

# FRANCIS BARLOW QC

"Hugely experienced and what he doesn't know about trust and wills law isn't worth knowing. He's a real heavyweight, but he's also got a light touch."  
(Chambers UK 2019)



Call 1965 • QC 2006

Francis Barlow QC is Head of Chambers and is a noted figure in traditional chancery circles both at home and abroad. He is highly respected for his expertise.

A deeply respected senior member of the Bar who is often trusted with exceptionally high-value matters at both the advisory and litigation stages, and is also recognised for his depth of knowledge in questions of jurisdiction and conflict of laws. A strong choice for those seeking advice on the setting up and interpretation of UK and offshore trusts, and an expert in the associated taxation aspects. He is also adept in contentious trust disputes, including applications for the variation of trusts. Barlow is a frequent contributor to various trust and succession textbooks.

Ranked in Tier 1 (Leading Silks) for Private Client: Trusts & Probate and Tier 3 (Leading Silks) for Offshore in Legal 500 2021.

Ranked in Band 1 for Chancery: Traditional for Chambers UK HNW 2020.

Ranked in Band 1 for Chancery: Traditional and for Trusts in Chambers UK Bar 2020.

## Private Client: Contentious

He acts in prominent UK and Offshore trusts matters and is regarded as “approachable, exceedingly knowledgeable and wise” by Legal 500.

### Recent Cases:

- **Shergill & Ors v Khaira & Ors** [2017] EWHC 769 (Ch): Dispute over trusteeship of Sikh temple
- **Bathurst & Anor v Bathurst & Ors (Rev 1)** [2016] EWHC 3033 (Ch): Variation of trusts application
- **V v T** [2014] EWHC 3432 (Ch): Settlement Variation of trusts.
- **Re Q Trust** [2010] Bda LR 26, [2011] WTLR 735: Sup Ct of Bermuda, appeared as amicus curiae to

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argue that a trust was not invalid as an illusory trust.

- **Kershaw v Micklethwaite** [2010] WTLR 413: Removal of executors; jurisdiction.
- **Re Z Trust** [2009] CILR 593 (Grand Court of Cayman Islands): Trusts: jurisdiction to confer administrative powers.
- **Wyndham v Egremont** [2009] WTLR 1473: Variation of trusts; extension of trust period; capital gains tax.
- **Breakspear v Ackland** [2009] Ch 32: Settlement; disclosure of letter of wishes; exercise of dispositive powers; conflict of interest.
- **Thomas & Agnes Carvel Foundation v Carvel** [2008] Ch 395: Will: jurisdiction to remove executrix; devastavit.

## Private Client: Non-Contentious

Francis specialises in trust and succession disputes, as well as estates administration.

Chambers UK 2016 report that Francis " is hugely experienced and an immensely reassuring presence. He is the first person to turn to if you need to resolve a particularly difficult or sensitive problem related to trusts, wills or estates. He will take his time and come up with a solution, often an ingenious one."

Recent Cases:

- **Sieff v Fox** [2005] 1 WLR 3811: Rule in Hastings-Bass and mistake.
- **Mitchell v Halliwell** [2005] EWHC 937: Removal of executors; devastavit.
- **Re DWS** [2001] Ch 568, CA: Murder, forfeiture and intestacy.
- **Corbett v Newey** [1998] Ch 57, CA: Conditional wills.
- **Re K** [1985] Ch 85, CA: Manslaughter, succession and relief from forfeiture.

## Capital Taxes

Francis acts in the full range of capital taxes matters as they relate to trusts and individuals.

## Recommendations

*"An absolute gem." "I cannot believe his learning and ability." "The master of the UK courts when it comes to this work." "He's hugely experienced, and very wise technically, particularly when it comes to older trusts. He reigns supreme."*

*"Just brilliant and extraordinarily experienced." "He's a highly eminent silk," who "always puts up a strong fight on his client's behalf."*

Chambers UK 2021

*'Hugely experienced, very thoughtful and creative, a formidable presence in court. Good at finding practical solutions to intractable problems.'* and *'Excellent with broad expertise.'*

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Legal 500 2021

Francis Barlow QC *“is an absolute gem,”* according to an interviewee, who also says: *“I cannot believe his learning and ability.”* He is notable for advising clients on conflict of laws and jurisdictional points, as well as on complex trusts matters. *“He is the master of the UK courts when it comes to this work,”* observes a commentator, adding: *“He’s hugely experienced, and very wise technically, particularly for older trusts. He reigns supreme.”*

Chambers HNW 2020

“One of the gurus of traditional chancery.”

Chambers UK 2020

“He’s a walking encyclopaedia.”

Chambers UK 2020

“He’s a very bright and very experienced trusts practitioner.”

Chambers UK 2020

“Has huge experience of complex trust issues.”

