



serle court

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## Jonathan Fowles

Year of Call: 2004

*"Jonathan is absolutely superb, really clear,  
accessible and always generous with his time.  
He is so incredibly knowledgeable."*

Chambers & Partners, 2026

[clerks@serlecourt.co.uk](mailto:clerks@serlecourt.co.uk)



## Practice Overview

Jonathan is a specialist in charity law, but also has supporting expertise in related areas of law, particularly trusts and probate, real property, and company law so far as it relates to charities. His practice encompasses both contentious and non-contentious work in the law of charities. He is Junior Counsel to the Treasury in Charity Matters, advising the Attorney General in their constitutional function as defender of charity and the charitable interest and representing them in litigation where necessary. He is also co-editor of the leading textbook, *Tudor on Charities*, 11<sup>th</sup> edn. (Sweet & Maxwell).

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## Areas of Expertise

### Charities

Jonathan is the co-editor of the leading textbook, *Tudor on Charities*, 11th ed. (Sweet & Maxwell). He has written numerous articles on charity law, and has spoken a number of times at the Charity Law Association, including at their flagship annual conference.

*(Much of Jonathan's work in this area is non-contentious and has not been before the court in public hearings. Accordingly, it has been necessary to make a number of the case references anonymous for reasons of confidentiality.)*

*Free Grammar School of John Lyon within the Town of Harrow-on-the-Hill v Attorney General* [2024] EWHC 2857 (Ch): acted for the Attorney General on Harrow School's application for cy-près scheme and declaration as to the interpretation of ss.7 and 11 of the Public Schools Act 1868.

*Mohammed v Daji* [2024] EWCA Civ 1247; [2023] EWHC 2761 (Ch); acting for successful claimants in dispute about charitable trusts of extensive site in East London; the judgments of the Court of Appeal and High Court contain important analysis of trusts arising from charity appeals.

*Merton LBC v Nuffield Health* [2023] UKSC 18: landmark case on public benefit and charitable relief from non-domestic rates

*Re NGO (2023)*: Advising internationally renowned organisation about charitable status

*Re Legacies (2021-23)*: Advising major English charity about proper approach to hundreds of historic bequests and donations

*Re educational charity (2020)*: Advising Charity Commission about complex questions in relation to history of school charitable trust

*Naik v Charity Commission* (2020): Acted for internationally renowned Islamic preacher in appeal from disqualification by the Charity Commission.

*Re RSPCA* (2018-19): Advising RSPCA on governance reform, led by Shaheed Fatima QC (Blackstone Chambers)

*B v Interim Managers* (2018): Advising individual on dispute with Interim Managers of religious charity.

*Charity Commission v A* (2018): Advising the charity commission on potential proceedings by the commission for wide-ranging breaches of trust.

*Re X Trust* (2017): Advice to major offshore charitable trust on constitutional matters.

*Re AB* (2016): Advising Interim Managers of Charity.

*Re Jehovah's Witnesses* (2014-2018): Providing ongoing advice to relevant charitable institutions in the UK.

*Re L Trusts* (2016): Advising trustees as to potential charitable conditions on ownership of land transferred to their predecessors in 16th century (with William Henderson).

*N v B&T* (2015), Chancery Division: Acting with Christopher Stoner QC for charities claiming rectification of multi-million pound land transaction; the claim has unusually involved the joinder of the Official Custodian for Charities.

*Re Allotments for the Labouring Poor* (2014): Advising Hughenden Parish Council as to historic charitable trusts arising under the Inclosure Acts (subsequently the subject of litigation in *Densham v Charity Commission* [2018] UKUT 402 (TCC)).

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## Chancery

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### Recommendations

Charities (*Chambers & Partners*) - Star Individual

Charities (*The Legal 500*) - Tier 1

Property Litigation (*The Legal 500*) - Tier 4

Private Client: Trusts and Probate (*Legal 500*) - Tier 4

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### Quotes

*"His knowledge was second to none and he became part of the team immediately. We could not have done the case without him."* (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

*"Jonathan is a fantastic barrister, hugely expert in and dedicated to the charity sector. We hugely value his advice, approach and the fact he is immensely pleasant to deal with as an individual."* (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

*"Jonathan is absolutely superb, really clear, accessible and always generous with his time. He is so incredibly knowledgeable."* (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

*"Jonathan is an excellent technical lawyer."* (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

*"He is really great on complex trust advice."* (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

*"Jonathan is user-friendly and conscious of clients' needs."* (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

*"Jonathan has both impressive technical expertise and sector awareness."* (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

