

ALEX LAING

Call 2014

ABOUT ME

Alex specialises in children and finance law, particularly cases with an international element.

He is the current Family Law Awards: Junior Barrister of the Year (2020), which is the top category under QC, having been the only member of the Family Bar ever twice to have won the Family Law Awards: Young Barrister of the Year (2018 and 2016).

Alex is the only ‘Rising Star’ at the UK bar for both finance and children in Legal 500, 2021 (“*Very bright young barrister. Brilliant all-rounder...*” and “*... hugely enthusiastic, dedicated to his work and extremely hardworking. His capacity to multi-task is exceedingly impressive*”) and was the most junior family barrister to be ranked in Chambers and Partners, 2020 (“*Very clever and persuasive*” and as having “*...a conspicuously excellent legal brain far beyond his years of call*”).

Alex is co-author of the leading text, *Hershman and McFarlane: Children Law and Practice*, and only the fourth in that book’s history. He is also co-author of three further books on family law: *Laing and Jackson: Public Children Law: Contemporary Issues* (1st edn., 2018); *Child Protection and the Family Court: What You Need to Know* (3rd edn., 2019); and *Family Law Precedents Service* (46th edn., 2020). He is the only barrister to appear in the three UK Supreme Court cases about family law over the past two years (*Re T (A Child)* UKSC 2019/0188; *Villiers v Villiers* [2020] UKSC 30; *In the matter of NY (A Child)* (AP) [2019] UKSC 49), the last of which is the current Family Law Awards: Case of the Year (2020).

Alex speaks and writes fluent Spanish. He holds a DELE Diploma C2 (equivalent to doctorate level: certifies “mastery”).

EXPERIENCE

Alex studied history and modern languages at Trinity College Dublin for which he was awarded a First, an honorary distinction and the Gold Medal for receiving a First in each and every paper, essay and dissertation (famous recipients include Samuel Beckett, Nobel

laureate). As part of that, Alex spent a year at the Universidad de Salamanca in Spain; subsequently, he completed a masters-level programme at the Universidad para la Paz in Costa Rica (distinction: 1st in year).

He completed the GDL (distinction) and the BPTC (outstanding) at the City Law School, London, where he won the Everard Van Heyden prize.

Before coming to the Bar, Alex worked for the United Nations in El Salvador. At that time, El Salvador suffered from the highest murder rate of any country not in open war. His primary tasks were to help investigate corruption in the justice system and introduce electoral reform; he also worked with charities assisting ex “maras” (or gang members) to reintegrate into society.

Alex was the top barrister of his Call to the Bar by Lincoln’s Inn across all areas of law. Shortly after, Sir James Munby P described Alex’s work in complex areas as “*very impressive*” ([2015] EWCA Civ 1112) and “*illuminating*” ([2016] EWHC 2271). He was then awarded the Outstanding Newcomer in the Field of Children Law: ALC (2017) and the Family Law Awards: Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year (2017).

By appointment of Sir Andrew McFarlane P Alex is currently on two working groups on the future of family justice (public children law; and adoption).

PRACTICE AREAS

Children

Family Finance

Human Rights

International

EDUCATION

Called to the Bar by Lincoln’s Inn (top barrister)

The City Law School, BPTC (Outstanding)

Universidad para la Paz, Costa Rica, M.A.-level certificate, Transitions to Democracy (Distinction)

The City Law School, GDL (Distinction)

Trinity College Dublin, B.A. (Mod.) European Studies (Gold Medal; First Class Honours, with Distinction)

LANGUAGES

Spanish

Italian (basic)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn

Family Law Bar Association

Resolution

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Family Law Precedents Service (46th edn., 2020), with Sir Michael Keehan et al.

Child Protection and the Family Court: What You Need to Know (3rd edn., 2019), with Sir Andrew McFarlane P and HHJ Reardon.

Laing and Jackson: Public Children Law: Contemporary Issues (1st edn., 2018), with Dr Bianca Jackson.

Articles

No Exceptions to the Ongoing Involvement of the Judge Who Hears the FDR, Lexis PSL online, 9 August 2019

Outta Time, But Not Outta Luck (co-author, Greg Williams), *The Review*, July 2019

Family: Update, *Legal Action* (December 2018 / January 2019)

A Short Note on Habitual Residence: AB v CD [2018] EWHC 1021 (Fam), *Family Law Week*, 22 May 2018 (read <https://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed190031>)

Daedalus, Ariadne and the Minotaur: Where are we now? *Family Law Week*, 15 May 2018 (read <https://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed189940>)

Villiers v Villiers: The Hammer of the Scots?: Part I (co-author, Michael Horton) *The Review*, May 2018

Why pro bono? [2018] Fam Law 361

Villiers v Villiers: An Update (co-author, Michael Horton) Family Law Week, 22 March 2018 (read <http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed188904>)

