCDR routes, mediation and arbitration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator: Ruth Kirby KC, 4PB • Nicola Wallace, 4PB • Michelle Aly, Yungo Law • Shabana Saleem, Al Tamimi & Co • Nicola Crowther, Crowther Mediation |
| 16:55 – 17:00 | Closing Remarks |
| 17:00 – 19:00 | Networking Drinks Reception |

Speaker Profiles

Jennifer Lee



Jennifer is a family law barrister at Pump Court Chambers (London) with particular expertise in HNW complex financial remedies and modern families. She is named as one of a handful of “Top Recommended” family law barristers in the UK in the prestigious Spear’s Legal Index, and has been consistently ranked as a “Leading Junior (Tier 1)” in The Legal 500 and in Chambers & Partners (UK Bar) in family law.

Well-known for her ability to ‘grapple with complex matrimonial finance work in a heartbeat’, she regularly represents HNW clients in cases with inherited wealth, businesses, nuptial agreements and trusts, many of which involve tax complications and international elements, such as the validity of overseas marriages/divorces or claims in other jurisdictions. She is also experienced in claims concerning financial provision for children, cohabitee, and trusts in land disputes. Jennifer is a fee-paid Judge of the Tax Chamber (FTT). She is co-head of the International Team in chambers and sits on the Financial Remedies Journal Editorial Board. She is a Bar Council, FLBA, LAWASIA and Resolution member. She writes for leading legal publications and is often invited to speak at family law conferences in the UK and abroad.

Duncan Brooks KC



Duncan is a KC specialising in complex matrimonial finance proceedings and also acts as an arbitrator and private FDR evaluator in financial cases. Duncan specialises in financial provision following separation. He represents high and ultra-high net worth individuals and is used to dealing with complexities arising from trusts, business accounts, taxation and international disputes. He regularly deals with cases involving the music, art, finance, private equity, legal, farming and business industries. He is often instructed where there are

knotty points of law. Most of Duncan's cases have an international dimension. He has advised in proceedings in Hong Kong, The Cayman Islands and the Channel Islands. He is a Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers.

Duncan has been a Family Law Arbitrator since 2013 and has concluded over 35 arbitrations as arbitrator. He has conducted more than 100 Private FDRs as the evaluator.

Ruth Kirby KC



Ruth Kirby KC is a barrister, arbitrator and mediator. She specialises in all three in disputes relating to children, elderly people and sports law (disciplinary and child protection issues).

Ruth advises out of court but much of her work is concentrated in the court room setting, working both as a barrister and mediator. She has specialised for the last 20 years in cases involving cross jurisdictional disputes including the UAE.

She is qualified as a barrister in England and Wales and in Ireland. She enjoys learning about and from practices in foreign jurisdictions and, in 2019, organised an international symposium on family law in Tokyo and was part of the Bar Council's family law delegation to the UAE in 2024. She is a member of the Bar Council including its Ethics Committee and sits on the Executive Committee of Middle Temple. Ruth previously worked as an expert witness and as a lecturer before joining the Bar in 1994.

Clarissa Wigoder



Clarissa Wigoder is a barrister at 4PB specialising in complex children law disputes including private, public, and cross-border cases. Ranked as a Rising Star in the 2025 Legal 500 – "Clarissa is intelligent, personable and persuasive. She provides realistic and pragmatic advice" – she has acted in reported and high-profile matters in the High Court and Court of Appeal, as well as in international disputes involving relocation, abduction, and jurisdictional challenges. Clarissa regularly advises and represents HNW clients in the

UAE, providing strategic guidance with sensitivity to religious and cultural contexts. She has led training on working with clients from minority religious backgrounds, co-authored legal resources for family law charities, published articles including in the Family Law Journal, and spearheaded wellbeing initiatives within chambers.

Tadhgh Barwell O'Connor



Tadhgh is a family law barrister at 1KBW, London, specialising in complex international children and financial proceedings, including child abduction and contact, relocation/leave to remove applications, forum disputes, financial provision for children under Schedule 1, and cases with multi-national/global asset portfolios. Tadhgh won Young Barrister of the Year at the 2024 Family Law Awards and has been awarded multiple scholarships. Tadhgh is a 'Rising Star' in the Legal 500 for both Matrimonial Finance and Children Law: "persuasive and eloquent", has published articles in both the International Family Law Journal and the Financial Remedies Journal, and is an advocacy trainer for Lincoln's Inn. Tadhgh is also a member of the Young Barristers' Committee at the Bar Council.

Natasha Khalique



Natasha Khalique is a Specialist Family Law Barrister at Exchange Chambers. She practises exclusively in financial remedy, international and private children law. She has a distinctive specialism in the validity of marriages involving the Islamic Nikah and sharia law, which often involve nuanced cultural aspects. As an AuDHD practitioner, Natasha draws on her own lived experience to advocate on behalf neurodivergent clients, developing a nationally recognised niche in neurodivergence in family law. Increasingly the go-to barrister in this field, she is instructed on complex cases across England and Wales. Her book "A Practical Guide to Neurodivergence in Family Law" is due to be released in Autumn 2025. She also sits on the FLANC Advisory Committee. Her professional excellence has been recognised through winning the 2024 National Resolution Rising Star Award, which recognises

emerging talent and future leaders in family justice. More recently, Natasha was a finalist for “Barrister of the Year” at the Manchester Legal Awards 2025.

