

Francis Payne
(2014) Barrister

Specialist Areas

Private Law Children: Residence and Contact

Family: Finance

Out of Court Solutions (NCDR)



Who is Francis Payne?

Francis is a specialist family practitioner, with a particular focus in private law children and matrimonial finance matters. He is regularly instructed in legally complex, factually and/or lengthy hearings involving children disputes, matrimonial finance as well as Domestic violence. Francis is a courageous advocate who strives to secure the best possible results for his clients. Commended for his "valiant submissions" (HHJ) in Court, Francis often demonstrates advocacy skills beyond his year of call. Francis's friendly, sensitive and down to earth approach coupled with his background makes him an instant hit with clients, who are reassured by his ability to provide comprehensive legal advice in a straightforward digestible form.

Public access accredited, Francis is able to take instructions directly from members of the public.

Francis has also been appointed to the Government Legal Department's Junior Panel of Counsel and takes suitable instructions from the government.

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No.18 Chambers is a distinguished set of barristers based in Southampton, recognised for its strong reputation and presence across the South Coast of England. Our expertise cover a range of practice areas, including Family Law (Care Proceedings and Adoption, Private Law Children, Matrimonial Finance), Employment, Chancery and Commercial Law, Property Disputes, together with Dispute Resolution and Mediation. Our members are committed to delivering expert legal advice and representation to clients nationwide, offering extensive experience in handling both complex and sensitive matters.



Legal Expertise

For more information or to get in touch with Francis please contact the clerks room who will be happy to assist you.

Private Law Children: Residence and Contact

Private Law Children: Contact and Residence Disputes Under the Children Act 1989

Francis is regularly instructed in Children Act 1989 matters and regularly represents parents and other family members at all stages of private children law disputes, from first hearing to final hearing. Often appearing in multi-day contested hearings where complex and serious facts are in dispute, and where rigorous challenge to the evidence is required. He has vast experience representing clients in factual as well as welfare disputes, and he has a wealth of expertise in dealing with allegations of serious domestic abuse (including sexual abuse), non-accidental injuries and child abuse, drug misuse, parental alienation, applications for removal from jurisdiction/relocation within jurisdiction and human rights issues. Francis often appears in cases where a Guardian has been appointed for the children.

Francis has successfully represented parents seeking to obtain and resist child arrangements orders, determine parental responsibility, and in applications for prohibited steps orders. Francis represents each client with care and skill. Outside of court, Francis is a confident negotiator and is often able to settle child arrangements (including interim arrangements) in favourable terms for his clients. Despite his youthful looks, Francis is a parent and is able to empathise with his clients and ensure that their case is skilfully presented in court.

Francis' results and testimonials are a clear indicator of his ability in this area.

Domestic Violence & Injunctions

Francis has represented many clients in cases involving Domestic Abuse, dealing with applications for injunctions under the Family Law Act 1996 (non-molestation orders and occupation orders) both on an without notice and on-notice basis through to final hearing including where those applications are linked to Children Act 1989 proceedings. Francis successfully represents both parties raising and defending serious allegations of domestic abuse including violence, sexual abuse and abuse of minors.

Francis' background enables him to prepare cases diligently, pinpointing crucial evidence in order to succeed in a case.



Legal Expertise Continued

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Family: Finance

Divorce & Separation

Francis appears in and advises upon financial remedy proceedings from first appointment to contested final hearing. Francis has extensive experience in matrimonial proceedings and is often instructed in cases involving high net worth, trusts, businesses, third party interests and hidden assets. Francis is a fierce and confident advocate who uses his skill and expertise to obtain favourable outcomes for his clients. In cases where there are limited assets, Francis will look to achieve acceptable and sustainable solutions, saving his clients significant costs. Francis is able to assist on applications for financial provision under Schedule 1 of the Children Act 1989 and financial disputes between cohabitants.

As a result of Francis' time spent with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (working within the MTIC Fraud and Strategic Litigation teams), he has a solid grasp of taxation (in particular direct and indirect tax matters and issues relating to the Finance Act 2014) and insolvency issues and has a keen eye for contrived financial activity and the dissipation of assets.

Francis is available to represent clients in arbitration and at private FDRs. Francis also sits as a private FDR Judge.

Out of Court Solutions (NCDR)

Private FDR

Single Joint Advices/Early Neutral Evaluation

Round Table Meetings/Joint Conferences

Merits, Advice, Drafting And Support Package



Professional Info

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Qualifications

LL.B (Hons) Law with Criminology, University of Portsmouth (Upper Second Class Honours)

Bar Vocational Course, City University (Very Competent, graded Outstanding for Civil Advocacy)

Membership

The Honourable Society of Middle Temple (Major Scholar, 2013)

South Eastern Circuit

Young Legal Aid Lawyers Association

Human Rights Lawyers Association

Awards

Queen Mother Scholarship – The Honourable Society of Middle Temple (2013/14)



Professional Info Continued

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Publications

Contributor - Tools for changing banking culture: FCA are you listening? (Reported in Capital Markets Law Journal and Financial Times)

Francis often gives seminars and lectures to solicitors on prevalent issues.