*"Jonathan has an encyclopaedic knowledge of anything and everything related to charities and the law. He is incredibly user-friendly, he delivers advice in a clear, concise and focused way, and he is also a superb strategist."* (Legal 500, 2025)

*'One of the very best charity juniors at the Bar. He has an incredible depth of charity law knowledge and produces clear, authoritative advice in a style that clients are able to easily digest.'* (Legal 500, 2024)

*"Jonathan provides excellent and prompt advice in terms that can be easily shared with and understood by clients."* (Chambers & Partners, 2024)

*"He is fantastically user-friendly, and has an encyclopaedic knowledge of his subject."* (Chambers & Partners, 2024)

*"Jonathan Fowles is absolutely brilliant. His technical knowledge of charity law is unsurpassed."* Chambers and Partners UK Bar, 2023

*"Mr Fowles provides excellent and well-presented advice. He is accessible, speaks in plain English and offers his firm views on matters where grey areas exist."* Chambers and Partners UK Bar, 2023

*"Jonathan's technical expertise in charity law is superb."* Legal 500 2023

*"Particularly knowledgeable and responsive, Jonathan's advocacy is conducted skilfully and professionally."* Legal 500 2023

*"Excellent analytical mind. Good on paper and a persuasive advocate."* Legal 500 2022

*"He is accessible, incredibly clear, and thorough in his advice on complex issues, and is also very alive to the practicalities of a matter."* Legal 500 2022

*"He is very well respected in the charities field and is one of the few experienced juniors who genuinely works across the charities sector, a genuine charity specialist. I have found him particularly strong on complex technical matters."* Chambers and Partners, 2022

*"He's very user-friendly, very approachable and has an incredibly incisive mind. He's totally on top of all the details and very responsive. He is also practical in his advice."* Chambers and Partners, 2022

*"Hugely bright and superb attention to detail."* Legal 500, 2021

*"For his intellectual rigour and incredible responsiveness – he is affable and pragmatic and is a very creative and innovative thinker who finds solutions."* Legal 500, 2021

*"He is technically fantastic, very responsive and provides robust advice."* Legal 500, 2021

*"He is incredibly knowledgeable about charity matters generally, gives very good practical advice and is a terribly likeable man." "His advice is clear and pragmatic on complex issues and he is a pleasure to instruct and work with."* Chambers and Partners, 2021

*"He is someone who goes down very well with clients and has a common sense streak. You can put faith in his technical skill and breadth of knowledge. He has dedicated time and effort to the area, and it shows in the confidence of the opinions you can get from him. He is deeply immersed in the charity law world and is an exceptionally bright and user-friendly senior junior."* Chambers & Partners, 2020

*"Has the ability to distil very complex concepts and make them accessible and understood by a lay client."* The Legal 500, 2020

*"Has a deft and practical touch."* The Legal 500, 2020

## **Publications**

"Nuffield Health: Public benefit in the Supreme Court", P.C.B. 2023, 5, pp.173-179

"A fine balance" article for Civil Society: Governance & Leadership, March 2023

*Tudor on Charities*, 11th Ed. (2022, Sweet & Maxwell), co-author with [William Henderson](#) and [Gregor Hogan](#)

"[Making an exception: the general superintendence of all charitable uses](#)", *Trust & Trustees*, 11 November 2020

"The charitable trust: not so special after all?", *Trusts & Trustees* (OUP), vol. 25, issue 4, May 2019, pp.382-390

*Tudor on Charities*, First Supplement to 10th Ed. (2018, Sweet & Maxwell), co-author with William Henderson

*Tudor on Charities*, 10th Ed. (2015, Sweet & Maxwell), co-author with William Henderson

Former contributor to Francis, *Inheritance Act Claims: Law, Practice and Procedure* (Jordans, looseleaf)

"How to assess the risk of contesting a legacy", *Charity Finance*, October 2017

"Charity begins with the law", *Estates Gazette*, 26/6/17 (Charities Act requirements for land transactions)

"A work in progress", *New Law Journal*, 24/6/16 (on the *Pallant v Morgan* equity)

"The Removal of Trustees", *Practical Law Company*

"Charity Litigation: The role of the Charity Commission": *Practical Law Company*

## Public Access

Jonathan accepts public access instructions in the field of charity law.

## In the Press

'Harrow' Case Featured in The Times "[Harrow loses fight to write 500-year-old charter in plain English](#)" 13 November 2024.

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## Education & Qualifications

New College, Oxford: - MA, Literae Humaniores

City University, London - Postgraduate Diploma in Law

Karmel and Bedingfield Scholar (Gray's Inn)

## Memberships

Chancery Bar Association

Charity Law Association

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