



Rob George

Call: 2013

“International Family Lawyer of the Year” – LexisNexis Family Law Awards 2021

“Family Case of the Year” – LexisNexis Family Law Awards 2021

Rob is a leading expert on international family law, particularly in relation to relocation disputes, child abduction, jurisdiction, and international and domestic surrogacy cases. He has published numerous books and papers on these subjects, and been involved with many of the leading cases in related areas.

Rob undertakes hearings at all levels of the Family Court and in the High Court, as well as appeals to the High Court, Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. He brings a calm and thoughtful manner to his advocacy, developing complex arguments in an intelligible manner, and always going the extra mile with client care.

Alongside his practice at Harcourt Chambers, Rob holds the position of Professor of Law and Policy at University College London, teaching family law and children’s rights, as well as conducting research into the family justice system. Rob’s internationally acknowledged academic expertise in family law issues allows him to bring real depth to his advice and advocacy work.

Rob has been appointed as Special Advisor to the House of Lords Committee on the Children and Families Act 2014. Rob’s academic and practice expertise will be used to assist the Committee, which is reviewing the operation of the Act.

International Children Law

Rob is a highly regarded expert on international children law, with most of his practice involving an international element. His knowledge and experience in this area includes Hague and non-Hague child abduction, jurisdictional disputes, and international enforcement of orders. His practice in international children law often takes Rob to the Court of Appeal and to

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the Supreme Court, and his expertise is recognised by his long-time membership of the International Family Justice Committee.

Rob has a particular specialism in relocation disputes, both international and internal. Having written his doctorate and two further books on relocation disputes, Rob is an undisputed expert in this area. He often represents parents in relocation cases at all levels of the Family Court, and is experienced in bringing and defending appeals. Rob also does frequent advice work on relocation, prior to final hearings and for appeals.

Notable International Children Law cases

- **A Father v A Mother [2024] EWHC 1149 (Fam)**

Application by father for summary return of 13 year-old child to Lithuania.

- **J v E (Habitual Residence) [2024] EWHC 196 (Fam)**

Successfully secured the return of a young child from Zambia, over 18 months after she was retained there by her mother.

- **D (A Child), Re (Abduction: Child's Objections: Representation of Child Party) [2023] EWCA Civ 1047**

Appeal by child against return order, raising issue as to role of a "solicitor-guardian" in 1980 Convention proceedings.

- **A Mother v A Father & Ors [2023] EWHC 2059 (Fam)**

Rob George represent two children in this re-hearing of a 1980 Hague Convention case. The parents originally agreed to the separation of the children, with one remaining and the other returning under the Convention. The children objected to this proposal and the court set aside that order. At the re-hearing, Rob successfully established exceptions to allow both children to remain in this country, including child's objections and a grave risk of harm in relation to sibling separation. The case shows the importance of listening to children and the potential role of children themselves in Hague Convention proceedings.

- **A (A Child) (Habitual Residence : 1996 Hague Child Protection Convention) (Rev1) [2023] EWCA Civ 659**

Successfully appealed a decision of the High Court concerning the jurisdiction of the courts in relation to a child wrongfully retained in Zambia. The case provides important clarification about habitual residence and the need to avoid over-simplification of the test, while also making clear for the purposes of the Family Law Act 1986 that it is the substance of the orders sought, not the form of the application, that matters. The case has been remitted for re-hearing on the issue of habitual residence at the date of the application.

- **Re L (Return Order: Set Aside Application) [2022] EWHC 3564**

Successful application before Francis J to set aside a return order from Poland.

- **AA v BB & Ors [2022] EWHC 2322 (Fam) (12 July 2022)**

An application under the Hague Convention 1980.

- **Re A and B (Rescission of Order: Change of Circumstances) [2021] EWFC 76**

Application before Cobb J on behalf of two children to have an order rescinded under s 31F(6).

- **Re: M (A Child: Hague Convention) [2020] EWHC 3340 (Fam)**
- **Re NY (A Child) [2019] UKSC 49, [2019] 3 WLR 962, [2020] 1 All ER 923**
- **Re F (Abduction: Sexual Abuse: Summary Return) [2019] EWHC 3791 (Fam)**
- **C v G [2017] EWHC 762 (Fam)**
- **Re N (Adoption: Jurisdiction) [2016] UKSC 15, [2017] AC 167, [2017] 1 All ER 527**
- **Re J (A Child) (1996 Hague Convention) [2015] UKSC 70, [2016] AC 1291, [2016] 4 All ER 1048**
- **BB v CC (Residence Order) [2018] EWFC B78**
- **Re L (Relocation: Second Appeal) [2017] EWCA Civ 2121, [2018] 4 WLR 141, [2018] 2 FLR 608**
- **S v S (Relocation) [2017] EWHC 2345 (Fam), [2018] 1 FLR 825**
- **Re C (Internal Relocation) [2015] EWCA Civ 1305, [2016] Fam 253, [2017] 1 FLR 103**

Private Law Children

Rob undertakes a full range of private law children cases, including residence, contact, education and medical disputes, and has particular expertise in unusual and complex matters. Rob has experience in surrogacy law and cases about parentage and parental responsibility, as well as more niche and sensitive issues such as disputes about withdrawal of medical treatment and the disposal of a child's body after death.

