



## SAM WATTS

Year called: 2018

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## OVERVIEW

Sam specialises in all areas of Family and Private Client law. He accepts instructions in public and private children law, applications under the Family Law Act 1996, financial remedy and TOLATA proceedings.

He has experience as sole counsel up to and including in the High Court, taking a strategic approach to make sure that his clients' best interests are met. He will advise on and encourage a settlement where appropriate but will not hesitate to contest matters on his client's behalf. His approach recognises the diverse personal circumstances of his client base, which has included politicians, established artists and serving members of the police and armed forces.

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## EXPERIENCE

### Family Finance and Private Client

Sam is regularly instructed at each stage of financial remedy proceedings, including multi-day contested final hearings. He is recognised for his measured and constructive approach. He will sometimes be instructed to advise on the merits of a case before proceedings have been issued and to inform alternative forms of dispute resolution. He has a particular interest in TOLATA proceedings and intervenor claims.

His focus is on achieving an appropriate settlement for his client if possible, acknowledging the importance of strategic and tactical negotiation on all issues. Where agreement is impossible or inappropriate, his experience of contested final hearings allows him to confidently conduct the case.

### Private Child

Sam recognises the complex dynamic between separated parents. His focus is on resolving the case as effectively as possible, remaining mindful that any court order will need to work for the years that follow.

He has experience of long-running and intractable disputes about child arrangements or key decisions about a child's welfare. He is often instructed to represent the child's interests in high conflict or complex cases. Sam has also represented parents in cases where one wishes to relocate (within the jurisdiction and abroad), or where one parent has already done so and the child needs to be returned.

#### Family Law Act 1996

Sam accepts instructions in cases under the Family Law Act 1996, including orders to regulate the occupation of a property or transfer a tenancy between occupants. Sam's involvement in these cases is often in the context of broader litigation and he is well used to advising on how such orders can effect in parallel private child or financial remedy proceedings.

#### Public Child

Sam is instructed to represent all parties at all stages of public law proceedings. He is able to use this experience to anticipate the strategy and concerns of other parties to his client's advantage. His empathetic approach is valued by vulnerable parents who trust him to promote their needs during a time of extreme anxiety.

Sam is often instructed by Local Authorities. He has significant experience of applications to safeguard children under Part IV Children Act 1989, including contested hearings to remove them from their parent's care. He has a developing practice in complex cases under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court, including applications for the deprivation of a child's liberty.

#### Lectures and seminars

Sam regularly delivers lectures, seminars and training for solicitors and other professionals. Topics have included enforcement of orders for financial remedies, best practice in relation to drug and alcohol testing, and consensual adoption.

Together with a colleague, Sam has also organised and produced training sessions on private child family law for use by a network of over 300 pro-bono legal clinics in England and Wales.

Sam originally studied philosophy at the University of Bristol, with a particular interest in phenomenology, the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of psychology. He then completed the Graduate Diploma in Law (Commendation), simultaneously teaching Issues in International Criminal Law as a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Bedfordshire, before completing the Bar Professional Training Course (Outstanding).

Before coming to the Bar, Sam spent time in the legal office of the UN World Food Programme, dealing with contractual, constitutional and international law matters at their headquarters in Rome. Sam has also worked at the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, where he assisted in the investigation of possible institutional failings to protect children from sexual abuse within the Anglican Church and Roman Catholic Church.

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## PRACTICE AREAS

- Finance and Private Client
- Private Law Children
- Public Law Children
- International Family Law

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## TESTIMONIALS

*“Sam is always faultlessly prepared and his advocacy is always clear and persuasive. Sam’s ability to grasp complex legal issues guarantees that he can provide invaluable and well-reasoned advice to clients and solicitors alike.*

*Sam is very much appeaseable to all types of clients, is exceptionally easy to deal with and incredibly knowledgeable. He is a dependable advocate who is willing to fight for his clients but who also takes a realistic view.*

*Sam is remarkably hard-working, is supremely intelligent and has an ability to lay out complex issues in simple terms. Judges listen to his persuasive and commanding style despite his junior years.” – Partner, Legal 500 ranked firm.*

*“Sam went above and beyond in the case I had with him. He was happy to help with any query, and never felt as though he did not have time for you. He was fantastic with the client – clearly explaining advice, as many times as needed, understanding that this was a highly emotive case for them. Myself and the client felt fully supported by Sam and I shall definitely be working with him again” – Instructing Solicitor, Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners ranked firm.*

*“I started to instruct Sam when he was still a pupil barrister. What struck me immediately was how knowledgeable and well prepared he was when I first instructed him. I immediately sensed his passion to achieve desired outcomes for his clients.*

*“Sam is very approachable and always prepared to assist his instructing solicitors. I really appreciate how robust and determined he is. What I like about working with Sam is that we always work as a team. He communicates with me regularly throughout a case in order to achieve the best legal strategy for the case at hand. This almost always leads to successful outcomes.*

*Sam goes the extra mile when representing his clients in order to meet their specific needs. I have instructed him to represent vulnerable clients and his approach to them was invaluable and made the difference in their cases.*

*It is an absolute pleasure to work with Sam and I am absolutely confident that he will get far in his career.” – Instructing Solicitor, Legal 500 ranked firm.*

*“The service I received from Mr Watts was simply outstanding. I would also like to commend Mr Watts for being very understanding and sensitive to my racial/ cultural experiences which greatly helped communications. I do believe it is in the best interests of the child to have two parents in their life as well as their siblings/wider family. This outcome was a tremendous relief.” – Lay client .*

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## **EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND AWARDS**

### **Education**

Bar Professional Training Course (BPP University Law School)

Graduate Diploma in Law (BPP University Law School)

BA (Hons) Philosophy (University of Bristol)

### **Professional Memberships**

The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple

Family Law Bar Association

Association of Lawyers for Children

### **Awards**

Award for academic achievement on the Bar Professional Training Course (2018), Inner Temple

Major Scholarship (2017), Inner Temple

Advocacy Scholarship (2017), BPP University Law School

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