Nicola Wallace



Nicola Wallace is a highly respected, accredited mediator and the Head of Non-Court Dispute Resolution (NCDR) at 4PB. With extensive training in family, civil & commercial, workplace, and faith-based mediation, Nicola is known for successfully mediating some of the most complex and intractable disputes. Following her advanced mediation studies at Harvard Law School’s programme in Mediating Complex Disputes and at Oxford University, Oxpeace, Nicola combines rigorous academic training with over 30 years of litigation experience. This unique blend enables her to guide parties through challenging issues with empathy, authority and clarity. Nicola’s mediation practice spans a wide range of disputes, including divorce and separation, arrangements for children, family wealth, inheritance, property ownership and TOLATA claims, business succession planning, and trusts. In addition to her family and commercial work, Nicola holds an MSc in Art, Law & Business (with distinction) (Christies/University of Oxford) bringing expertise to mediate disputes in the art world and cultural heritage sector. Nicola is also a Panel Member for Family & Civil at ADRODR International and of the Court of Arbitration for Art (CAfA) in The Hague, reflecting her standing in the field of mediation in both domestic and international contexts.

Nazmun Ismail



Nazmun Ismail is a senior barrister with over 25 years’ experience in family law and human rights. She is one of the founders of her Chambers, where she represents clients in complex

and often sensitive cases involving children, divorce, finance and domestic abuse. This includes in cross border and international movement cases.

Her work is driven by a commitment to fairness and protecting those who are most vulnerable, particularly children caught up in family breakdown. She has appeared in many challenging cases, including successfully at the UK Supreme Court, where legal issues transcend national and cultural boundaries. She is recognised by her peers, including the Legal 500, for combining clear, practical advice with a deep understanding of the human side of the law. She is also a specialist in Court of Protection work relating to mental capacity matters. Alongside her practice, she mentors younger lawyers, delivers training, and contributes to policy discussions aimed at improving access to justice. She is delighted to be speaking at the Conference, sharing her perspective on how the law can best protect children in a changing world.

Charles Hale KC



Charles Hale KC is the Joint Head of Chambers at 4PB, a leading family law barristers' chambers in the UK. Recognised as a top advocate and arbitrator in both Chambers and Partners and Legal 500, he has been shortlisted as Silk of the Year in 2019, 2021, and 2022. Charles specialises in high-stakes family disputes, representing high-net-worth clients in international divorce, financial disputes, and complex modern family cases. His expertise spans both matrimonial finance and children matters, often involving multi-jurisdictional elements. He is also qualified to accept instructions directly from overseas lawyers.

With a significant ADR practice, Charles acts as an arbitrator, private FDR judge, and early neutral evaluator in finance and children disputes, offering comprehensive out-of-court solutions. He serves on the International Committee of the Bar of England and Wales and is one of two KCs appointed to the Transparency Implementation Group.

Maria Scotland



Maria is Deputy Head of Chambers and the Head of the Family Team at 5SAH in London. Maria is a qualified arbitrator in financial matters and an accredited civil mediator.

Maria practices exclusively in family law with a specialism in financial remedy applications and private law children work. Her work includes international issues, including cases where the parties, the children and/ or the assets are in the UAE. She is recognised in Spears' 500 Guide (2023 & 2024): as a Top Recommended Family Law Barrister within the exclusive guide. She is also the [author at Spears'](#), with her recent article on *Divorcing in Dubai: Should wealthy Expats worry about new UAE family laws?* Maria is further ranked in the Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners.

Niamh Wilkie



Niamh practices exclusively in family law. Prior to joining the Bar in England 5 years ago, she worked as a barrister and in other legal disciplines in the Republic of Ireland, the Middle East, and the USA. Niamh holds a specialist qualification in international arbitration. Niamh represents clients in financial remedy proceedings, including clients based in UAE. Niamh is regularly instructed on international child abduction cases and relocation cases.

Gemma Kelly



Gemma is a specialist children's practitioner at 1GC, Family Law Chambers. She is ranked in Band 2 of Chambers and Partners, and "She has the ability to dictate the shape of the case through the force of her clear and persuasive advocacy and has the ear of most judges and is particularly good with high-net-worth individuals." In the private law sphere, she is almost exclusively instructed in very high-conflict disputes and increasingly those featuring an international element, including the UAE, especially those involving relocation. Gemma has been appointed as a Special Advocate by the Attorney General since 2018. She also enjoys applying the different perspective she gains from sitting as a Recorder - a fee-paid judge - to the tactics of her everyday practice.