



Chris Bryden – Barrister

Called 2003

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Chris is the Head of Chambers' Family Group, encompassing private client litigation, and has vast experience of these areas of law. He practises principally in the financial and trust aspects of family law, particularly financial remedies and TLATA, and in contentious probate work, the principles of which are closely linked. He is also able to undertake private law children and Court of Protection work.

Chris has experience across the Family Courts and the Family Division of the High Court and has petitioned the Supreme Court in a financial remedies case and advised on merits in a professional negligence claim arising out of financial remedies in respect of a Supreme Court appeal.

#### **FINANCIAL REMEDIES**

Chris has experience in acting for clients at all levels of court up to and including the Supreme Court, and is regularly instructed in complex cases with high asset values or where there are company structures, using his detailed knowledge of other areas of law to benefit his clients. He has acted in many cases with convoluted legal issues, including where bankruptcy or the Proceeds of Crime Act are involved. He has acted in numerous cases involving third party interests, including a case involving a dispute between competing claims by an equitable chargeholder and a wife over the beneficial interest of the Husband. He is often instructed by high net worth individuals including one memorable case in which an island was the principal asset. However he is equally at home advising on cases with limited assets, and is prepared to consider fixed fees at competitive rates for such work.

Chris also acts in schedule 1 Children Act claims, arbitrations, mediations, adjudications and has significant experience of private FDRs.

Chris has also been involved both in the drafting of Pre- and Post-Nuptial Agreements and litigation arising out of disputes over such Agreements. He has also lectured widely in this developing area of law.

#### **Recent examples of cases include:**

- An adjudication involving a company with hidden assets (2020);
- A case involving a settlement following which a party realised an asset worth several £m which had not been disclosed (2020 – not involved in the settlement);
- A case involving significant pensions and a dispute as to valuation methodology (2020);
- A case involving multiple intervenors and a Very High Net Worth client (2019);
- A case involving multi-million-pound assets, an island and a complex corporate structure (2016);
- A case involving family trusts and contentions as to whether monies advanced were loans, gifts, trust funds or available resources (2017);



- A petition (unsuccessful) to the Supreme Court arising out of lengthy litigation over a final order (2015).

## **TRUSTS OF LAND**

Chris acts regularly in TLATA disputes and has a reputation for having an unrivalled knowledge of the law. He has lectured widely on the various developments in the law of co-ownership in recent years and his Masters degree also included the study of advanced trusts and equity. He also has a particular interest in secret and half-secret trusts.

### **Recent examples of cases include:**

- A successful contested TLATA claim in which a defence of coercive control and duress was raised (2021);
- An occupation rent/equitable account dispute (2020);
- A case involving multiple claimants contending an interest in a family home (2020);
- A case involving companies holding property assets and whether a party was the true beneficial owner (2019);
- A three day dispute over a property worth over £2m, involving claims of proprietary estoppel (2017);
- A multi-day dispute involving the ownership of farmland and residential premises (2017);
- A four day dispute relating to the beneficial ownership of a family company (2017).

## **CONTENTIOUS PROBATE**

Chris has acted in numerous contentious probate cases and disputes over wills that involve property, including allegations of lack of capacity, undue influence, want of knowledge and approval, fraudulent calumny (on which he was published in 2020 in the Family Law Journal) and donations mortis causa. He has been instructed on a number of occasions in High Court actions arising out of contested wills, capacity issues, claims under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975, and secret trusts. He has also been instructed on numerous occasions in respect of mediations arising out of disputes over wills, averaging around four per month.

### **Recent examples of cases include:**

- Advising on an alleged DMC made to the partner of the Deceased in hospital, shortly before death (2021, ongoing);
- Advising on and pleading a defence to a claim involving an alleged DMC (2021, ongoing);
- Advising on, then settling in mediation, a DMC claim relating to significant property (2021);
- Successfully proving a will challenged on grounds of capacity and undue influence, following a five day trial (2021);
- A long-running challenge to a will based on undue influence and fraudulent calumny (2020);
- A claim involving disputed paternity and declarations of parentage (2019);



- Instructions to advise on a very high profile Estate worth in excess of £200m on behalf of a potential dependency Claimant (2018);
- A successful mediation over a £4m contested Estate involving an alleged secret trust (2017);
- An unfair prejudice claim listed for 3 days in the High Court, ultimately settled (2015-17);
- A High Court challenge to a will involving injunctive relief (2015).

#### **PRIVATE LAW CHILDREN**

Chris acts when requested in private law children cases, including applications for leave to remove from the jurisdiction and child abduction cases. He has significant experience of disputes between parents and is often instructed to deal with intractable cases of parental alienation.

#### **COURT OF PROTECTION**

Chris has experience of Court of Protection work and has been engaged in respect of cases including deprivation of liberty; contact; the contested appointment of deputies and in respect of statutory wills

#### **Recent examples of cases include:**

- A case involving a disputed health and welfare LPA and contact between adult daughters and the patient (2017);
- A case involving a contested statutory will (2017)

#### **Contact Details**

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