Personal Info

Outside chambers, Francis' main interests are football (watching his team Leyton Orient lose every weekend), boxing and spending time with his young family. Prior to attending University, Francis was a competitive boxer and competed at County and District Level. Francis received a Sporting Excellence Scholarship from the University of Portsmouth as a result of his achievements within the sport.

Francis is passionate about the provision of legal services to all who require it. His dedication is such that he is the Co-Founder of a Legal Advice Clinic for a London charity, Shelter from the Storm. Coming from a 'non-traditional' background and keen to promote diversity at the Independent Bar, Francis regularly gives talks to Secondary School and University students about entry into the legal profession.



Cases of Note

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Francis Payne, a barrister at No.18 Chambers, is known for his work in private children disputes and financial remedy cases, often involving complex and sensitive issues. With a background in criminal law and experience at HMRC, he brings a strong analytical approach to cases involving financial complexity. His advocacy is marked by clarity and precision, and he is frequently instructed in matters requiring careful handling and strategic insight:

G v T [2025]

Representing M in CA proceedings. F was seeking a transfer of residency alleging alienating behaviours. M alleging F was emotionally abusive. Live with order made in favour of M with child having only supervised contact with F. The court found that F was emotionally abusive to M. Costs awarded against F on basis of his unreasonable litigation conduct.

P v C [2025]

Representing M in CA proceedings concerning child (17) with complex mental health difficulties. Final order made on an 'exceptional basis' for no contact between child and Father, an extension of previous s91(14) order and non-molestation order. Prohibited steps orders also made in favour of M. Costs awarded against F on basis of his unreasonable litigation conduct.

H v H [2024]

Represented W in matrimonial finance proceedings worth £25million.

M v M [2024]

Represented F at 2-day final hearing in circumstances where the younger children were having limited contact with F because of M's behaviour. Secured a finding of parental alienation against M and a 'joint lives with' order was granted with F obtaining a 40/60 split of time with his children.

H v H [2024]

Represented W in matrimonial finance proceedings. Secured a 14-year Mesher and departure from equality in favour of W.

K v K [2023]

Represented W at a final hearing in matrimonial finance proceedings. In circumstances where H had failed to comply with court orders, Francis secured transfer of FMH to W and a costs award against H.

P v P [2023]

Represented F in 4-day fact finding where cross-allegations made. M was relying on significant allegations (including sexual abuse on non-subject child) to prevent contact between F and his daughter. F had 18 months without contact with his daughter by the time of the fact-finding hearing. Save for limited admissions made by F, all of M's allegations were disproven. M found to have lied/exaggerated her evidence in order to frustrate contact between F and child. Contact reinstated immediately.

C v C [2022]

Representing Wife. One limited asset case. FDR indication was for a 50/50 split of the net proceeds. Francis secured 67.5% for his client at final hearing.



Cases of Note Continued

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S v S [2022]

Representing Wife. Secured 77.5% of the net proceeds from the FMH and costs awarded against the Husband at final hearing.

S v S [2022]

Represented a client in matrimonial finance proceedings worth an estimated £2.5million. This case involved numerous international properties and issues relating to legal and beneficial ownership. Francis strategic advice on evidence following the FDA secured a concession from the other side as to his client's beneficial ownership of a Spanish property worth 1,000,000 euros.

M v H [2022]

Advising and representing client in relation to making a worldwide freezing order in relation to assets worth approx. £2,000,000.

M v M [2022]

Represented M in 6-day fact finding hearing in relation to CA proceedings involving 7 children where F had made malicious allegations of child abuse in response to M's allegations of domestic abuse. All of M's 9 allegations proven. None of F's allegations proven. No order for contact between F and children.

L v B [2023]

Represented F at a 3-day fact finding hearing. F had gone without contact with his son for 18 months due to M's significant allegations (9) of child abuse and domestic abuse. None of Ms allegations proven at the fact-finding hearing. F now having contact with child.

M v W [2023]

Represented F in a 'finely balanced case' where F had repeatedly failed to comply with indirect contact which was a prerequisite to direct contact with his child. Child had complex additional needs. Direct contact ordered between F and child.

T v T [2023]

Represented M at a 3-day fact finding hearing in relation to 22 separate allegations of domestic abuse including rape, physical, emotional, and psychological harm, controlling and coercive behaviour and child abuse. F denied all allegations (save for one) prior to the commencement of the fact-finding hearing. 21 allegations proven. F's application for CAO subsequently dismissed.

M v M [2023]

Represented F in 3-day fact finding where cross allegations made. M was relying on significant allegations to prevent any contact between F and his daughter.. F had gone without contact with his daughter for over a year leading up to fact-finding hearing. Serious findings made against M and limited findings made against F. Contact reinstated immediately following fact-finding hearing.

