

ALEXANDER LAING

Year called 2014

clerks@coramchambers.co.uk

+44 (0)20 7092 3700



*“Alex is, without doubt, a formidable barrister...
His knowledge of black letter law is stunning... and his advocacy is deadly”*
Chambers & Partners, 2025

*“Alex is everything that a barrister should be...
He is a super star, the clients absolutely adore him, and his opponents are
charmed and scared of his brilliance in equal measure”*
Legal 500, 2026

OVERVIEW

Alex specialises in children and finance law, particularly cases with an international element. He was described by Legal 500 as the “absolute go-to barrister on all matters”.

Alex is the current Family Law Awards and Legal 500 Junior Barrister of the Year, which is the top category under KC. He has won the Family Law Awards Junior Barrister of the Year three times, no other counsel has won it more than once. Before that, he was the only member of the Bar twice to win the Family Law Awards: Young Barrister of the Year. He was Lincoln’s Inn’s top barrister of his Call to the Bar across all areas of law.

The legal directories review Alex as “amazing on the detail”, “extremely personable, very bright and always thorough and prepared”, “diligent, unflappable, precise, clear and effective” and “his advocacy is always on point.”

Alex is co-author of the two ‘bibles’ of family law, given to every family judge in England and Wales: the Red Book and Hershman and McFarlane: Children Law and Practice. He is co-author of four 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](#)); [Family Law Precedents Service](#) and A Practical Guide to Family Proceedings ([7th edn., 2022](#)).

Alex has appeared in five UK Supreme Court cases about family law, including the Family Law Awards: Case of the Year. In finance cases, Alex has dealt with assets in the £billions; in children law, he is instructed across the globe, from the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to St Helena and the British Indian Ocean Territory. He represents a full range of clients in their family disputes: from those most vulnerable to reality TV stars, Premier League footballers and senior politicians. He has also been chosen to represent the Lord Chancellor, the Secretary of State for Justice, the Secretary of State for Education, and the Home Department.

Alex speaks and writes Spanish. He previously studied in Spain and worked for the United Nations in El Salvador.

PRACTICE AREAS

Finance and Private Client

Private Law Children

Public Law Children

Human Rights

International Family Law

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 the Nobel laureate, Samuel Beckett). 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.

In Alex’s first year of practice, Sir James Munby P described his work in complex areas as “very impressive” ([2015] EWCA Civ 1112) and “illuminating” ([2016] EWHC 2271). Alex 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).

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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)

The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn

Family Law Bar Association

Resolution

CASES

2025

[R \(on the application of TW\) v Essex County Council \[2025\] EWCA Civ 4](#)

[Re K \(Children\) \(Application for return orders: Concurrent asylum claims\) \[2025\] EWHC 450 \(Fam\)](#)

[Re K \(No. 2\) \(Application for return orders: Best interests decision\) \[2025\] EWHC 451 \(Fam\)](#)

[BR v BR \[2025\] EWFC 88](#)

[F v M \(Abduction: Settlement: Grave Risk\) \[2025\] EWHC 1713 \(Fam\)](#)

2024

[BR v BR \[2024\] EWFC 11](#)

R (on the application of CT, T, RK and KT) v The Commissioner for the British Indian Ocean Territory BIOT SC 17, 18, 19 & 20 2024

[WX v YZ \(International Relocation: Supervised Contact\) \[2024\] EWFC 430](#)

[Re X \(Intercountry Adoption: Kafala: Noncompliance s 83 ACA 2002\) \[2024\] EWHC 3198 \(Fam\)](#)

[The Lord Chancellor v 79 Divorced Couples \[2024\] EWHC 3211 \(Fam\)](#)

Secretary of State for the Home Department v EK & Ors [2024] EWCA Civ 1601

2023

Agarwal v the Czech Republic, app no 44870/19 (19 January 2023) (European Court of Human Rights)

Re A (Parental Responsibility) [2023] EWCA Civ 689

B v C [2023] EWHC 291 (Fam)

