



**Five Pump  
Court Chambers**

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## Simon Bickler KC

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Barrister

Call: 1988

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### Practice overview

Simon is a very highly regarded QC with specialisms in family law particularly concerning children, crime and regulatory cases. He is described by the Legal 500 2019 as "A silk at the height of his powers" and "A brilliant orator", by the 2018 edition as "a consummate silk who builds good relationships with clients" and "A formidable and very astute advocate" and by previous editions as "highly persuasive", "An extremely strong and persuasive advocate, exceptionally hard working and fearless in Court".

Simon is personable, and very good at building relationships. He is particularly good at reassuring and explaining the law to clients, and undertakes direct access work in order to ensure that clients can get access to his expertise for a reasonable cost.

### Children law (public)

With over 30 years' experience, Simon has an outstanding reputation in all cases concerning child welfare. He has extensive experience when dealing with complex medical evidence and cross-examination of medical experts, with particular expertise in those cases involving shaking of infants leading to death or permanent brain damage. Simon has particular expertise in serious children cases; both private and public law. He is highly regarded in cases concerning parental disputes over the leave to remove from the jurisdiction. He has extensive experience in acting for Local Authorities, Guardians and Parents.

Simon frequently appears in high profile care proceedings. In the last 18 months he has acted successfully for parents in 4 cases involving a large scale paedophile ring, harming a child as a result of fictitious disorder, allegations of arranging a forced marriage abroad and causing the death of a baby with congenital brain abnormalities by shaking.

Simon works with a wide range of clients including local authorities, parents and guardians, adopters and foster parents, extended family members, other interested parties or interveners and the Official Solicitor. He also sits as a Deputy High Court Judge in the Family Division.

## **Children law (private)**

Simon has a lot of experience of representing high net worth individuals who have seemingly intractable disputes with their partners over arrangements for their children following relationship breakdown.

Simon has experience at dealing with a wide range of allegations made in disputes about children, including allegations of abuse and historical abuse; rape and sexual abuse; neglect and factitious or induced illness. Many of Simon's cases involve complex allegations which have to be fully tested; detailed expert opinions and numerous experts in different fields.

Simon also sits part time as a High Court Judge in the Family Division.

## **International family law**

Simon is committed to defending the rights of families who face issues of children relocating abroad, applications for leave to remove a child, or when clients are faced with an application from an ex-partner.

Simon is adept at handling cases involving Brussels II regulations. He is experienced in dealing with enforcement and registration of orders made in foreign countries and 'Mirror orders' in countries where no international treaty is in force.

His areas of expertise include:

- Applications for permission to remove children to another jurisdiction.
- Abductions within England and Wales and other British territory.
- Emergency injunctions to prevent child removal.
- Brussels II Regulation No 2201/2003, also called Brussels IIA or II bis.
- Summary return under the Hague Convention 1980.

## **Regulatory**

Simon's experience in business has involved many different sectors and over the years he has managed many private clients who have faced prosecution for compliance breach. These generally include Health and Safety and Trading Standards breaches.

He is instructed in discipline cases concerning the Police (including the Cross-Border case), the Fire Service, Probation Service and Customs and Excise, as well as individual corporate and charity matters. He represents individuals and advises employers. Simon advises firms of solicitors and accountants regarding the defaults of particular employees and has acted for entire firms alleged to have committed both disciplinary and regulatory breaches. He is instructed in the disciplinary proceedings arising from administration of the COPD scheme for miners. He drafts professional guidance for accountants and barristers. He also acts for those wishing to make complaints. Simon acts for both doctors and patients in Hospital Trust investigations

He has a lot of experience of prosecuting and defending breaches of health and safety law and regulations, including trading standards. Cases he has been instructed in include Poundstretcher (unsafe clothing); numerous industries including Medley (asbestos); Mather and Jackson (fireworks and explosives); Butters (Lightwater Valley amusement park); Seiles (electricity); Henry Boot (roofing); Next (warehousing and fork lift trucks); Scurr (transportation of animals spreading foot and mouth); Totty (scaffolding); Wakefield (Hydraulic lifts), management of training at work (Next).