Notable Private Law Children cases

- **P v Q & F (Child: Legal Parentage) [2024] EWCA Civ 878**
Appeal by former wife of biological mother from declaration that biological father is child's legal parent, rather than her.
- **Re E (A Child: Burial Arrangements) [2019] EWHC 3639 (Fam)**
- **Re G (Declaration of Parentage: Removal of Person Identified as Mother from Birth Certificate) [2018] EWHC 3360 (Fam)**
- **Re B & C (Change of Name: Parental Responsibility: Evidence) [2017] EWHC 3250 (Fam), [2018] 4 WLR 19, [2018] 1 FLR 1471**

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- **Re JS (Disposal of Body) [2016] EWHC 2859 (Fam), [2017] 4 WLR 1)**

Public Law Children

Notable Public Law Children cases

- **Re H (Step-Parent Adoption: Human Rights) [2023] EWHC 3186 (Fam)**

Rob acting pro bono represented the applicant step-father.

The law on step-parent adoption has been changed by this ground-breaking judgement from the President of the Family Division.

Rob successfully argued that the court should use the Human Rights Act 1998 to modify provisions of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, to allow a step-parent adoption to be made in a case where the child's natural parent had died before the application was made.

The President accepted Rob's argument and s51(2) of the Act has been amended accordingly.

- **Article 39 v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2023] EWHC 1398 (Fam)**

Rob George was one of three counsel representing children's rights charity [Article 39](#) in this ground-breaking case about the scope of wardship and the inherent jurisdiction. The case concerned a number of 'missing' unaccompanied asylum-seeking (UAS) children, who disappeared from Home Office-run hotel accommodation. While the court ultimately declined to use its wardship jurisdiction, the case shows that a charity can make such an application, and brought into the open a large amount of previously unknown information about the Home Office's involvement with these cases and the responsibilities of local authorities in safeguarding UAS children.

- **Re T [2021] UKSC 35**

Supreme Court appeal about the use of the inherent jurisdiction to authorise secure accommodation for vulnerable children.

- **A County Council v M [2021] EWFC 35**

Order of Judd J authorising a local authority to proceed with an adoption favoured by the parents without first assessing the paternal grandmother as a potential carer.

Court of Protection and Medical Treatment

Notable Court of Protection and Medical Treatment cases

- **Dance & Anor v Barts Health NHS Trust & Anor [2022] EWCA Civ 1055 (25 July 2022)**

- **Barts Health NHS Trust v Dance & Ors (Re Archie Battersbee) [2022] EWCA Civ 935 (06 July 2022)**

Direct Access

Rob is qualified to accept instructions directly from members of the public in appropriate cases, and welcomes enquiries about such matters at all stages of proceedings, including appeals.

Appointments

- International Family Justice Committee
- Professor of Law and Policy, UCL
- Associate Professor of Family Law, University College London
- Special Advisor to the House of Lords Committee on the Children and Families Act 2014

Publications

- The Routledge Handbook of Family Law and Policy (Routledge, 2nd edition, 2020)
- Family Law: Text, Cases, and Materials (OUP, 4th edition, 2019)
- Blackstone's Statutes on Family Law (OUP, editor from 2019 onwards)
- Relocation: A Practical Guide (Jordans, 2nd edition, 2016)
- Relocation Disputes: Law and Practice in England and New Zealand (Hart, 2014)
- Ideas and Debates in Family Law (Hart, 2012)

Memberships

- FLBA
- Socio-Legal Studies Association

Education

- The College of Law, London (2013)

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- DPhil, Family Law, Lincoln College, Oxford (2010)
- MSc Social Policy, Trinity College, Oxford (2006)
- BA Jurisprudence, Trinity College, Oxford (2005)

Blog

[Do We Need Physical Family Courts?](#)

Prizes

- International Family Lawyer of the Year – LexisNexis Family Law Awards 2021
- Family Case of the Year – LexisNexis Family Law Awards 2021
- International Family Lawyer of the Year 2018 (shortlisted)

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