M v M [2023]

Represented F in 3-day fact finding hearing where cross allegations made. Despite repeated allegations to social services by all children of physical harm by F, the court found that M had physically abused one of the children and influenced the children's views against F. No findings of physical abuse by F.



Cases of Note Continued

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B v B [2023]

Contempt proceedings where Francis represented the Respondent. Despite overwhelming evidence against his client (HHJ indicating that only a custodial sentence would suffice), Francis was able to have the proceedings dismissed with his client accepting one minor breach. No sanctions imposed.

G v G [2023]

Despite W's repeated non-compliance with court orders (previous costs order made against W at first hearing), Francis was able to secure W substantially more spousal maintenance than was being offered (an additional 2 years amounting to £30,000), the lions share of the FMH and no adverse costs order against W.

B v B [2023]

Aadvising H in matter involving assets of £4,000,000. The case involves issues of earning capacity, the treatment of post-separation inheritance (including valuable artwork held on trust) and business assets. W's Counsel leading junior who has appeared in the Supreme Court.



Reviews

For more information or to get in touch with Francis please contact the clerks room who will be happy to assist you.

Francis is a brilliant barrister. He makes the clients feel safe and listened to. He has a strong advocacy and is always willing to fight for his clients - Legal 500

Francis is one of those barristers who is wise and experienced beyond his years of call, approachable, engaging and absolutely wonderful to work with. I never feel worried about reaching out ahead of hearing to discuss factors in a case and I am reassured to know that he takes as much an interest in each of his cases as those involved and instructing. The ability to work as a team with your barrister is only ever a positive for your client. I find that Francis is able to make my client's feel at ease with him the moment they meet him, and this is key when often you do not get a huge amount of time with the barrister before a hearing. He has a way of building a rapport with any client and ensuring that they fully understand everything that is going on at all times. My client's always comment about the confidence he instils in them and the main feedback is that not only do they have excellent outcomes but they felt heard. That is massively important in family work and Francis has a way of making the client's voice heard appropriately, without it being a barrage of gripes about the other party. Once I have instructed Francis once on a matter, I can be sure that the client will ask for him to be instructed for all future hearings. Francis' style in court has always impressed me, he is persuasive with the right level of force, he is as assertive but polite and respectful at all times, regardless of the circumstances which in family matters can often be very difficult or complicated. Francis always gets a great outcome for the client. - Nicola Beasley, Stowe Family Law

I was so assured Francis had my best interests at heart and he immediately put me at ease. He explained things in a clear, honest way and really took the time to understand my case. His expertise and skill, meant he wasted no time in navigating things to a conclusion that I was really happy with. Thank you. - Mr H

We have instructed Francis many times and he is always extremely well prepared. His attention to detail is second to none and both his written work and advocacy are of the highest quality. He is extremely knowledgeable in both financial and children matters and is a pleasure to work with. He is certainly one to watch! - George IDE Solicitors

"I had Francis look after me for my fact find hearing, and I just knew I had someone that listened to me and didn't just go by the standard answers. He listened to what I had to say, and my points, I cannot recommend him enough. For the first time in an 18 month process I found someone that heard me, as a person and not just a client. I suffered huge anxiety, stress and panic attacks throughout the previous 18 months, and I can say from the bottom of my heart that Francis was the reason I was able to keep my head above water during the process. Never before had I been in a court room, let alone being questioned on my character and history. Because of his attitude and demeanour, I had no concerns whatsoever, I knew he cared about me, and in the end he got the result that I deserved. If more people in the legal profession were like Francis, we would have a much better system, that looks at the people." - Mr L (Direct Access client)

Confident with expertise beyond his call - Sarah French Moore Blatch

Best client feedback on counsel I have ever seen - Tim Melville-Walker – Macdonald Oates



Reviews Continued

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Francis represented a nervous client in matrimonial finance proceedings. Francis was able to put the client at ease and gave him a sense of confidence going into court and achieved a positive outcome. - Michelle Noy – Bates Solicitors

Francis conduct his cases with great detail and care and is very reliable. He is well prepared and his work is of an exceptional quality and provides a good service for the client - Oi-Yuyn Wong AWD

When I was covering for my colleague Francis was very responsive and helpful, as well as proactive and determined to achieve the best outcome for our client. - Sarah French Moore Blatch

We have instructed Francis to represent our client many times at hearings. He has always been punctual and never failed to provide us with an attendance note updating us of hearing with next steps within a few hours! Francis is very passionate and knowledgeable in his work and the area of Family Law - our client's have requested to have Francis represent them at subsequent hearings. - Nikki Ruparelia -Bookers & Bolton

I have found Francis to be unreservedly tenacious and pragmatic in court. He has proven on numerous occasions that he will consistently get results. He is conscientious and his courtroom manner, particularly with litigants in person, is excellent - Daniel Norris - Churchers

Francis conducts every case with meticulous preparation and sees cases through with a thorough and efficient approach. Francis makes clients feel at ease with his attentive approach, as well as clearly explaining the options available to clients. Francis is a rising legal star with his professionalism, knowledge and skill. - Alyciette Edwards - AWD