B v C (No 2) (1996 Hague Convention) [2023] EWHC 2524 (Fam)

Caso Cordoba vs Paraguay, 4 de Septiembre de 2023, Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos

2022

PT v CW & Ors [2022] EWHC 3557 (Fam)

Villiers v Villiers (Rev 1) [2022] EWCA Civ 772

MZ v FZ [2022] EWHC 295 (Fam)

Re N (A Child) (Instruction of Expert) [2022] EWCA Civ 1588

2021

In the matter of T (A Child) [2021] UKSC 35

Re D (Care Proceedings: 1996 Hague Convention: Article 9 Request) [2021] EWHC 1970 (Fam)

Re E (Care Proceedings: Welfare Determination) [2021] EWFC 52

AX v BX & Ors (Revocation of Adoption Order) (Rev 1) [2021] EWHC 1121 (Fam)

G v G [2021] UKSC 9

Villiers v Villiers [2021] EWFC 23

2020

Villiers v Villiers [2020] UKSC 30

Re T (Jurisdiction: BIIR: 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

PUBLICATIONS

Books

[The Family Court Practice](#)

[Hershman and McFarlane: Children Law and Practice](#)

[Family Law Precedents Service](#)

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 <https://www.coramchambers.co.uk/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 <https://www.coramchambers.co.uk/www.bloomsburylawonline.com/children-giving-evidence-in-family-proceedings/>)

Secure, Secure, Secure, Absconding, Bloomsbury Law Online, 5 October 2016 (read <https://www.coramchambers.co.uk/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 <https://www.coramchambers.co.uk/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 <https://www.coramchambers.co.uk/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

'Limping Infants and Article 15 BIIA: 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 <https://www.coramchambers.co.uk/www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed178924>)

TESTIMONIALS

"Alex is a distinguished barrister. His advocacy skills are exceptional, marked by clarity, precision, and effectiveness. He is adept at reading judges and tailoring his arguments to maximise impact. His calm demeanour, combined with a deep understanding of both legal and factual issues, makes him a persuasive advocate."

Legal 500, 2025. Ranked: Tier 3

"Alex is a fantastic barrister. He provides solid advice and is always thinking two steps ahead. He has strong technical knowledge and his advocacy is always on point."

Legal 500, 2025. Ranked: Tier 3

"Alex is, without doubt, a formidable barrister, who is extremely skilled in advocacy."

Chambers & Partners, 2025. Band 3

"Alex's innate ability to connect with vulnerable clients through kindness and understanding is truly remarkable."

Chambers & Partners, 2025. Band 3

"His paperwork can win cases before they've even really begun and his advocacy is deadly."

Chambers & Partners, 2025. Band 3

“His knowledge of black letter law is stunning for someone who is still relatively junior.”
Chambers & Partners, 2025. Band 3

“He has exceptional legal knowledge.”
Chambers & Partners, 2025. Band 3

“He is incisive, always well-prepared, very confident and composed.”
Legal 500 2024 Ranked: Tier 3

“Alexander is able to do his job with such skill and make it look so easy. His advocacy is exceptional. He is measured, patient and persuasive. He can read the judge and knows when to push and when to not.” Legal 500, 2023 Ranked: Tier 3

“Alex Laing is extremely personable, very bright and always thorough and prepared. He raises your comfort levels because he’s calm, composed and highly knowledgeable. Judges listen to him and like him.”
Chambers and Partners 2023

“Alexander is a singularly hardworking, dedicated and very effective member of the Bar. His position statements and written submissions are always filed on time and are always comprehensive and succinctly identify all of the relevant issues which the court will have to determine. His oral advocacy is of a similarly excellent quality. His oral submissions are pithy and focussed. He has full command of the papers and of the factual and legal issues in each case. He is a most effective and persuasive advocate.”
Legal 500 2023

LANGUAGES

Spanish

Italian (basic)