Legal 500 2020

“So well known and experienced that his name would always be one of those which leaps to mind”

“One of the gurus of traditional chancery”

HNW Guide 2019

“Recognised for his impressive private client practice, as well as his specialist knowledge of trusts and succession disputes.”

WWL UK Bar 2019

“Very, very thoughtful, he thinks about things for a long time.”

“If he says something, people will listen and believe it.”

Chambers UK 2019

“Vastly experienced and is the first port of call for advice on trust issues of particular complexity.”

Legal 500 2018

“A heavyweight lawyer with a light touch, he is incredibly reassuring and someone you can always turn to when faced with a difficult legal issue or complex problem. He always gives very practical and sensible advice.”

“He is extremely knowledgeable and has a very confident yet laid-back approach. He is very authoritative and will always give you a definite view on what can and can’t be done. He will not hesitate to give a clear and decisive opinion which will always inspire confidence.”

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HNW 2018

“An elder statesman of the chancery Bar.”

“He is hugely experienced and what he doesn’t know about trusts and wills isn’t worth knowing”

“Particularly good on variation of trust applications”

“A go-to person for complex trust structures with historical issues.”

“He is known for his experience and his authoritative manner. If he says something, people will listen to it and believe it.”

Chambers UK 2018

“He is very learned and experienced.”

Chambers UK 2018

“A hugely experienced barrister”

“A massive track record in this area of law.”

“He is a heavyweight with a light touch. He is incredibly reassuring and one you can always turn to on a difficult legal issue or complex problem. He always gives very practical and sensible advice.”

“He is arguably the most experienced practitioner in the country for trust and chancery work.”

Chambers UK HNW 2017

“There aren’t too many QCs around with his level of experience in trusts, wills and estates. He is very knowledgeable and he writes and speaks eloquently.”

Chambers UK Global 2017

“The king of the variation trust world. He really is very good at it and knows how to read the court. He’s got so much experience and he is such a safe pair of hands.”

Chambers UK Global 2017

“He is “an absolute master of trust law,” “a real asset when faced with complex problems requiring creative solutions.”

“When it comes to variation of Trust Act claims,” one source says, Francis Barlow QC “is the law. He probably knows more than the judges do on this. He is the obvious choice, as he has had all the big cases and seems to be able to do it with his eyes shut.”

“Francis is hugely experienced and an immensely reassuring presence. He is the first person I would turn to if seeking help to resolve a particularly difficult or sensitive problem related to trusts, wills or estates. He will take his time and come up with a solution, often ingenious. I have the highest regard for him.”

“He has a lightness of touch and a sense of humour that is never far from the surface and it is pleasant to deal

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with him.”

Chambers UK HNW 2016

“One of the best-known and most highly regarded silks at the Chancery Bar, and someone with an enviable reputation for his expertise in onshore and offshore trust matters. He is also a noted authority on contentious probate and succession issues.”

“He is hugely experienced and an immensely reassuring presence. He is the first person to turn to if you need to resolve a particularly difficult or sensitive problem related to trusts, wills or estates. He will take his time and come up with a solution, often an ingenious one.”

“He’s a very sound figure and has done a lot of offshore work.”

“He’s very highly regarded for his written advice.”

“He is invariably helpful, very amenable and he finds pragmatic, sensible solutions to problems.”

“He’s top of the tree in his field and very enjoyable to work with.”

Chambers UK 2016

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“He’s top of the tree in his field and very enjoyable to work with.”

“He’s a very sound figure and has done a lot of offshore work.”

“He’s very highly regarded for his written advice.”

Chambers Global 2016

“A safe pair of hands on Variation of Trusts Act matters.”

Legal 500 2016

“Smooth performances”

“Ability to get the ear of the court”

Who's Who Legal 2016

“He is someone who thinks about things a lot and comes up with clever solutions to difficult problems. If something worries you or if you want heavyweight opinion, he is the one you go to.”

“He has incredible, in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of trust law at his fingertips.”

Chambers UK 2015

“Revered for the quality of his broad traditional chancery practice and his outstanding knowledge of trusts. He is highly respected for his expertise.”

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“He has an excellent intellect, and a wealth of experience and depth of knowledge.”

## Qualifications

- MA, Christ Church, Oxford (1966)

## Associations & Memberships

- ACTAPS
- Chancery Bar Association
- Charity Law Association
- STEP

## Publications

- Consultant editor of [Williams on Wills](#)
- Contributor to the first and second editions of [Thomas and Hudson’s Law of Trusts](#), the third edition of [International Succession \(Garb and Wood\)](#) and to [International Trust Disputes \(Collins, Kempster, McMillan and Meek\)](#)
- Member of the “Group of Experts” appointed by the EU Commission to consider proposals for the harmonisation of the laws of succession of Member States

## Speaking Engagements

Francis is frequently invited to chair national and international trusts and private client events and has addressed audiences for:

- IBC Private Client
- STEP Bermuda
- STEP Jersey
- STEP Guernsey
- The Chancery Bar Association

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