Simon acted for the Humberside Police Federation in the Bichard Inquiry (Soham murders) and advised the officers in the IPCC Inquiry into the death of Christopher Alder. He also act for groups and individuals who do not necessarily require representation during the Inquiry itself (or are not allowed it) but need to make representations prior to the Report being published. He also advises local government departments and agencies into the scope of and terms of local inquiries into, for example, offences committed whilst being the subject of a Community Order.

Arising from other regulatory work Simon has judicially reviewed public bodies, including witness statement only reviews and live evidence reviews. Cases include R (on application of Ashton & Fraser) v CC West Yorkshire[2005] EWHC 975 (Admin) (Chief Constable's refusal to stop discipline proceedings after case stopped as abuse in the Crown Court); R v DPP ex p Duckenfield 1999] EWHC Admin 286 (DPP's refusal to take over and discontinue private prosecution).

## **Crime**

Simon has a high-level of excellence, expertise and experience in all areas of crime, with particular emphasis on complex fraud trials. He covers all areas of fraud including investment

fraud, VAT and revenue fraud, advance fee fraud and internet fraud. Film tax credit fraud is a particular area of expertise for Simon. He is highly adept at managing document-heavy cases and managing the involvement of professional experts.

Notable cases include R v Driscoll, an acquittal on Film Tax Credit Fraud. Lengthy cross examination of the Revenue's head of the film tax unit about the Corporation Tax Act 2009 and the guidelines that were issued by the Revenue. Simon successfully found a loop-hole in the legislation and the jury acquitted the defendant of those charges. He was later convicted on the VAT fraud. His sentence however, was very favourable. Simon has subsequently been instructed to advise on several film tax credit frauds having established himself as a leading expert in the interplay between legislation and revenue guidelines.

He has also acted in a case involving an international car theft from Japan on a massive scale in conspiracy with Stolen Vehicle Squad Police Officers; a conspiracy to cheat the Inland Revenue by fraudulently claiming rollover relief of Corporation Tax; an international money laundering case of £20 million (the proceeds of heroin supply); and a complex Inland Revenue and Customs Prosecution involving four businesses over a period of six years.

## Memberships

- Deputy High Court Judge, Family Division

## Notable Cases

Represented surviving child following deaths of two siblings. Overturned historical Coroner's verdict following further pathology investigation.

Represented father in finding of fact care proceedings concerning baby disfigured by burns sustained in boiling water. Complex medical evidence from burns experts.

Represented father in finding of fact care proceedings involving complex medical evidence of devastating head injury to 5 day old baby sustained whilst in hospital.

Represented father in finding of fact care proceedings. Life threatening rectal injury to 12 year old boy with autism and learning difficulties.

Represented father in rape and indecent assault on step-daughter aged 12 through to 15.

Represented father concerning the death by poisoning of a two year old boy and the physical and emotional abuse suffered by his surviving ten year old brother. Complex DNA and pathology evidence and psychiatric analysis.

Represented interest of a baby found with a depressed skull fracture having been born with an unusually large head. Complex medical evidence. Numerous experts.

Represented the mother of a six year old child who was on permanent dialysis having had her kidneys removed. Non-compliance with strict dietary regime was potentially life-threatening. The Local Authority sought removal of this child before a transplant was to take place, which Simon successfully resisted.

Represented father in resisting mother's application to return child from Pakistan. Complex legal arguments on Habitual Residence and Brussels Revised.

[Re SK \(Perplexing Presentation/Fabricated or Induced illness : PP/FII\) \[2022\] EWFC 144:](#) represented mother in a finding of fact hearing in respect of allegations regarding her parenting of two younger children in a family where the eldest child had challenging and unmanageable behaviour.

[AA & 25 Ors \(Children\) \(Rev 2\) \[2019\] EWFC 64:](#) represented a mother in very complex proceedings involving 25 children, over 60 advocates and almost 1 million pages of evidence.

[Re X \(A Child\), Re \[2018\] EWHC 3883 \(Fam\):](#) represented mother in finding of fact proceedings relating to a baby who had suffered injuries found to be due to a babysitter.

[J \(a child : Fact-finding\) \[2015\] EWFC B19:](#) represented Special Guardian in proceedings relating to the death of a young baby, found to be a tragic accident.