I Can't Get No (Just) Satisfaction: Human Rights Act Claims in Family Law (co-author, Rachel Cooper), The Review, December 2017

Guidance on the Use of Professional Time to Benefit Children, The Review, September 2017

Children Giving Evidence in Family Proceedings: A Pocket Guide to the Law, Bloomsbury Law Online, 26 October 2016 (read <http://www.bloomsburylawonline.com/children-giving-evidence-in-family-proceedings/>)

Secure, Secure, Secure, Absconding, Bloomsbury Law Online, 5 October 2016 (read <http://www.bloomsburylawonline.com/secure-secure-secure-absconding/>)

Children Case Update: Public law: Part 3: Special guardianship orders; female genital mutilation protection orders; BIIa and other international care cases; inherent jurisdiction and wardship; decisions of the Supreme Court [2016] Fam Law 643

Children Case Update: Public law: Part 2: Fact finding; medical treatment; adoption and placement orders [2016] Fam Law 931

Children Case Update: Public law: Part 1: Care Proceedings, [2016] Fam Law 643

And There Lurks the Minotaur: The Interrelationship Between the Inherent Jurisdiction and Section 25, CA 1989: Part II, Family Law Week, 8 July 2016 (read <http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed161670>)

And There Lurks the Minotaur: The Interrelationship Between the Inherent Jurisdiction and Section 25, CA 1989: Part I, Family Law Week, 22 June 2016 (read <http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed161398>)

A Very Legal Playground: In the Matter of B (A Child) and the Habitual Residence Seesaw, Family Law (online), 22 February 2016

Saleem, Shivering and English Winters: Jurisdiction under Article 11 of the 1996 Hague Convention and is published on Family Law (online), 4 January 2015. ([read here](#))

'Calderback to the Future: A Debate on the Motion: This House Believes the Calderbank Regime Should be Restored in Family Cases' [2015] Fam Law 1537

"... this can no longer be tolerated": a short guide to the correct use of section 20, Children Act 1989' Family Law Week, 11 November 2015 (read here)

'Limping Infants and Article 15 BIA: the "magisterial" judgment in In the Matter of N (Children) (Adoption: Jurisdiction), Family Law Week, 10 November 2015 ([read here](#))

'Magna Carta 800 Years On: Faded Lustre and Family Law.' Family Law (online), 17 July 2015 ([read here](#))

Genes or Jeans? The Importance of the Genetic Relationship when Evaluating a Child's Best Interests, Family Law (online), 3 June 2015 ([read here](#))

Adopting Foreign Children: Part II: A Counter-Argument; Choice of Laws [2015] Fam Law 703

Adopting Foreign Children: Part I: Jurisdiction [2015] Fam Law 565 ([read here](#))

Re J: A Lesson on Threshold and Logic, Family Law Week, 23 April 2015 ([read here](#))

Daedalus's Twist? Secure Accommodation after a Child's 16th Birthday, Family Law Week, 9 April 2015 ([read here](#))

Ariadne's Golden Thread: Placing Children in Secure Accommodation, Family Law Week, 9 April 2015 ([read here](#))

Podcast and Case Summaries

Secure Accommodation Orders and Deprivation of Liberty of Children and Young Persons, 29 July 2017 (listen here <http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed178924>)

Alex writes weekly case summaries for Family Law Week. These are available to read <http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=se0&s=Laing>

CASES

2020

Villiers v Villiers [2020] UKSC 30

Re T (Jurisdiction: BIIIR: Cyprus) [2020] EWFC 37

Re E (Care Proceedings: Fact Finding) [2020] EWFC 24

M v F [2020] EWHC 576 (Fam)

2019

Re E (A Child: Questioning of Vulnerable Witness) [2019] EWHC 3808 (Fam)

In the matter of NY (A Child) [2019] UKSC 49

Re NY (A Child) (1980 Hague Abduction Convention) (Inherent Jurisdiction) [2019] EWCA Civ 1065

TY and HY [2019] EWHC 1310 (Fam)

2018

T (A Child) [2018] EWCA Civ 2136

X and Y (Appeal against Care Order) [2018] EWFC B55

Williams and another v London Borough of Hackney [2018] UKSC 37

Letts v Letts [2018] EWHC 1639 (Fam)

Villiers v Villiers [2018] EWCA Civ 1120

A Local Authority v A's Father, Mr F & Ors [2018] EWHC 1121 (Fam)

AB v CD [2018] EWHC 1021 (Fam)

A Local Authority v T (No. 2) [2018] EWHC 816 (Fam)

A Local Authority v T (No. 1) [2018] EWHC 576 (Fam)

2017

F v H & Anor [2017] EWHC 3358 (Fam)

A London Borough v M, F and B [2017] EWFC B93

J (A Child) (Finland) (Habitual Residence) [2017] EWCA Civ 80

2016

Magiera v Magiera [2016] EWCA Civ 1292

P (A Child) [2016] EWCA Civ 1127